

The capitation earned during the year 1903 was paid over to the head teachers. The purchase of material was made a first charge, and the balance was distributed among the teachers who gave the instruction. At the end of the year the Board decided to retain the capitation and supply all material required. Instruction in needlework was given during the year at twenty-nine schools in charge of male teachers, the average attendance at which did not exceed forty. In some cases difficulty was found in obtaining suitable teachers, owing, no doubt, to the low rate of capitation allowed by the regulations. The Board is giving every encouragement in the formation of classes in manual and technical instruction. Good work continues to be done in the technical schools at Wanganui and Palmerston North; at Hawera the classes are poorly attended. During the second quarter advantage was taken in Wanganui of the regulations regarding Junior Technical Scholarships, and the classes in English, typewriting, shorthand, and other subjects were made free, the result being a large influx of new pupils.

*Training of Teachers.*—The midwinter holidays were extended by a week to enable teachers to attend a winter school for the training of teachers. The subjects taken were kindergarten-work, nature-study, agricultural science, needlework, the work of schools below Grade 4, physical exercise, free-arm drawing, cardboard-modelling, and experimental science. The majority of teachers who attended, over two hundred in number, took several subjects.

#### EXTRACT FROM THE REPORT OF THE INSPECTORS OF SCHOOLS.

*Manual Training.*—It is with pleasure we record a decided movement in respect of manual training. Its claims are now more fully recognised than ever before, and in the majority of the schools room is found on the time-table for at least one of the recognised branches. Teachers, too, are more alive to the importance of manual training as a basis for mental development and as a source of increased interest on the part of the pupils in the general work of the school. It may not be out of place to state here a few of the reasons adduced by educationalists for giving manual training so prominent a place in the work of the primary school.

1. The psychological reason: Manual training aids in mental development. Some modern psychologists state the position much more strongly. They assert that unless suitable manual training be given between the ages of four and sixteen certain parts of the brain are only partially developed. At any rate, it is undoubtedly true that a sounder mental training is secured when manual training is made to play a prominent part in the life of the child. All experience attests the fact, and the unquenchable desire of the growing child to do and make on its own account is a fact too well known to be ignored.

2. Manual training tends to develop the power of attention. "This is due partly to the pupil's interest in the work and partly to the nature of the exercises given. The correct construction of a piece of work can be accomplished only by a careful concentration of the mind upon the task." The boy who finds little to interest him in the ordinary lessons of the school becomes keen and alert in the presence of tasks in which he himself is the chief agent.

3. Manual training exercises a potent influence for good over the whole work of the school. An increased amount of attention gained in one subject is available for all the rest of the work as well, and the interest aroused in one subject may be the salvation of a pupil so far as his whole school career is concerned. This has been proved over and over again; and it is a significant fact that manual-training exercises provide the only real avenue of approach to a very large number of our pupils. "Learn by doing" should ever be the motto of the schoolroom, and if we cannot apply it always, let us at least do so as often as we can, so that the appetite of the growing pupil for "doing" may be satisfied, and thus his interest in the school be better maintained.

So far as this district is concerned, we are in respect of manual training but yet in the beginning of things. We are feeling our way with a good deal of hesitation, and often with misgivings; but let us be assured that we have entered upon a right departure and move steadily on, trusting to the enlightenment of experience to guide us towards the best subjects and into the best means of dealing with them. Each teacher has his own problem here, and, though he may be helped by others towards its solution, the solution must in the end rest with himself. Each must choose and act according to that for which he is most suited.

The great success attending the establishment of the woodwork and cookery classes at Palmerston and Hawera, and of the woodwork class at Wanganui, urges us to seek a further development of this scheme; and we trust that before long these two subjects will become part of the course of instruction at all our centres. Is it vain to hope that at some not far distant day provision for cookery and benchwork will be part of the equipment of every school, and that the training given by a suitable course in these subjects will soon be deemed as important as the learning of problem in stocks and compound interest?

We are pleased to find, especially in the larger schools, that sewing, perhaps the most important subject for girls, is being taught in a more educative manner, and that the practice of many teachers in cutting out and placing the pupils' work for them—a task that makes extraordinary and quite unnecessary demands upon the teacher—is giving way to the more rational and the only educative one of insisting that the pupils shall place and cut out for themselves. Most of our large schools are now provided with sewing-machines, and the girls in the upper classes obtain valuable practice in the use of these.

Perhaps the most important development of the work of our rural schools has been the establishment of cottage-gardens. A very large number of teachers encourage the formation of flower-borders around the school, and this is an excellent thing; but we refer here to those gardens whose aim is to teach the elements of agriculture, and where operations are upon a much larger scale. This work was inaugurated under the provisions of the manual and technical regulations, the initial cost of tools, &c., being provided out of a special grant by the Education Department, and the upkeep maintained by a liberal capitation. It is felt on all hands that this is a step in the right direction. No more practical move has before been made. The work has