

obstacle, they have convinced the authorities by means of a programme of experimental work satisfactorily carried out in the school-garden and by their success in teaching elementary practical agriculture as a school subject that they are entitled to receive the necessary certificate. Moreover, applications from teachers for leave to attend classes for instruction in the subjects referred to have always received favourable consideration.

Reference was made in last year's report to the increasing number of schools where the pupils are supplied during the winter months with a cup or mug of hot cocoa at the midday recess. It is a distinct pleasure to be able to record a further increase in the number of such schools. The idea is an excellent one from the point of view of the physical welfare of the child, and the teachers themselves are highly pleased with the results. The pupils, as a result of their insistent demands upon their parents, now come to school provided with lunch—probably a piece of bread or a large biscuit—which they enjoy with their cocoa; and when it is borne in mind that very many Maori children have only two meals a day—often of indifferent quality—it is not a difficult matter to appreciate the value of the innovation and what it means to the children. The parents in these districts now recognize that the activities of the school include not only the educational welfare of their children, but also their physical welfare, and as a consequence they have become enthusiastic in the matter. The expenses connected with the practice are met in various ways by local effort on the part of the teachers and the parents concerned: all that is evidently required is some enthusiasm, initiative, and organization, and the thing is done. It is worthy of record that in one district where there is a large school a sum of £50 was raised for the purpose of providing, in addition to the supply of cocoa, sugar, &c., one or two large nutritious biscuits to each child. At another school where hot cocoa is supplied it is an amusing sight to see the small children marching proudly to the teacher's residence at the midday recess to claim their daily rations from supplies of these biscuits, which have been placed under the charge of the teacher by their individual parents.

The annual picnic and the annual concert are institutions which are extremely popular with the pupils and parents alike in those settlements where the teachers are alive to the value of this means of securing interest in the schools and the co-operation of the parents. These social events, which are anticipated all the year, are valuable from many points of view, not the least important being the pleasure and happiness which are radiated by their means through the community. As a result of the concerts many schools have funds which are devoted to school purposes. The school which does not run an annual concert and an annual picnic cannot be regarded as a "live" concern.

In another respect which leads the children and parents to take a pride in their school, it is pleasing to note that in competitions that are held in various parts of the country for specimens of work done by children the pupils of many Native schools have been wonderfully successful.

The standard classification of the pupils in the Native village schools as shown at the 31st December, 1921, was as follows:—

Class.	Number on Roll.
Standard VII	57
„ VI	259
„ V	373
„ IV	466
„ III	617
„ II	673
„ I	718
Preparatory	2,659
Total	5,822

GENERAL REMARKS.

The following comments are made in connection with the various subjects of the school course:—

Reading.—Within the last few years substantial progress has been made in the great majority of schools in the direction of securing better articulation, clearness in enunciation, and distinctness in pronunciation, with the result that the habit of pronouncing words carelessly or indistinctly is not met with in many schools. It is when the ability of the pupils to get at the thought-content of what they read is gauged that the principal defect of the reading becomes apparent. Teachers will no doubt read with profit the following extract from the report of the departmental committee appointed by the President of the Board of Education to inquire into the position of English in the educational system of England: "Explicit rules for reading are not what is wanted: they are apt to lead to a stilted and artificial delivery. The essentials, in addition to speech-training, are that the children should understand and feel what they read, and that the teacher himself should be a good reader. From the very beginning reading should be treated, not as a mechanical trick, but as a means of getting at ideas. An infant-school headmistress tells us: 'Too many teachers fail to realize that reading is the recognition of the script equivalent of the spoken word. They fail to get their pupils to read for "content." Children should from the beginning realize that the writing is speaking to them silently.' In reading aloud, so soon as sentences are reached, it is the phrase and not the word that should be the unit. The monotonous, expressionless way in which children even high up in the senior school sometimes read is usually traceable to bad habits acquired in the lower standards or in the infants' class. They read each word separately, each in the same tone, as if it bore no relation to any other word in the sentence, ticking them off like beads on a string, and this exasperating trick often proves most difficult to eradicate. A very common source of bad reading is that the children have been pressed forward too fast on the purely mechanical side, and have been given difficult books too soon. If the