

MODEL SCHOOL.

The model country school at Stratford continued its operations throughout the year, and undoubtedly its efficiency is gradually improving. Some thirty-two teachers visited the school during the year, each spending from three days to a fortnight there. The succeeding efforts on the part of some of these showed improvement in their powers of handling their classes.

The observation school at Moturoa was also visited by several teachers, and the free methods in use there appealed greatly to most of the visitors. We should welcome an extension of these methods throughout the district.

INFANT-ROOMS.

In general, the infant divisions of our schools have been very well taught, and in all our largest schools, at least, the most modern methods have been adopted with entire success. Indeed, in no other department of our school-work has such progress been noted. It would appear that there is still ample scope for experimentation in the management of, and methods adopted in, the middle and senior divisions. We are always pleased to record cases where initiative and originality have been shown. We express the hope that during the forthcoming year some of our most capable teachers will be willing, even in the face of probable failure, to try out such new methods as may appear to them worthy of experiment. So might progress in the upper divisions keep pace with that in the infant division. In all the larger schools the head teachers should take the greatest care to secure continuity of work and treatment of lessons when pupils pass out of the primer classes into the junior division. There should be close co-operation between the teachers of the highest primer class and Standard I, especially in such subjects as spelling, writing, and number work. Otherwise the pupils from the primer classes are hindered in their progress, and seem to be less well prepared than they really are.

SCHEMES OF WORK AND WORK-BOOK.

Teachers are realizing more and more that, if properly drawn up, their schemes and work-books, instead of being a useless waste of time and energy, may become not only important aids in the successful carrying-on of the school-work, but will also enable more thoughtful treatment to be meted out to the various subjects of the syllabus. Where the courses to be covered, the methods to be adopted, and the aims are carefully considered beforehand it is self-evident that in the course of a year much unnecessary waste of time may be saved and much purposeless teaching avoided. If the scheme-books have been fully drawn up so as to show in detail the steps of the methods employed, much unnecessary daily repetition of method and treatment can be avoided.

PROFICIENCY EXAMINATIONS.

The percentage of passes was somewhat greater this year than in previous years, mainly due to the evenness of the tests in arithmetic. The system of accrediting pupils was again adopted. For the purposes of arriving at a correct estimate of a pupil's attainment marks allotted by teachers were taken into consideration where such marks were found reliable. We would impress upon teachers the necessity for exercising greater care in awarding marks, not only in the case of Standard VI pupils but also throughout the school. In every case written tests were set in history, civics, geography, science, and hygiene, and the marks awarded by the instructors in cookery, woodwork, and agriculture were taken into account in the award of certificates.

PHYSICAL INSTRUCTION.

It is pleasing that we are able to say that most of our schools devote much attention to the physical well-being of their pupils. By organized games for both boys and girls, by the ordinary physical exercises, and in less degree by attention to posture in school and out of school, the pupils are afforded opportunities for developing their bodies in healthy fashion. The greatest weakness lies in the smallest schools, where it is not easy to organize games which may be played by boys and girls together. Next year we expect to find in every school visited by a physical instructor a report on the value of the instruction given in the school. Once again we place on record our opinion that a physical instructor should be stationed in Taranaki.

TEMPERANCE TEACHING.

In a great number of our schools this subject receives full attention, though we must admit that the degree of attention depends largely upon the personality of the teacher. Our tests, as set to Standards V and VI, usually reveal that the pupils have a good knowledge of the instruction given in Pamphlet 13. But in some cases we feel that the instruction is given only perfunctorily.

SELF-GOVERNMENT AND DISCIPLINE.

In an increasing number of our schools are being tried experiments in self-government by the pupils, usually with the happiest of results. In these schools the discipline practically establishes itself, and the pupils are contented and eager to learn. Frayed nerves do not exist amidst such conditions, and a sound working-spirit prevails generally. In a few other schools neither teachers nor pupils have yet distinguished between freedom of action and inattention and time-wasting frivolity.