

In the practising-school attached to the Normal School certain of the rooms are specially adapted, among other things, for the teaching of geography. In one of these, occupying the whole of the middle of one large room, was a table, or, rather, a series of table-like troughs, fitted with taps, sprinklers, and drainage-outlets for representing the action of water upon any miniature landscape that might be modelled with sand and clay thereon, so as to show miniature river-courses, deltas, lakes, and so forth. The school is splendidly equipped with a geographical museum showing the natural products and chief manufactured staples of various countries of the world. The institution, moreover, acts as a centre for lending similar collections to the elementary schools and high schools of the city, for it is the headquarters of the Bureau of Geography, which, originally established by elementary-school principals, was in 1904 handed over to the Board of Education, and by it transferred to the Normal School. One hundred and thirty-one schools, high and elementary, avail themselves of its facilities; it is surprising that all of the 250 public schools in the city do not ask for its material. The aim of the Bureau is to furnish illustrative material to aid in teaching geography in the elementary schools. All illustrative materials have been secured entirely by donation from individuals and firms in the United States and foreign countries. These supplies occupy three rooms in the new Normal School building, where they are classified, labelled, and arranged in convenient order for distribution to the schools. The collections are composed of books, pamphlets, typewritten articles, specimens, pictures, maps, charts, and other forms of objective illustrative materials. They may represent a country as a whole, or part of it, or some natural or manufactured product—for instance, by means of specimens and pictures silk is shown in all stages of production, from the egg of the silkworm-moth to the various beautiful finished fabrics. The Bureau aims especially to vitalise the commercial and industrial phases of geography; it now proposes to supply the gaps in its collections by setting aside a small sum annually for purchases, and for meeting the travelling-expenses of the Curator in collecting material. During the past three years, the bottling, mounting, and care of the specimens has cost only £55. Some of the specimens are mounted, others are in bottles; they are arranged in series in pasteboard boxes, and these, in sets of three, are enclosed in strong wooden boxes. Each school is allowed to retain one set during a period of two weeks. On Monday and Thursday a special wagon of the Board of Education calls at the Normal School for the sets that are to be distributed to the various schools. During the year 1905-6, 128 sets were used in the Normal School, for the instruction of teachers in methods of teaching geography, 642 sets were used in the two practice schools, and 2,390 sets were furnished to other schools.

The New Zealand Education Department has begun to distribute hand-pictures for class teaching in geography, and there is no reason, in spite of the way in which our schools are spread over the Dominion, why other features of the Chicago scheme might not, in part at least, be adopted here, the Training Colleges, the Boards of Education, and the Department co-operating in the work of distribution. I should like to see every school, primary, secondary, and technical, beginning to make its own museum—a museum not of mere curiosities, but of specimens and pictures to illustrate nature-study, geography, and industrial and technical processes. I have no doubt that many of the firms in the Dominion would be happy to supply samples illustrating our manufactures and other industries.

In 1903 was published a valuable report on Geography, drawn up by a special committee of principals of schools, together with the head of the Department of Geography in the Chicago Normal School. The report consists entirely of an outline of a geography course for the eight grades of the elementary schools; it fills 154 pages, and, although largely on the lines of our own syllabus, the amount of matter suggested would, I imagine, spread alarm among most teachers in New Zealand. The work begins in the first two grades (corresponding to the Upper Preparatory and First Standard classes in our public schools) by what is called "environment study," based on the children's own observation and on pictures; in the Third Grade (Standard II) there is a fairly complete study (as far as children of eight or nine can make it) of the "geography of the social centre"; the work is fully up, as regards content, to what is required in our Fourth Standard. In this, as in all the higher grades, special emphasis is laid on social, industrial, and economic geography; but it should be remembered that good school museums and the collections distributed by the Bureau of Geography render direct concrete teaching easy; moreover, in many schools the children actually dress like the inhabitants of the country they are studying, do simple manual work to illustrate the primary industries, and generally act as far as possible the things they are learning about other countries. In the