

The most serious problems in this connection are those of ventilation and heating. In most cases due attention is paid to these matters in newly erected schools, but in many old schools defects of this kind are prominent and difficult to remedy. The temperature observed in some schools in the southern part of the Dominion was found to be far below what is regarded as a hygienic working-temperature. The shape and size of the rooms frequently make it impossible for them to be adequately heated by means of one fire or stove. Where such conditions exist the Medical Inspectors recommend that the children be warmly clad and given frequent opportunities for exercise, in the open air if possible. The difficulties of obtaining both sufficient heating and ventilation in schools have received the attention of experts in America and elsewhere, and no very satisfactory conclusions have as yet been reached as to the best means to adopt. It is remarked that teachers are as a rule fully aware of the value of fresh air, and do their utmost to keep the schoolrooms sufficiently ventilated. In suitable localities open-air schools or shelters, with one side open, are recommended. One such schoolroom was erected in 1914, and careful statistics of the physical condition of the children using it are being kept during the current year, in order to make a comparison with a similar set of children occupying the usual class-room.

The same remarks as were made last year apply to the cleanliness of the schools, the care of the playgrounds, and the sanitary conditions. There still continues to be much room for improvement in these respects, although in many cases the criticisms and recommendations of the Medical Inspectors have had beneficial results.

The instruction of training-college students in the work of medical inspection, so far as teachers may be expected to undertake it, has been continued by means of lectures and practical demonstrations. This is regarded as being an important part of the Medical Inspectors' work, as the value of having teachers capable of observing physical defects in the scholars and of taking all possible precautions in the interests of their health is inestimable. The special instruction thus given will do much to remove the danger of an incorrect diagnosis by the teacher by which children suffering only from such defects as obstructed breathing or defective vision are treated as being mentally dull or incompetent.

The school-teachers continued to keep medical-record cards of children who were not examined by the Medical Inspectors, taking height, weight, and chest-measurements, and commenting on any noticeable defects. Some seventeen thousand children were dealt with in this way last year, and the consistency of the records of heights and weights is demonstrated by the graphs shown in the extract from the Minister's report, which also point to a slightly better condition among children of the Dominion than among children of the English Board of Education schools.

Among the most encouraging results of the year's work is the increasing attention that is being given to the Medical Inspectors' recommendation to parents, and the obvious improvement in the children who have received the required medical attention. Parents are always invited to meet the Medical Inspectors to discuss the health of their children, and it is considered that the good resulting from such interviews more than compensates for the expenditure of time involved.

On the whole, from the scheme of medical inspection now in operation and instituted only a little more than two years ago, it must be concluded that much good has already resulted, warranting further expansion as opportunity permits.

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Director of Education.

Wellington, 21st September, 1915.