

school-keeping has been too much in evidence, and it is time that active measures were taken to improve the inefficient schools and place them under more satisfactory working-conditions. Professor Armstrong, writing upon the training of teachers, says "that the only real training is that of practice under competent guidance," and this is exactly what is required in the country schools to-day, where there is plenty of knowledge, but no training or experience in the art of teaching.

The subjects of instruction have received much careful attention during the year. New requirements tend to modify methods, but, after all, results are the criterion as to whether a method is efficient or inefficient. Persons who can teach, and therefore can teach others how to teach, are scarcely to be found for the purpose, and the mistake has been made of placing the work always in the hands of those who lack training in the art of inquiry. Various methods of instruction are adopted by teachers. One says he uses the heuristic method, another the intellectual, yet another the Socratic, nevertheless there is still lacking the art of inquiry in the schools. Individuality and originality are seldom found in a school. The text-book reigns instead of being used as an aid in training, and very often teachers get into difficulties because they do not trouble themselves to study the aim and scope of the regulations under which they are supposed to work.

The compulsory subjects under the regulations received less careful preparation than formerly. Quantity has replaced quality in most of the school-work, but it is doubtful whether the intelligence of the pupils is being developed in a satisfactory manner. The essential subjects of instruction in the schools are reading, writing, composition, arithmetic, drawing, geography, and history; and yet, important as these subjects are, Locke put before them all virtue, wisdom, and manners. The latter, however, can only be tested as factors in training by time and experience, but the former can be separately fostered among children at an early age.

With respect to some of the subjects named we briefly express our opinions as follows:—

*Reading and Spelling.*—While there is no definite cause for complaint, we cannot help feeling that there is a deterioration in quality. Reading is not as correct or intelligent as formerly. The amount of reading covered in the year is now greater than under the old regulations, but one is inclined to ask whether quantity is not in some cases taking the place of quality. In a number of the schools reading is excellently taught.

*Geography.*—The teaching of this subject has fallen off most lamentably. There is no definite knowledge. The map is not used to advantage, and children show little acquaintance with it. A certain amount of mathematical and physical geography is taught, but it would be rank flattery to say that it is taught intelligently.

*English Composition* is well and intelligently taught. Whether improved methods or greater attention to this subject is responsible for the improvement we are unable to say, but the quality is undeniably there.

*History* practically is not taught as such in a number of the schools. The important historical events upon which special lessons are to be given should be dealt with in each term in conjunction with reading. The "term book" recently issued should state the sequence of the teaching, and the exercises written on the subject should be kept until the next visit of an Inspector.

*Science and Nature-study* are making but little progress in the schools. Except at Gisborne and Pakipaki, where physical measurements are taught with fair success, there is nothing done in the way of practical science. The books are too much in evidence, and the book of nature is in a large measure a blank. Observation with the near and the seemingly commonplace is necessary, though sadly neglected, for there is sufficient knowledge to be gathered within most of the school grounds to occupy much of the time set aside for instruction in the subjects named. It requires, remarks Lord Bacon, "that we should generalise slowly, going from particular things to those that are one step more general, from those to others of still greater extent, and so on to such as are universal. By such means we may hope to arrive at principles not vague and obscure, but luminous and well defined, such as Nature herself will not refuse to acknowledge." Were teachers to follow this pregnant advice in their teaching the things by the wayside, such as the varieties of stones and weeds, flowers and useful plants, would be found to act as stepping-stones to all scientific inquiry and progress on the part of learners and teachers alike.

Commendation must be bestowed on the teachers generally for the real progress that has taken place in the physical training of pupils. Breathing exercises are taken in most schools, and since their introduction it has been noticed that the younger pupils do not suffer from coughs or colds as formerly. The girls are trained in calisthenics and other forms of movement that are of great value to them, but the special feature is the attention paid to military drill among the boys. Many head and assistant masters are enthusiasts in this form of training, and the annual meetings that are arranged by teachers to foster a higher standard of physical culture among their pupils are worthy of more encouragement than they now receive from the public and the Government. Milton, writing in the troublous times that preceded the civil war in the reign of the first King Charles, says in his "Tract on Education" "that an academy ought to provide, in addition to a thorough and complete course of instruction through books, a perfect system both of gymnastics for the pupils singly, and of military drill for them collectively." Surely, if there was need of military drill in the days of the Stuarts, the need is greater to-day, when external dangers are increasing so rapidly. Is it, then, too much to urge that the manhood of to-morrow should be trained in habits of discipline and self-protection so as to fit them for any contingency that may arise in connection with their homes and their Fatherland!

*Special School Classes.*—All the larger schools now take up some form of work under the Manual and Technical Regulations. Application for the recognition of classes is not always made by teachers, but there are few schools where at least one subject is not taken. Instruction in cookery, dressmaking, woodwork, swimming, and physical measurements is given to twelve hundred or more of the senior children, and nearly six thousand more receive instruction either in