

The drawing is still of poor quality, and will continue to be so until more systematic attention is given to it.

In some schools teachers have made an excellent beginning in making use of nature itself, and in one school particularly good work was exhibited, showing how drawing can be correlated with elementary agriculture. There are still many teachers who have not yet learned to discard the flat copies and drawing-charts in favour of nature itself.

Elementary Practical Agriculture.—School gardens have been now established in fifty-one schools, in some cases with remarkably good results. Maoris hold manure of whatever kind in abomination, and cannot be brought to recognise its value or to use crops that have been grown by its agency. The result is that in places like Te Kaha, where crops of maize have been grown every year continuously for upwards of thirty years, the ground has become exhausted, and poor crops are obtained. In such circumstances the school garden may furnish an object-lesson not only to the school-children, but also to the community. An interesting report on experiments in potato-growing as carried out by the children is supplied by one teacher. Twenty-eight pounds of seed were put into five plots, each 7 ft. by 21 ft.; artificial manures were applied in four of the plots, and 205 lb. weight of potatoes were obtained. The teacher states that there was an inclination on the part of the boys to favour the unmanured plot, but the results, which were closely watched and checked by the class, were convincing, the unmanured plot returning only 17 lb. as against 65 lb. produced in that in which a little superphosphate, sulphate of ammonia, and sulphate of potash had been used. He adds that the experiment was watched by a number of the adults, and that no sign of blight was seen in the school crop, though its presence was reported in the village. It is impossible to overestimate the value of such work, and we hope that teachers in various localities will see their way to carry out similar experiments with other crops. Even in places where the land has been pronounced to be useless, it has been surprising to find what cultivation and energy have been able to produce. Two places in the Far North offer striking examples of this, and flourishing gardens appear where previous teachers had made no attempt to cultivate what had seemed to them the unkindly soil.

Woodwork.—During the year there were in operation fifteen workshops attached to village schools, and these afford the means of imparting valuable instruction. The people continue to show their appreciation of the workshops, and are not slow to take advantage of them either by purchasing readily the articles made in them, or by coming themselves to share in the work. At *Oruanui* the pupils who have been trained in the school workshop have built cottages for both European and Maori residents.

Domestic Duties.—Training in domestic duties continues to be given with success in several of the schools, and the specimens of the work done by the girls and submitted at the examination bore ample testimony both to the excellence of the instruction and to its practical nature. It must be understood that no special cookery-rooms have been provided, nor is the outfit of an elaborate nature. Two hundred pounds of flour per annum, a few bread-tins and pans, a camp-oven, and a sympathetic woman willing to devote the time and even the use of her kitchen to the purpose, and there you have a cooking-class established in a Native school.

Singing.—The singing has again been a matter of considerable enjoyment to us, and is on the whole very well taught. The sight tests that we have used were gone through by the children with comparatively little difficulty, which shows that they are acquiring the power to sing at sight. A greater variety of songs would be more acceptable to us, and we certainly think that new songs should be submitted every year in every school. It is a pity that a better selection of tonic sol-fa books is not available. Those we have are, in the case of many schools, not up to the standard of the children's abilities.

Drill.—Breathing exercises now form an integral part of the drill in vogue in Native schools, and a handbook of physical exercises has recently been issued to teachers. There are still signs of neglect to engage in physical exercises with the regularity that the subject demands, and we are afraid that in some schools drill is postponed until the annual inspection draws near. Five or ten minutes' practice daily throughout the year before the pupils enter school would achieve better results than those obtained at present.

NEW SYLLABUS.

The proposed course of instruction in Native schools which was laid before teachers in 1907 has now been adopted as the syllabus to be followed, though it is probable that in the compilation of the code some modifications will be effected.

The subjects of instruction in Native schools are now English, arithmetic, handwork, nature-study, morals, singing, and physical drill. It is interesting to compare this syllabus with that which existed when Native schools first came into being. The system of education followed in the earliest times was to impart instruction to the Maoris in their own language in establishments where great numbers of all ages were congregated, and where they were not only educated, but housed, clothed, and fed. Some of these establishments contained more than a hundred Natives, and the cost of maintenance was considerable.

By the Native Schools Act of 1858 a grant of £7,000 per annum was provided for a term of seven years in aid of schools for the education of the aboriginal Native race, whether children or adults. Grants from this fund were made periodically to the respective managers of schools aided under the Act, in proportion to the number of scholars, the rate of capitation being not less than £5 and not greater than £10 per head. Instruction in the English language and in the ordinary subjects of primary English education and industrial training, formed a necessary part of the system pursued in every school that received Government aid.

The Native Schools Amendment Act of 1867 provided for the formation of education districts and for the granting of subsidies towards the cost of buildings and teachers' salaries. The Act required that instruction should be carried on in the English language as far as possible. Before the Act could be brought into effectual operation the North Island became involved in war, and it was not until the year 1871 that a strenuous effort could be made to construct a workable scheme of Native education.