

they are in at the time of the examination. The School Hygiene Division is very desirous of having the parents present at the examination of the children for various reasons :—

- (1) The parent has the opportunity of seeing that the defect, if such exists—as, for example, enlarged tonsils—is a genuine one, and, moreover, one which it is to the advantage of the child to have treated at the earliest possible moment.
- (2) The parent has the benefit of a talk with the School Medical Officer, and is often given very useful advice as to the all-important question of diet, which, alas, even in these days, is too often given but scant attention, to the lifelong misery, in many cases, of the unfortunate child.
- (3) False reports as to the manner of conducting the medical examination cannot receive credence by the parent who has been an eye-witness of the extreme care taken by the School Hygiene staff that the child shall not take cold. Children are not by any means accurate reporters of facts ; consequently parents have been misled in various instances.
- (4) The personal touch, which is so necessary for good results in the work, is obtained, and the school doctor becomes known to the parents of the little ones amongst whom she spends the greater part of her life.

The Board is aware that the notification sent to parents by the School Medical Officer regarding defects in the physical condition of their children are in a great many cases unheeded. The Board suggests that, in the interests of the child, legislation should be introduced to enforce the need for attention by parents.

During the year preventive treatment for diphtheria has been carried out extensively in this district. Over three thousand children have been rendered immune to this terrible scourge, which occasionally descends on us and sweeps away the best and brightest so often from our homes. The school doctor here again is hampered by the short-sighted parent, and the safety of the community is endangered by the one who will not give his consent to the inoculation of his child. The doctors tell us that at the end of six months, at the outside, the immunized children are free from the risk of contracting diphtheria, at any rate, during their school life, and probably for a much longer period. Why, then, does any sane parent object ? In addition to carrying out the preventive treatment for diphtheria, the school doctor has 3,500 children under treatment for goitre. The teachers make the giving of pills a part of their daily work. Excellent results are being obtained.

*School Dental Clinic.*—Excellent work is being done at the dental clinic in Invercargill. The dental nurses, Misses Kirkpatrick and Miller, have been indefatigable in the discharge of their duties. During the year the dental clinic was opened in Gore, in charge of Nurse Kelly. While the Board appreciates the work done by the Health Department in establishing school dental clinics in Invercargill and Gore, it would urge the Department to make provision for the dental treatment of country children. Where the health of our people is at stake financial obligations should not be allowed to stand in the way of an extension of the scheme. The Board would urge upon the Department the absolute necessity for the appointment of additional nurses, so that children who are far removed from the centres may receive attention.

*Physical Instruction.*—The Board is satisfied that the good work of previous years is being worthily maintained. The annual competition in physical exercises among the primary schools in Southland was won by Invercargill South School. The winning team obtains possession for one year of the Galloway Memorial Shield.

*Needlework.*—In forty-five schools where for the whole or a part of the year there was no female teacher on the staff local residents appointed as sewing mistresses carried on the work of instruction in needlework. The average attendance of the girls thus being taught this essential subject totalled 414. Though this represents an increase of nine schools and 70 pupils over the corresponding figures for last year, there are still some schools where girls have been unable to receive any instruction in needlework owing to the impossibility of securing suitable sewing mistresses to undertake the work.

*Elementary Handwork.*—In all schools throughout the district, instruction in some forms of handwork was given during the year, materials being supplied as required for plasticine-modelling, paper-folding and paper-cutting, brushwork, cardboard-work and raffia-work. The materials supplied by the Department for kindergarten purposes were in such keen demand that the supplies were quickly exhausted.

*Agriculture.*—Recognized classes in elementary agriculture were carried on during the year at 142 schools, this number being an increase of seven over the corresponding figures for last year. Good work in this subject has continued to be done in most schools, but it is to be regretted that in all cases satisfactory provision has not been made in regard to school gardens being looked after during the summer vacation. It is unfortunate that this vacation occurs just at the time when gardens require constant attention, but the Board feels that it should not be impossible for the teachers and School Committees concerned to make some arrangement whereby the gardens would not be completely neglected.

That keen interest continues to be taken in the improving and beautifying of school-grounds is evidenced by the fact that during the year contributions amounting to £1,019 18s. 1d. were received for the purpose of effecting improvements to school gardens and grounds. With subsidy from the Department, the amount available for expenditure in this direction was, therefore, approximately £2,040. Unfortunately, however, there are still some districts where sufficient enthusiasm in the matter of making school-grounds beautiful and attractive has not yet been aroused. It is impossible under such circumstances to make children grow up with a pride in their school, when no attempt is made to stimulate the æsthetic taste. Certainly we have instances where the school and its surroundings are looked upon as one of the show places of the district, but the number of such cases is far too few.