

This, I am of opinion, is a mistake, not merely because teachers will object to carry a load which rightly should fall upon all, but because it is based on a wrong conception of the function this teaching practice is to serve. Educationists regard the training of the teacher as being based to but a slight extent on conscious imitation. They do not say that there is no room for imitation, but rather that teaching is an individual affair, and each teacher must ultimately evolve his own method. "Nothing," says Dewey, "has brought pedagogical theory into greater disrepute than the belief that it is identified with handing out to teachers recipes and models to be followed in teaching." In another place he says: "But methods remain the personal concern, approach, and attack of an individual, and no catalogue can ever exhaust their diversity of form and tint." This does not imply that there is no room for the teaching of method and for the demonstration of successful teaching—"There exists a cumulative body of fairly stable methods for reaching results, a body authorized by past experience and by intellectual analysis which an individual ignores at his peril"—but it certainly implies that the training of the teacher must not be confined wholly, or even mainly, to the imitation of standardized lessons. For this reason I am strongly of the opinion that during part at least of a student's training he should have the opportunity of practising this "personal concern, approach, and attack" under guidance. Hence almost any class in almost any school will furnish the material for practice, provided there is adequate supervision. The Normal Schools can be relied upon for demonstration and for the first efforts of the student, but the main, and really most effective, practice of the student in his senior year might well be undertaken in the ordinary school under ordinary conditions.

There would appear to be a fairly common opinion that our students do not get sufficient practice in teaching. If it is meant that they do not spend sufficient time in the class-rooms I am convinced the criticism is unfounded. If, however, the critics mean that the student does not get sufficient actual teaching practice, then I am inclined to agree. The reason for this is perfectly obvious. Last year I wrote, "At least a quarter of our students must be in the schools at one time if the requirements of the regulations are to be met. This means that throughout the whole year we must provide for the teaching practice of eighty students—an average of two and a half per class-room. Not only is each teacher required to supervise and provide practice for these students, but his class must suffer the interruption and 'prentice efforts of the students continuously throughout the year. One or both of two things must result: the students' actual teaching must be curtailed or the class be allowed to suffer."

My proposal would obviate this. Not more than one student at a time would be sent into each class-room, and no class-room would be used continuously. Thus it would be possible for the student to spend almost his whole time actively teaching, and because no class-room would be required for more than a few weeks in the year no ill effects would be suffered by the class. The system would require close and careful organization and supervision, and while it would be no more expensive than the present system I am convinced it would be much more effective.

Social Life.—As in past years this aspect of College work received prominence. All the various societies—glee and dramatic clubs, Students' Christian Union, the College orchestra, debating societies, as well as the various sports clubs—had a very successful year. An additional club, the Appreciation Club, was organized and also had a good initial year. While attendance at most of these is optional, yet students clearly understand that no course of training can be considered complete unless it includes active participation in some one or more of them. The consequence is that an increasing number of students is developing interests that must stand them in good stead in developing their personalities as well as in equipping them to become social forces in the districts to which they are sent. The good effect of the work is shown in the increasing number of our ex-students who have established glee, dramatic, and other clubs in rural districts and small towns.

CHRISTCHURCH.

I have the honour to submit the following report on the Christchurch Teachers' Training College for the year ending 31st December, 1925:—

The Science Department made little change in its work. We received with pleasure a request from the Department to suggest changes in the C requirement. One recommendation we desire is that the subject "physiography" be deleted and "geography" inserted. Physiography has been valuable in so far as it enabled certain portions of geography to be taught. A suggested programme of work in geography was forwarded to the Department, a course that we consider very much better for teacher students, but so far no modification of the syllabus has been made. Additional time was given to physical geography at the expense of some of the more strictly geological portion of the syllabus. The course in agriculture and school-gardening was continued. We have not been able to carry out this portion of our work to our satisfaction owing to the difficulty of getting a suitable plot of ground. There are at present two proposals under consideration, one to use a portion of a school-site near Linwood Park, and another to endeavour to obtain the use of a piece of ground in the Botanic Gardens. It is our purpose to emphasize the æsthetic side of school-gardening rather than the more definitely agricultural side in the hope that students will feel impelled to do something to improve the appearance of school-grounds and form gardens where now none exist.

It is pleasing to note that the students are better qualified academically—that is, more have a higher leaving certificate or have passed the Matriculation Examination; but I wish again to stress the fact that subjects of great importance to teachers are still receiving insufficient attention. Higher qualifications in Latin, French, and mathematics do not compensate for little knowledge in geography,