

in winning the Macfarlane Shield for the greatest improvement in the school-gardens of North Canterbury during 1917, and Cust School was declared the winner for 1918. The Hurdley Shield in South Canterbury was won by the Hilton School.

SOUTHLAND.

EXTRACT FROM THE REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF MANUAL AND TECHNICAL INSTRUCTION.

Elementary Handwork.—With but a few exceptions in the case of some of the smallest schools, handwork, in some form or other, may be said to have received attention in all schools throughout the district. As hitherto, the subjects most commonly taken were plasticine-modelling and paper-folding in the lower classes and cardboard-work in the upper. Very considerable difficulty was experienced in obtaining the necessary supplies of materials, but fortunately, though some lines were quite unobtainable, the most important needs of the classes were able to be met, substitutes of local manufacture being provided where possible. The burning question of the increased cost of material was one that had to be faced in connection with all handwork requirements, being especially serious in the case of the drawing-books required for pastel-work and brushwork. Unfortunately, however, the capitation available to meet this largely increased expenditure remained exactly the same. However, it is hoped that, slow though the return to normal condition after the effects of war may be, yet the disabilities under which work has been carried on will soon be considerably lightened.

Woodwork and Cookery.—In all schools within a reasonable distance of a manual-training centre woodwork or cookery has been the subject of handwork for the upper standards, country children attending for one day per week for a period of thirteen weeks, and town and suburban children for one lesson of two hours per week for thirty weeks, or of three hours for twenty weeks. Up till 1918 the instructors in the main centre in Invercargill had charge of classes from the Technical High School in addition to those from the primary schools, but the increase in the number of children attending from primary schools was deemed sufficient to warrant the Board in utilizing the services of the instructors entirely in connection with primary work, with results that have proved in every way satisfactory. The number of schools represented at one or other of the three centres was as follows: Invercargill, 36; Gore, 26; Riverton, 13. At Invercargill 607 boys and 583 girls received instruction; at Gore, 345 boys and 332 girls; at Riverton, 136 boys and 113 girls; the total numbers being thus 1,088 boys and 1,028 girls. Altogether there were forty-eight separate classes for boys and forty-seven for girls.

In connection with the winter show of the Agricultural and Pastoral Association an interesting display was made of work in cookery and woodwork, as well as in school-garden produce, the whole display being generally recognized as one of the most attractive features of the show.

The most important event of the year in connection with these classes was undoubtedly the opening towards the end of the year of the first portion of the new manual-training school in Invercargill. The change from the two old rooms that had done duty for so many years to an up-to-date building, fitted with every convenience for carrying on work under conditions as nearly approaching the ideal as can at present be secured, has been very much appreciated by both instructors and pupils. When this building is completed, as it is expected it soon will be, by the addition of two more classrooms, one for woodwork and one for cookery, the Board will have a school which, after prospective additions are made in the near future in the way of equipment, will suffice to meet the needs of manual training for many years to come. The prospect of having within a year or two an abundant supply of electricity available throughout the district for every household purpose, and at a price within the reach of every one, makes it imperative that provision be made for girls to receive instruction in the new appliances that will shortly be indispensable in every household.

Elementary Agriculture.—Instruction in this subject was given during the year in 113 schools, an increase of four over the corresponding figure for last year. In the majority of cases satisfactory work was accomplished, but, unfortunately, the long vacation as a result of the influenza epidemic nullified to a large extent the value of the experimental work in progress, in many schools the gardens receiving no attention whatever at the very time of the year when constant attention is essential. It is gratifying to record, however, that in an increasing number of schools commendable efforts are being made to improve the surroundings. As the provisions of the regulations governing the granting of subsidies on money raised by voluntary effort have become better known, greater interest has been manifested in the way of rendering the grounds pleasing and attractive. It must be confessed, however, that in too many cases the school buildings are conspicuous by their bare and uninviting surroundings, little or no attempt in this direction being made to cultivate in the child during its most impressionable years that love for the beautiful that is essentially a part of its education. That a very considerable amount of work in attending to the beautifying of the school-grounds can be successfully undertaken by the children without the ordinary programme of garden-work being in any way interfered with is evidenced in a number of schools both in town and country, and where the responsibility for the condition of the ornamental plots and borders is laid upon the children the results have been most encouraging. As a factor in stimulating interest in this branch of education it should be mentioned that early in the year a local firm presented to the Board a silver cup for competition amongst schools receiving instruction in agriculture, it being stipulated that in making an award due consideration was to be paid to both the garden-work and the efforts made to beautify the grounds. Waianiwa, the winning school for the first year, well deserved the honour.