indoor experiments on such subjects as gardening and soil, plant-life, and very elementary chemistry and physics in relation thereto. If this instruction—as there is every reason to believe it does—broadens the child's outlook, quickens the interest, and imparts even the most elementary scientific knowledge of botany and biology, thus providing a foundation for and a stimulus to acquire future knowledge, then the instruction is of direct value both to the child and to the State.

The following table shows that the number of district high schools providing a course of instruction bearing on rural pursuits, has increased to forty-seven :—

District.	Number of Schools.	Number of Pupils.	Capitation earned.
	1918.	1918.	£
Auckland	11	381	2,629
Taranaki	1	68	479
Wanganui	6	146	860
Hawke's Bay	3	125	845
Wellington	6	226	1,335
Canterbury	13	282	1,841
Otago	7	185	1,183
Totals, 1918	47	1,413	£9,172
Totals, 1917	38	1,229	£7,984

The conditions under which the science subjects of the rural course are taught are far from ideal, and will never be otherwise until a well trained and enthusiastic science teacher on the staff is in charge of the course at every school in which it is taken. There is consolation, however, to be taken from the fact that in most cases science is systematically taught, and if "the special purpose which science serves is the inculcation of principles and balance, not facts," the utility of the instruction lies not in how much scientific knowledge of farming, botany, chemistry, biology, &c., has been imparted by the teacher, but in the mental discipline, quickened observational powers, and the stimulus to persistent effort the course has provided.

It is to be expected that as normal conditions return an increase will take place in the number of classes in elementary science, instead of a slight decrease as is shown by the returns for 1918. The number of approved classes for swimming and life-saving shows a slight decrease for the year, due to the prevalence of the epidemic at the time that the classes would under normal conditions have commenced.

Capitation earnings by Education Boards for the year amounted to £41,906, as compared with £39,538 for 1917, while grants amounting to £3,596 in aid of buildings and equipment were received. The total receipts (including transfers from other accounts) of Education Boards in respect of manual instruction amounted to £53,164, and the total payments (including transfers to other accounts) to £62,009. The monetary assets of the Boards at the 31st December, 1918, were £12,027, and these exceeded the liabilities by £5,639.

The following table gives some particulars of the payments by Education Boards in respect of certain branches of manual instruction :—

Subjects.	Number of Schools.	Payments.		
		Salaries of Instructors.	Working-expenses.	Totals.
		£	£	£
Woodwork and ironwork	494	9,163	2,475	11,638
Domestic subjects	500	7,558	4,078	11,636
Agriculture and dairy science ..	1,390	7,187	3,688	10,875
Elementary science	133	230	178	408
Swimming and life-saving ..	134	628	264	892
Elementary handwork and needlework	2,135	1,608	7,213	8,821
Totals	..	26,374	17,896	44,270