

and the making of frocks are often well taught in the upper classes, and the sewing generally includes a greater variety of useful and neat needlework than was presented in former years.

In the early part of the past year I submitted to the Board a scheme for a cadet service on military lines similar to that so successfully adopted in New South Wales. The proposed service, which received the approval of experts and was for the most part prompted by a military officer, included the formation of companies (one for each of the large schools), the appointment of officers of various rank, the wearing of a simple and inexpensive uniform, the use of a small Martini rifle, the training of a band, and field or camp exercises. As events have happened, if this scheme had been adopted, it would have been the pride of the district, and its utility would have been unquestioned. After many strange objections, much difference of opinion, and long delay, a drill-instructor was appointed, companies formed, and a drum and bugle band is in the course of training; and, further, the Government have entertained the scheme and supplied about four hundred so-called "model rifles" which shoot not. The Government has, however, intimated that the model rifle will be superseded by a real miniature rifle, when the cadet corps have made such progress as to justify their existence. And this we look upon hopefully as a very saving clause, for in these warlike times one of the first duties of a citizen is to be able to shoot. There are at present seven cadet companies in the City schools, with an average strength of fifty each, one at Petone forty-five strong, and one at the Hutt with forty. In the country there are companies formed at Masterton and Carterton, each fifty strong, whilst detachments exist at Fernridge, Greytown, Upper Hutt, Otaki, Levin, Eketahuna, Pahiatua, Maungatainoka, Karori, and Kilbirnie. In the small schools squad and physical drill are taught. Model rifles are served out to the City schools, Fernridge, Kilbirnie, and Petone. The drill-instructor (Mr. McDonald), who is doing satisfactory work, has compiled a handy drill manual for the use of teachers, and a set of rules for the organization of public-school cadets and instruction in drill generally. The rules have been published by the Education Department and freely circulated.

Head teachers inform me that the formation of companies is having a direct salutary effect on the discipline; and this was taken to be a strong reason for the introduction of the system. I am pleased to note that few schools are weak in discipline, though in many the awarded mark is not higher than satisfactory.

The infant-school kindergarten system is always an important factor in estimating the year's results. Mrs. Francis, of the Mount Cook Infant School, and Miss Page, of the Thorndon Infant School, continue to take the lead in this work, and are mainly instrumental in introducing new occupations, which now include paper-flower making and the elements of brush-work. The large Mount Cook Infant School is practically made a training-ground for newly appointed City pupil-teachers, but the mistress reports that the quality of the material supplied is deteriorating.

Kindergarten work, which for twenty years past appears as a characteristic feature of our school work, is the basis of manual instruction, which has made of late years such marvellous progress in several advanced countries. Mr. A. D. Riley, Director of the Technical School, on his return from England, presented a valuable report to the Board, which fully treated on this subject in its relation to primary work. The report and the consideration of the subject have not met with the thoughtful attention they deserve, except from a section of the Press; and it yet remains to discuss the possibilities of giving, either in our schools or in special buildings, an excellent hand and eye training to boys, without pretending to teach trades, which will correspond to the cookery instruction for girls, and will be invaluable in fitting boys for their future bread-winning days by training them in the principles of skilled handicraft, and in that necessary manipulation and practical dexterity which fit a lad for any industrial work.

In the upper classes of the schools there was a satisfactory increase in the numbers previously passed in Standard VI., who form the classes in which scholarship preparation goes on. This work is referred to in our scholarship report. Many of the best pupils in the class above Standard VI. do not compete for scholarships, and many of those who do compete go up because their parents wish them to do so, and not because their teachers consider them suitable candidates. For these and other reasons it is misleading to judge of the whole of the upper class work by scholarship answers, even when the questions of a competitive test are reasonable. Nevertheless the scholarship results are satisfactory under the conditions pervading this report.

This is the first time that the Inspectors have been instructed to report on the working of six Roman Catholic schools, although a seventh, St. Joseph's Orphanage, has been twice previously examined. The Inspectors were very cordially received by the managers and teachers, the latter being Marist Brothers in one boys' school, and Sisters of Mercy in the others—all devoted to their work and exercising excellent control over their pupils. In some cases the buildings were hardly suitable, and were particularly defective in lighting. The schools were all twice visited, once for preliminary inspection, and once for classification in standards (pass-subjects only). In all of them good work was done in some subjects, and in most of them there was promise of a good record next year. It is not thought necessary to publish details, the appendix merely showing the numbers, totalling 1,038, presented by the teachers, who made their own presentment, and the numbers promoted to a higher standard.

I particularly call attention to the very good and most helpful work done by many School Committees during the past year. Some head teachers have expressed themselves very decidedly on this point in words such as these: "I have an excellent School Committee who would do anything for me in reason." I have only to point to such work as the Masterton playground to verify this statement; and there is evidence in many places of School Committees taking a living interest in the upkeep and in the general success of their schools.

It now remains for me to sum up what I know to be a faithful statement of the condition of the schools as seen from several standpoints. As already stated they consist of eighty-one in a satisfactory condition (including eight very small ones newly opened which cannot be otherwise