

it may not be out of place to quote from the *New South Wales Public Instruction Gazette* an article by Mr. W. G. Davies, Principal of the Superior Public School, Cowra:—

“Twenty-eight students, teachers of small country schools comprised of the two sexes, about equally balanced in number, and representing in years most of the stages in human life, attended. I eliminated from the staff of teachers those without experience, whether of years or training. The visiting teachers were of various types: there was the ‘young person’ of both sexes eager to see how the thing was done in the larger schools, and hoping to profit by the observation; there was also the young person (mostly male, I must say) who, feeling that it was the proper thing to attend, as the Inspector was ‘running the show,’ was also a little scornful of the whole thing, and quite sure that there was nothing for him to learn. Thirdly, there was the indifferent teacher who came because the Inspector seemed to desire it, but as for himself it was a holiday and there an end. Lastly, and I am glad to think in a majority, were those who welcomed the opportunity, and saw in it great possibilities. As an interested ‘bystander,’ I carefully watched the effect of the daily work upon the visitors, and by cautious inquiry made a welcome discovery. I found that the indifference began to disappear after the first day and interest to take its place. As the work progressed the interest increased, and by the end of the week it had ripened into what was in very many cases actual enthusiasm. With one of the most earnest of the men (he had come thirty or forty miles to attend) my inquiries were less masked. ‘Well,’ I said, ‘has it been worth while?’ ‘Worth while?’ he repeated, ‘it was worth while if I had got only the first half-hour.’ The first half-hour, I may say in passing, was occupied by a demonstration in handling the little ones who had just come to school, those of about five or six years, and it was just here among the little ones that the average teacher saw most to interest him and most to learn. We gave of our best, and if the visitors saw some work that they were not able to imitate—in the upper classes we showed, for instance, how we rounded off a course of practical botany—still the bulk of the demonstration was packed with suggestive hints, which I have every reason to think will be the means of much good work in the remote country schools. Of this prediction, however, let the Inspector report, say, next year. In conclusion, let me say that the school was chosen not because we had an ideal staff of teachers, but rather for topographical reasons. Many things we did and showed could possibly have been done better in other schools, but I am satisfied that the net result of our very arduous week was distinctly good, and I should not be at all surprised to learn that, with departmental encouragement, schools of method will become of very frequent occurrence in every country inspectorate throughout the State.”

*Environment.*—During the last two or three years there has been a marked improvement in the grounds and general surroundings of many of our schools, and we are pleased to see this as it shows that teachers are beginning to recognize the important part that environment plays in the education of the child. But the gardens have a broader influence on the locality. Teachers tell us that the gardens in connexion with one or two schools are admitted to be a feature of the district. The shield presented in 1909 by the late Mr. Tisch to encourage schools to improve their surroundings was this year secured by the Korito School after very keen competition.

*Returns.*—Although a steady improvement has taken place in respect to the accuracy and completeness of the returns required to be filled in by teachers, still a great deal of inconvenience and unnecessary work is imposed upon the office staff by the failure of some teachers to exercise a little care in the completion of their returns.

*Pupil-teachers.*—At the risk of being thought old-fashioned and out-of-date by theoretical educationists we should like to put in a good word for the retention of the pupil-teacher system. We think we are safe in asserting that head teachers generally prefer as assistant one who has served his term of apprenticeship as pupil-teacher. Our own experience satisfies us that they are fully justified in their preference. Pupil-teachers we find are better able to govern and discipline than are those who have passed through the stages of studentship without the long previous contact with pupils which fell to the lot of the pupil-teacher. The first few years after leaving college are trying ones for the ex-student, who is for the first time thrown on his own responsibility, and also trying ones to the child minds he is practising on. Apparently many head teachers imagined that with the appointment of additional assistants they would have their schools staffed from end to end with thoroughly trained teachers, and to a great extent be relieved of the responsibility of instructing their assistants in the art of teaching. Under the pupil-teacher system it was clearly recognized that the headmaster should closely direct and map out the work of the pupil-teacher, and not leave the class to the mercy of the crude efforts of the trainee, and thus the interests of the children were safeguarded.

*Training of Teachers.*—Saturday classes for the instruction of teachers under the Manual and Technical Regulations were held during the past year at New Plymouth and Stratford. The following summary shows the subjects taken and the roll number of each class: New Plymouth—Cookery, 8; hygiene, 19; mathematics, 8; geography, 7; school method, 8; drawing, 14; English, 7; history, 7; woodwork, 5. Stratford—School method, 20; English, 15; hygiene, 22; drawing, 30; agriculture, 11; mathematics, 21; history and civics, 12; home science, 15; botany, 12.

Arrangements were made also for the tuition of uncertificated teachers by correspondence in English, geography, and arithmetic. Seventeen teachers took advantage of these courses, and found them of great help. Some of the teachers who should have availed themselves of the courses provided failed to attend any of the classes; others again were very irregular in their attendance, showing clearly that they do not appreciate the efforts made to enable them to improve their professional standing. Those teachers evidently do not realize that regular attendance at teachers' classes is a factor taken into consideration by the Inspectors when dealing with the classification scheme for the promotion of teachers. It is not unreasonable to expect that teachers who enter for a class should continue to attend regularly throughout the course. Under the new