

show that such is not the case. In the interests of education generally, the Inspectors consider that it would be a great advantage to education were young children to begin life in a public school not earlier than the completion of their sixth year, and continuing to the completion of the fifteenth or even the sixteenth year. Assuming the staffing of the schools to remain as it is at present, school progress and general efficiency would be immensely improved, and home kindergartens would then become a proper place in the training of young children.

Attention has already been drawn to the high standard of efficiency reached by a large majority of the schools under the trained teachers. The annual examination results in various directions point to the satisfactory character of the teaching.

As the Inspectors' reports usually deal with the quality and general character of the instruction in the schools, it is hardly necessary to refer in any detail to the subjects of instruction. The methods adopted in teaching subjects like reading, arithmetic, geography, history, composition, and even nature-study are usually satisfactory, but the tendency to run in ruts quickly becomes apparent unless the principal teachers deal critically with their assistants, as suggested in the Board's regulations.

The Board's approval of a scheme of classification and promotion for the teachers in its employ will tend to encourage the teachers to become proficient in skill as well as in their studies, and if a plan for the training of the uncertificated teachers should be adopted many of the defects and weaknesses at present existing in the smaller schools would soon disappear. My experience is that almost without exception the untrained teachers are anxious to improve themselves. This was well shown in the case of those who were chosen by the Board to proceed to Wellington for a month's training in February last. Although the work was somewhat different from what they had expected, each lady student from whom information has been received has expressed herself as being highly pleased with her month's training.

The manual and technical school classes are now well organized, and much useful and experimental work is being done by a body of excellent workers under Mr. Loten's guidance. Although no special prominence is given in the scheme of classification and promotion to technical skill and scientific training as applied to agriculture, &c., the question merely stands in abeyance pending comparison of equivalents in value as between university status and scientific status. For all modern industrial needs science is becoming indispensable, and the possessor, whether man or woman, should receive the fullest recognition if scientific teaching is to be fostered as a part of the school course.

The teachers' Saturday classes continue to be fairly attended, but a widening of the scope of the work appears to me as desirable. Unfortunately, the classes must be limited to such as are required for examinations. In the case of teachers of capacity, the mind needs to explore fields other than those leading to an examination-room. It is the weakness of a system that requires uniformity of plan and method in order to satisfy departmental needs. The wider the educational survey of the teacher the greater will be the knowledge bearing on his work. Teachers need something more than mere grant-earning subjects; and were classes started to include singing, nature-study, drawing, psychology, and field botany the benefits would naturally pass into the schools. Such classes are carried on by the London and other educational authorities at Home, and although the cost is relatively small, the benefit to education is considerable.

It is refreshing to find among teachers a growing desire to be free from trammels that limit one's own ideals with respect to the work it is possible to do under a formal syllabus. The departmental examinations, desire otherwise as one may, compel unification of plan instead of differentiation and adaptation. Thirty-four years ago my first report to the Education Board stated, "The future bushman, ploughman, and mechanic are provided with the same tools to perform entirely different functions in life, with the result that words are now an equivalent for ideas, memory for mind, and instruction for education." Both schools and teachers have advanced since then, but Inspectors and teachers are still bound in examination shackles. Individuality and originality become deadened where every child, no matter where he may dwell or what trade or calling he may desire to follow, has to do identical work to gain a National or Board Scholarship or to obtain free admission to a secondary school.

To-day the majority of the more capable teachers yearn for freedom to draw up a syllabus of their own. The examination fetish compels unification instead of differentiation and adaptation. It is refreshing to know that there is now a chance of a school library being established in every school district, and it would be well if the public libraries that receive subsidies from the Government were required to provide a certain proportion of suitable books for children. In Canada, as at Vancouver, Winnipeg, and Toronto, special rooms attached to the public library are provided for children, and those visited by me sufficed to show that such provision must have an important bearing on the future lives of the children.

In those schools where the individuality of the teacher is strong, several attempts have been made to introduce new methods of teaching. Interesting work has been done at schools like Te Ongaonga, Waipawa, Otane, Gisborne, Pakipaki, Matamau, Te Puia, Ruahine, Petane, Te Arai, Tolaga Bay, Puha, Tipapakuku, Woodville, Ormondville, and several others, in special aspects of nature-study, the chemistry of agriculture, and the teaching of English. The results have been so satisfactory that I should be glad to see all the trained teachers launch out for themselves along lines that are likely to foster observation, encourage inquiry, and lead to the keeping of daily records of things seen by the way.

It is pleasing to report some real advantage in the general appearance of the school buildings, both internal and external, and in the arrangement and neatness of school grounds and gardens. A good deal of hard work has been necessary in most of the country districts to bring the grounds into their present working-order. The institution of the flower and vegetable gardens has fostered a desire among the senior children to keep the school surroundings neat and tidy. School Committees and parents have done much to encourage the children in the smaller districts. Garden-tools and seeds