

improved salaries will foster educational skill and school efficiency by attracting good men to the service.

*Medical Inspection.*—In 1913 the practice of medical inspection of school-children was begun, but owing to the exiguous staff employed, the interruption of the work by calls on the staff due to smallpox, and the somewhat ambitious attempt to cover rapidly great districts it has appeared to us to be hitherto rather statistical and impersonal. The innovation is a good one, and deserves the hearty co-operation of all concerned in order that its full benefits may be realized. It will be necessary to correlate the energies of the Medical Officers and the physical instructors. At present there is a tendency to place the cart before the horse, and put the child through a course of physical instruction before he has been examined as to his fitness for it. The same applies not only to pupils, but also to teachers.

*English.*—Reading is, broadly speaking, well taught, comprehensive, reasonably dealt with; recitation good. We notice, however, that many centres of considerable importance do not draw any of the subsidy granted by the Government in aid of libraries, which causes us to wonder whether the teachers have succeeded in instilling a real love of reading. A reference library should gradually appear in every school, so that pupils may learn where to go for information. Where the enrolment of Natives is large the difficulty of teaching to read and write good English is intensified. Not only does the Native alphabet contain fewer sounds than the English, so that a physiological difficulty has to be overcome—a difficulty that strikes one most in the matter of sibilants—but many infants know not a word of English when they enter the school, and hear none in their homes. Native schools are allowed an addition to the staff when the average reaches twenty-one, whereas at Murewai, with an enrolment of fifty, and only about three of the pupils European, the teacher was found struggling alone, or actually out of pocket in providing absolutely necessary monitorial assistance. It is suggested that in the coming year the *School Journal* should be the main reading and spelling book, and that further reading practice be given by use of two or more of the supplementary readers furnished by the Board.

*Spelling.*—There was much loose spelling, especially in Standard VI, which indicated the need that each pupil should keep note of his own errors in essay, geography, history, and other general work. Some children waste time in learning from spelling-books words that they do not use in actual practice. The child's own vocabulary should be drawn on for studies in word-building and derivation.

*Composition.*—The essay is usually of good length, frequently vivacious, indicative of a cultivated observation, and of adequate attention to current events; nevertheless small errors are too numerous. Proficiency tests revealed considerable need of a more intense study of analysis, synthesis, and variation, which give at once good practice in abstract thought and power in expression. Variation as taught by some is a species of juggling with a word and its derivatives, instead of an attempt at the more expressive rendering of an idea. In one question of the proficiency test the pupil was requested to state concerning certain sentences what devices had been used to render them more striking; the response was poorer than might have been expected in schools working under a syllabus in which power over the spoken word has displaced formal grammar as the chief objective of instruction in English. Punctuation, while sometimes so weak as to suggest neglect, was usually effectively taught, and so, too, the use of sentence and paragraph. A very fair number of schools excel in the production of written work.

*Arithmetic.*—This was, on the whole, satisfactorily dealt with, though still apt to be taught on abstract lines. In the lower standards the numbers considered by the children are not always those that they can realize. There is ample employment within the limits fixed by the syllabus for all the time that can be devoted to this branch of education. Mental arithmetic should receive additional attention generally.

*Geography.*—This is better defined in the new syllabus, and we look forward to improved results due to more concentration of attention. The subject is, however, in many schools well and carefully taught. Nature-study has been much assisted by the supply of meteorological instruments. We must make our geography as real as possible; in some schools near Dannevirke inquiry was made as to the effects of mountains on climate, and the matter appeared not to have been considered, although nature was performing experiments on a grand scale at their doors. The New Zealand Year-book is a valuable aid to the study of commercial geography; it should not be overlooked; it should be supplied to every school in the Dominion.

*History.*—History, a subject that rightly taught has immense influence over the lives and ideals of the pupils, too frequently lacks serious treatment. More should be made of the history of New Zealand. Material for a course can be found in Miss Bourke's little book, and in the Year-book.

*Drawing.*—This advanced in neatness and power over the object and in design. Instrumental drawing and solid geometry reached an excellent standard in the hands of some teachers. Geometrical drawing is apt to be overlooked in Standards III and IV. Programs in brushwork frequently left room for development, but a fair proportion of the schools produced studies from nature and in design of a very pleasing character.

*Singing.* is generally well taught, being particularly sweet and expressive where Natives are numerous.

*Needlework.*—Programs may usually be extended. The new syllabus gives an interesting variety of matter under this head.

*Physical Culture.*—The teachers who came to the winter session set to enthusiastically, and in very short time after return to their schools creditable progress had been made by their pupils. The regulation concerning breathing between lessons is not favourably received by some of our teachers; they point out that, as the schoolroom is not the right place for such exercises, the children will be constantly marching out into the grounds, and much loss of time will result.