

importance in connection with school control and organization. In December, 1906, the first synchronous examination took place, and it met with the hearty support of the teachers. Again, in December last the second examination took place. Registered examination-papers were posted to each centre, and these were supervised by two teachers who had been recommended as qualified by the Teachers' Institute. All arrangements in the local centres were made by the teachers themselves, and the plan has worked exceedingly well. On the 2nd December 544 candidates from sixty of the Board schools and forty-seven candidates belonging to five Catholic schools presented themselves for a certificate of competency or of proficiency in Standard VI requirements. The passes in both grades numbered 533, of which 356 were passes for certificates of proficiency.

The simultaneous examination of pupils from widely separated districts may perhaps possess some disadvantages, but it certainly provides a good opportunity of comparing pupil with pupil, and school with school, that was not possible under the old system of examination. Training, method, and efficiency can easily be estimated, and wide differences were seen in the papers of the candidates. Some of the schools did badly in arithmetic, others in English, and others in geography. The weaknesses were not general, but represented rather the strong and weak points among the teachers. Free classification, it has been urged, is an ideal one for the attainment of sound instruction, but, if such is the case, the relative thoroughness cannot yet be measured by means of examination tests.

The greater freedom enjoyed by teachers in the selection of work and in school control generally is bringing into prominence the fact that the plan of mere paper tests will soon become obsolete. The individual intelligence must be tested in other ways than by written exercises, and a physical and moral balance must be used equally with the mental in determining the best and highest qualities of children. The study of nature, which includes elementary science, also skill in the use of tools, and even physical development, will have to count in determining the "make-up" of a complete training for a girl or boy.

As to thoroughness in the mechanical preparation of subjects of instruction, the present cannot be compared with the past, as far as Hawke's Bay District is concerned. The old plan went in the direction of simplicity; the new aspires to complexity. Under the old there was an ideal, definite and attainable; under the new the schools are groping after something that is termed "wide intelligence," but which is better explained by the term "superficial knowledge." The regulations aim to foster scientific method; but how little is this possible among teachers who are thrown into a wilderness of educational indifference, where too often the school is made to subserve the "bread-and-butter" subjects of the anxious and overworked settler.

Nature-study is making most headway in the junior departments of the larger schools, and it is in these that one often meets with real glimpses of vitality and success in dealing with this interesting and important subject. A recent occurrence will illustrate my point. The junior department in a large school in the southern portion the district has encouraged experimental nature-study for years with considerable success. The instruction is practical, and is carried on in a large measure to train children in habits of observation with reference to animal and plant life in the vicinity of the school. The effect on one of the little girls in P3 class was that she began to keep a school in a small outhouse. She had a number of bottles for her scholars, each with the name of a child in her own class written on a piece of paper and fastened round the neck. She had a shelf which was a model of one in the schoolroom, and held a flower-pot with sweet-peas growing in it, a glass for containing tadpoles, another one with cress and mustard, and another with an onion growing in water. There was a saucer, too, with water in it, and a flourishing carrot-top on it. The little girl hurried home every day to her school, and rehearsed the day's lessons to her scholars. She watched the specimens very carefully, and compared their progress and changes with those in school. "This," says the mistress who sends me the above account, "is the most interesting instance I have noticed, but I know from what the children tell me that many of them try at home to carry out the experiments they see going on in school." And were this plan fostered by teachers, a love of nature would soon spread among the children, and the foundation of true scientific inquiry would be laid.

In quite a number of districts great attention is paid to the flower-garden, but the kitchen-garden has barely received attention. The useful, even in school studies, is supposed to precede the ornamental, and Committees might well foster the establishment of kitchen-gardens for testing and experimental purposes.

The celebration of Arbor Day was kept in forty-five school districts, and resulted in the planting of about 2,500 trees. In the Poverty Bay district several gentlemen specially interested themselves, and visited a number of the larger schools, so as to give practical lessons in tree-planting and levelling. The lessons were much appreciated by the pupils, and, judging by the papers that were sent to me containing a descriptive account of one of the lessons given, such teaching must prove of high value to the children.

Nature-study is encouraged by this practical instruction in habits of observation, and illustrative lessons of a similar kind might well be fostered by teachers. I should like to see prizes offered by the Board for the best-kept school garden and the best-arranged and best-planted site. Emulation would be fostered in this way, and it would bring into prominence the actual progress of local educational effort year by year.

The woodwork, cookery, and dressmaking classes under the Manual and Technical Regulations have been continued in the schools on the lines set forth in my last year's report. Mr. Gardiner, the instructor in woodwork, has conducted classes in Napier, Hastings, and Dannevirke, as centres. The cookery classes for girls have been carried on in the same places by Misses Millington and Lousley, and Mrs. Thomas has conducted dressmaking classes. In Poverty Bay the instruction in woodwork was given by Mr. Levey. Altogether more than a thousand children received instruction in one or more of the subjects mentioned. Instruction in military drill, with other forms of