

an attempt is made to develop a linked and co-ordinated scheme worthy of the name of national education. Victorian national education is as yet a patchwork.

The New Zealand syllabus, and the notes thereon, are permeated with the best of modern educational thought. There is throughout an attempt to import reality into school-work, to bring the teaching into closer contact with the outdoor life of the pupils, to throw overboard merely conventional information in favour of what will be genuinely interesting and serviceable. It demands rational methods, by making use of the principle of interest, by cultivating the self-activity of the pupil, by aiming at developing his individuality and generating real mental power. It affords great scope for the immediate application of a knowledge of facts and of the principles underlying them. In a word, it gives a chance to realise a true definition of education.

So much for some of the aims kept in view. Naturally, as was the case in Victoria, the teachers were alarmed when they saw the amount of work involved in the programme put forward, and during my visit feeling ran very high against the new syllabus. Most of this was, however, due to misconceptions as to what was prescribed and what was merely suggested. The New Zealand syllabus, like the Victorian one, gives to the teachers in some subjects freedom of choice as regards subject-matter. This is very different from the elaborately and definitely prescribed programmes which were issued when examinations were considered more important than they are at present. However, the following quotation from the instructions to Inspectors and teachers shows the spirit in which the syllabus has been framed :—

It is to be considered as important that the programme of instruction in any school shall be drawn up with a due regard to the principle of co-ordination, so that the various portions of the work shall be regarded not so much as separate subjects, but as parts of a whole linked together firmly by immediate reference to the facts and needs of the children's daily life. Accordingly, the requirements of the syllabus are not to be interpreted too rigidly, but for the several classes in various kinds of schools are to be adapted to the children in those classes, to the circumstances of the district, to the staff of the school, &c.

In my visits to the schools I observed the methods employed. On many occasions I took classes and gave lessons in order to try and ascertain the mental attitude of the pupils to a subject, and I examined classes orally. On the whole, I was satisfied that, class for class, the Victorian work will hold its own with what I saw. Where I have most doubt is in the case of our city schools. Our pupil-teacher system makes in these schools an element of weakness which the New Zealand schools have not.

As regards knowledge of modern methods and the application of them, I am inclined to think Victorian teachers, as a class, are ahead. The recent great educational revival in Victorian primary education came partly from the teachers themselves; and the teachers' congresses, the summer schools, the regular meetings convened by the district Inspectors, and the stimulus given by the Department's *Gazette and Teacher's Aid*, have produced a spirit of inquiry and a power of applying new methods which is sure to produce potent results. My impression is that in those Victorian inspectorial districts which have been roused and led by a vigorous Inspector I have seen more evidence of reading and thought upon educational methods; more attention to the details of preparation and organization, more energy and interest in school decoration and equipment, than I met with in the schools I visited in New Zealand. Here we meet with one of the advantages of centralisation. It is comparatively easy for a vigorous central Department to bring about a great improvement in methods in a comparatively short time.

Manual Work in Schools.

Great interest is evinced just now in New Zealand in the introduction of manual training and of improved methods of instruction in the infant-school. The Education Department has treated the Boards liberally in the matter, and central classes have been established for the instruction of teachers in the new work. The departmental report of 1903 says,—

There is no doubt that the training of our teachers is one of the most important questions calling for action at the present time. The reform of the syllabus will have very little practical effect unless those who are to carry it out receive the best training that the colony can afford to give them, and the introduction of manual training, which in its essence is far more a change of the methods of teaching than of the subject-matter of instruction, will fail in its purpose unless the teachers themselves are trained in the principles that underlie these modern ideas. . . . As far as manual subjects are concerned, provision has been made to a certain extent for the training of teachers therein by special grants to the Boards for that purpose, by grants of apparatus and material to teachers' classes, and by the concession of free railway passes to teachers attending any training classes approved by the Education Board of their district. (Report of Minister of Education, New Zealand, p. xvii., E.-1.)

It is interesting to compare the methods followed in Victoria and in New Zealand in introducing new work to the teachers. In Victoria the teachers paid all their expenses of travelling, were given no concessions in the matter of leaving or reopening their schools, and were required to pay for all material used. Much of the instruction was given without fee by honorary instructors. The New Zealand teacher is carried free on the railway, his instructors are well paid, and material is served to him with a most liberal hand.

In 1902 Victorian teachers were trained in central classes as follows :—

Instruction.	Classes.	Students.	Cost. £
Drawing	42	1,350	450
Manual training	30	830	222
Summer school, two weeks	..	600	30
Total	..	..	£702

[NOTE.—This amount should be reduced by £60, paid by teachers for material.]