

## 12. DRAWING.

Last year special attention was devoted to drawing. It was felt that for some years past the work had been rather aimless in its scope, and that the fundamental truths of drawing were not being sufficiently stressed. There was a tendency to assume that the Maori child had a natural gift for drawing, and on that account the actual teaching of the subject was scarcely given the thought it deserved. If properly taught, drawing must not only train the child in the art of self-expression, but also teach accurate observation and correct manipulative skill.

All schemes in drawing were, therefore, carefully perused with a view to seeing that all phases of the subject were receiving proper attention. Insistence was placed on a systematic grading of the work so that the child passed gradually from a study of the simpler forms to the more difficult and complex.

There has also been a tendency in the past, particularly in the standards, to rely too much on outline to give a true representation of the object. Very little work had been done in light and shade. Last year an attempt was made to correct this attitude, and tone values were more carefully studied.

As a result of this concentration of effort, it can be stated that there was a very definite improvement both in the treatment and in the quality of the drawing seen in Native schools.

## 13. AGRICULTURE.

In view of the great importance of agriculture to the future welfare of the Maori people, this subject is very strongly stressed in all Native schools. It is not intended that the pupils should be taught a comprehensive scheme of farm-management, but that the proper attitude to the subject should be developed. A course in indoor experimental science was also required in order to supplement the outdoor work. In all this work it was expected that the experiments should be carried out by the children themselves, not only so that interest might be stimulated, but also that the children might gain confidence in themselves in the handling of apparatus and in the carrying-out of other investigations. In a number of schools the children did perform the work, but in others the experiments were carried out by the teachers, and the chief value was lost.

The schemes were perused both by the Inspectors and by the agricultural instructors to see that they were related to the needs of the district. I have, in this connection, to record my thanks for the able assistance given by the agricultural instructors in the North Auckland, Bay of Plenty, and East Coast areas. They exercised a close supervision over the schools in their respective districts, and their expert knowledge and advice were greatly appreciated by the teachers and scholars.

Of necessity the work done varied considerably according to the nature of the school locality, but all branches of the subject were covered—the growth of domestic and farm crops and the value of manures, the principles of seed-saving, forestry, care of animals, and the culture of both fruit and flowers. In all school-gardens some work of an experimental nature was required. It has been found that, as a result of the attention given to this subject, a very favourable influence has been exerted on Maori life, and an increasing number of Native homes is being provided with flower and vegetable plots.

Nature-study is compulsory in all infant divisions, but it cannot be said that the treatment of the subject is satisfactory. Too much reliance is still placed on the teaching of facts instead of training the powers of observation in the child. Teachers fail to realize that the best place to teach nature-study is in Nature's own garden—outside the schoolroom.

The following extracts are from the annual reports of the agricultural instructors :—

*North Auckland.*

“ Teachers are now adopting a more sympathetic attitude towards agriculture and nature-study, and this is reflected in the interest shown by the children in the subject. Although there has not been a great improvement in the standard of records, there has been a very marked improvement in the ability of the children to understand and talk about what they have been taught. This is particularly noticeable in the primer division.”

“ Outstanding progress has also been made in outdoor work, particularly in ground-improvement and in club work. A home-garden competition was inaugurated in every Native school in the district, and in the majority of cases very promising results were obtained. Many parents take a keen interest in the plots, particularly where ‘ new ’ vegetables were being grown.”

“ The school-garden has not been used simply for growing vegetables or for the time-honoured school ‘ experiment,’ but the teachers have tried to make the garden educational to the parents as well as to the children. Types of work successfully carried out were : Variety trials ; demonstration plots of crops not previously grown in the district—for instance, lucerne, soya beans, chou moellier ; raising of seedlings of new crops to the district for growing at home—for instance, mangels.”

“ Tree nurseries were established in twenty-eight schools. Growing of extensive crops of winter vegetables, which are cooked at school, provided the children with the midday meal.”

“ On the whole, the progress for 1933 was the greatest made for the past ten years.”

*East Coast.*

“ *Indoor Work.*—This has definitely improved by the greater attention given to illustrative records, charts of crops, and similar details. A greater share in the formulating of all records should be expected of the pupils. More attention can still be given to all forms of collections. In too many instances