

SCHOOL BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS.

In almost all Native schools efforts are made to beautify and generally improve the school-grounds, and the condition of the school property in this connection in a large number of the schools is a credit to all concerned. The pupils prove themselves willing workers, and very fine work is done where the teachers themselves are enthusiastic and energetic enough to direct the energies of their pupils. In some schools the teachers are able to secure the co-operation of the parents, and by this means valuable assistance is obtained. The Maori people as a rule take very considerable interest in this matter, and show pride in their school when the grounds and surroundings present an attractive appearance. Tree-planting and the raising of trees from seed are carried out in a large number of schools. There are schools, however, where there is evidence of apathy or a lack of energy to make the conditions of the school-grounds serve as an object-lesson to the people, and in these the value of an attractive environment is not appreciated by the teachers. The instructors in agriculture who visit the Native schools give valuable assistance in suggesting schemes for the improvements in the grounds. The following schools deserve special commendation for the condition of the school-grounds: Te Horo, Awarua, Otaua, Matangirau, Mangatuna, Manutahi, Wharekahika, and Te Paroa-Totara.

The teachers almost without exception give close attention and supervision to the cleanliness of the schoolrooms. No grant is made by the Department for school-cleaning purposes, as far as Native schools are concerned. The Department, however, supplies the necessary school-cleaning materials, and the regular work of sweeping and dusting is carried out by the elder pupils under the supervision of the teacher, who also arranges for periodical scrubbing of the schoolroom floors. This arrangement is found to work most satisfactorily, and the children take much pride in keeping the school-rooms clean and tidy. The outbuildings and offices are generally kept in good condition, although occasionally evidence of unsatisfactory supervision is noticed. Visitors to Native schools are generally impressed by the clean condition of the desks and the cleanliness of the rooms. Reference must be made again to the unattractive interior appearance of a number of schoolrooms.

INSPECTION; ORGANIZATION; METHODS OF TEACHING.

During the year visits were made by the Inspectors to 133 village schools, ten mission schools, and twelve Maori secondary schools. Visits were also made to districts for the purpose of making inquiries regarding applications received by the Department for the establishment of Native schools. So far as the village and mission schools are concerned, the reports upon the schools indicate that in a very large number of schools good work is being done, and that improvement is noted in most of those schools whose efficiency does not reach that standard. From the point of view of efficiency the schools may be classified as follows: Weak, 12; fair, 16; satisfactory to good, 47; good to very good, 56; excellent, 12. The work of the Maori secondary schools is dealt with in the section of the report under "Secondary Education."

The methods of teaching employed in the great majority of the schools are intelligent and are well applied. The pupils when subjected to tests show that they have generally been well taught and that they have profited by the instruction. The teachers as a general rule are eager to profit by advice and instruction, and to adopt suggestions likely to improve their methods of teaching. The tone and discipline of the schools are generally good, and the pupils are subjected to wholesome influence. The schemes of work are on the whole satisfactorily prepared, and the value of the work-book is becoming much better appreciated. There are still schools where the work of the junior assistants is not satisfactorily supervised by the head teachers, and in a number of schools the supervision of the children's activities in the playground is not as satisfactory as it should be. The registers and records are, as a rule, carefully attended to in the schools.

In Native schools the teachers pay particular attention to the cleanliness, health, and comfort of their pupils, and in many of the districts they have a trying time in dealing with outbreaks of sickness. They are backed up by the Health Department, which keeps the schools well supplied with stocks of medicine. In all schools teachers should regard it as part of their duty to secure by means of regular inspection that the children's clothing is kept reasonably neat and clean, and that their bodies are not only clean but free from ailments. In this connection the importance of personal hygiene and of home and community sanitation should be stressed; and to this end instruction should be given which leads to the formation of hygienic and sanitary habits.

In quite a large number of schools the pupils as a result of the teachers' organization are supplied during the winter months with hot cocoa at the mid-day recess. Little difficulty is met with in raising the necessary funds by one means or another with the co-operation of the parents, who thoroughly appreciate the benefit to their children from such effort.

The annual picnic and the annual concert still continue to be regarded as most important events in a great majority of the school districts. The funds raised are devoted to various purposes for the benefit of the children.

It is hoped that teachers will receive during the current year a copy of the amended regulations. A new syllabus of instruction for Native Schools will be issued at a later date.

GENERAL REMARKS.

English (Language Teaching).—The quality of the instruction in oral and written English varies very considerably indeed in the schools, and it is only in those schools where effective methods are employed that really good work is done. In a fairly large number of the schools the work is of more or less indifferent quality, and there is little doubt that this condition of affairs is due to inefficient teaching. The progress of the pupils in practically every subject of the school course is so largely