

crowding in the homes and the overtaking of the children's strength in manual duties are also blamed for contributing to the poor condition of many of the children.

Besides the number of children returned as mentally defective, there exist a much larger number of backward children. Although these children are mentally much superior to such as are treated at the Special School for the Feeble-minded, yet they are a great hindrance to the school-teachers, and are not receiving the special treatment that they require.

The percentage of children suffering from defective eyesight is 13. The high percentage given for the Auckland District appears to be due to the inclusion of all children with imperfect sight, while in other districts the Inspectors have noted only those cases requiring attention. The eyesight is considered to be affected by wrong and insufficient lighting in the schools and homes, the large amount of reading the children do, and the kinematograph entertainments they attend.

The Inspectors do not undertake any treatment of the children; parents are informed of the defects and where necessary are recommended to obtain medical advice. In course of time more frequent visits to the schools will result in such cases being kept under closer observation, with probably even better results than at present. Ailments that are hindering the physical welfare of the children can, however, frequently be remedied with little or no expense. The clothing and cleanliness of the children are carefully scrutinized, and following on the advice given a great deal has been done to improve the conditions in these respects.

An important part of the work of the Inspectors is that of instructing the teachers in the system so far as it is required to be known by them. Lectures are given at the large centres to school-teachers, and the training-college students, besides receiving a course of lectures, are given practical instruction in the work of weighing and measuring, and in performing the simpler tests for defective hearing, eyesight, &c.

The teachers keep medical record-cards for the children whom they examine, and Tables Q2 and Q3, showing the average weights and heights of boys and girls respectively at different ages, have been compiled from the measurements thus recorded. The graphs on page vi show a comparison between the average weights and heights thus obtained of some 16,000 New Zealand boys and girls, and of some 800,000 English boys and girls. It is satisfactory to notice that the curves representing the New Zealand children are a little above those representing English children. As, however, this is the first time that such results have been recorded by school-teachers it would be wise not to depend too much upon their accuracy until they are verified by future observation.

Tables Q4 and Q5 give the average heights and weights of S2 children as found by the Medical Inspectors. It will be noticed that the results agree fairly well with those of Tables Q2 and Q3.

Tables Q6 and Q7 show the chest-measurements of boys and girls respectively of S2 as recorded by the Inspectors. The average measurements on full inspiration, forced expiration, the difference between these two measurements (that is, the amount of chest-expansion), the mean expansion, and the annual increase are shown. It will be interesting to compare these measurements with those that will be obtained after the new system of physical training has had time to have effect on the physique of the school-children.

School buildings and grounds, in so far as they affect the health of the school-children, also receive the attention of the Medical Inspectors; cleanliness, lighting, ventilation, space per child, and sanitary arrangements being reported upon.

The cleanliness of a large proportion of the schools visited is reported as being of a very low standard. Sweeping with sawdust moistened with some disinfectant, and damp dusting, are strongly recommended. This should be done every day. If parents would realize sufficiently that their own children are the sufferers when sent to unclean schools it is probable that endeavours would be made to remedy this unsatisfactory state of affairs.

The lighting in a number of the schoolrooms comes from windows at the back of the children. This is injurious to the eyesight of both pupils and teacher, and also tends to physical evils as pointed out above. The lighting should come from the left side where possible. In some cases an alteration in the arrangement of the desks has improved matters, but this is not always possible. In the planning of every new school and schoolroom this important matter should be attended to.

The Inspectors are very unanimous in their demands for more fresh air in the schoolrooms. Many teachers already recognize the value of fresh air, and make use of all the ventilation possible. Other teachers apparently still require educating on this point. The fault lies very often in the school buildings; the windows are too few, too small, too high up, or do not open far enough to admit a sufficient quantity of fresh air. Other appliances for ventilation are, as a rule, of little use. Imperfect ventilation has been reported upon in the case of some school buildings only just completed. In suitable localities open-air schools or shelters with one side open are strongly recommended. In some cases classes are already being held in the open air whenever the weather permits.

The desolate, uncared-for condition of great numbers of the playgrounds is commented upon as having a depressing effect on the minds of the children. In the country especially many of the grounds are wet all the winter, and there is insufficient seating accommodation outside. The comparatively small number of well-kept grounds and school gardens are examples of what can be done to produce cheerful and healthy surroundings to the school buildings.

The sanitary arrangements are naturally not so good in the country schools as in the town schools. Considerable difficulty is often experienced in the country in having the sanitary arrangements properly attended to. On the advice of the Inspectors in several instances the older boys have been appealed to, and have been taught to do this work in a thorough and hygienic manner. Complaint is made in a great number of cases of lack of sufficient accommodation, and also of the publicity of the outbuildings.

That a large amount of good has resulted from the medical inspection of schools and school-children is, after one year's working, very clear. To the demand for various improvements the response so far from parents and teachers has been excellent. The majority of teachers are interested in the work, and they appear to be realizing that the benefits obtained far outweigh the additional trouble to which they are put. The work so far has been in the nature of an experiment, but there seems to be sufficient evidence not only to justify the inception of the scheme, but also to call for its further extension in the future.