

It is many years since New Zealand embarked on the reforms which Scotland is just now adopting. The fact that Scotland, with its well-recognized respect for learning and for education, should condemn its primary system as "academic" and verbal, cut off from the living interests of childhood, and should set out to revise, in the manner indicated above, the content of the curriculum and methods of instruction, should banish the doubts of those who question the wisdom of recent trends in the development of our education.

The full benefit of the changes we have made, and are still making, will not be realized, despite all that administration has been able to accomplish, until time and experience have come to our aid. Teachers versed in the traditional instructional processes cannot easily adopt the methods in which self-directed effort is emphasized, and in which activity and questioning are encouraged rather than passivity and the listening attitude. There is evidence throughout the various education districts of a deeper understanding of the fundamental principles among teachers, who are in general gladly accepting the challenge of the wider responsibilities involved and of the unfamiliar methods in the new approach. The training colleges are laying sound philosophical foundations and developing professional attitudes, and young teachers are entering the service eager to practise techniques that were unknown to the older generations of teachers. For teachers in service local and national refresher courses have been instituted on an increasing scale, specialist services are being increased as quickly as the supply of teachers will permit, and both the Publications Branch of the Department and the teachers' organization are publishing a great number of explanatory and interpretative articles that should be very helpful to teachers. The curriculum, too, has been under revision. It can be confidently stated that the aims and purposes of the primary school are being more clearly defined, and that school organization and methods consonant with the larger conception of education are being successfully devised.

In accepting its wider role, the school becomes to a large extent an organ of the community, and it can fulfil its mission only in the closest relationship with parents through parent-teacher groups, home and school associations, or in similar ways. The number of such associations seems to be increasing rapidly, and it is pleasing to note that they are becoming increasingly interested in addresses by teachers and Inspectors on the aims of modern education.

Learning and teaching are inseparable in education. When the teacher is predominant, the process is one of instruction, and when the pupil is active the process is one of learning. In recent years the change of emphasis has been taking place, and modern techniques are concerned with pupils' interests, natural activities, and self-directed effort, whereas a generation ago almost the whole of a text-book on teaching method would have been devoted to the art of instruction. Both these aspects of the educational process are essential, and the skilled teacher keeps the balance. The teacher's part is now more difficult: it was comparatively easy to present oral lessons and to assign exercises; it is not so easy to plan programmes of work so as to have the materials, the furniture, apparatus, illustrations, and reference books at hand when necessary and to keep the activity programme smoothly graded and directed towards the right goals. Teachers are learning to do this and are finding satisfaction in this way of teaching. Parallel with this development, and largely the outcome of it, there have been in some schools considerable modifications of class-room organization. The whole class is no longer the only teaching unit: the practice is growing of dividing the class into streams according to ability and of planning work and rate of progress to suit each group. An alternative method of organization is to have different groupings for each subject, and many teachers are achieving fine results by this method. A close analysis of learning individually and in small, homogeneous groups would show that they have advantages for democracy, for they foster independence of thought and the spirit of co-operation and avoid the conditioning which is apt to result from large-group and mass teaching.