

The report refers specially to the need for following up cases notified by the school doctor, and states that, though we have not complete statistics of the number of notified cases obtaining treatment, an examination was made in the case of one school, and it was found that of forty-five notified cases within three months, twenty-one parents had visited a doctor or the hospital, eight had reasonable excuse for deferring treatment, two had had partial treatment, and thirteen had taken no notice of the report. As a means of following up, the appointment of school nurses is recommended. These officers would do valuable work in getting into touch with the homes and the parents of the children, giving advice and urging attention to medical reports. Many simple defects could be treated at the home or the school, hygienic conditions could be promoted, and any serious neglect of necessary treatment could be reported.

The report states that the cleanliness of the children leaves much to be desired, and recommends definite instructions on this point.

The serious results of eating improper food are plainly and emphatically pointed out. "Scarcity of food is very rarely, perhaps never, the cause of malnutrition among children in this country, but improper food, pampering the appetite with food too rich, too highly seasoned, or of too great variety, results in a capricious appetite and dislike for plain wholesome food. Many of our children are starved in the midst of plenty." Others suffer from insufficient sleep, due to late hours often spent in crowded picture-theatres.

The too frequent discovery of the nervous child strengthens the conviction that the absence of restful home-conditions and of long, quiet, refreshing hours of sleep is responsible for more evils than one. This applies chiefly to town children, but the country children have their troubles. They have to travel long distances, eat cold lunches, and on returning home find that farm labour unduly delays the hour for a hot meal, while the appetite is in the meantime blunted for the better food by pieces of bread and butter.

Dr. Macdonald refers specially to the need for organizing dental treatment at a reasonable cost for school-children, for dealing with defective eyesight, and for the performing of minor operations.

Open-air education and the benefits to be derived therefrom are specially dwelt upon. Even without special buildings a good deal of open-air teaching could be carried out in a district like that of Auckland, and this would prove a great boon for several months during the hottest part of the summer.

SUMMARY OF DR. A. G. PATERSON'S REPORT.

Dr. A. G. Paterson presents another valuable report covering her examination of over four thousand children in the Otago and Southland Districts, of whom about a third were special cases.

Dr. Paterson's report shows that a considerable amount of work was done by means of lectures, including practical demonstrations concerning defects common to school-children.

With regard to the medical inspection the doctor is led to believe that in modern civilization the girl is brought up under less advantageous circumstances than is the boy, as the amount of defect among girls is in nearly every instance in excess of that found among boys. In the poorer homes she has a considerable amount of indoor domestic work, which curtails the time to be spent out-of-doors. In the better-class homes she is often a victim of parental ambition, and is made to spend profitless hours at practising or in producing useless fancy-work. Her clothing also does not give her the same opportunities for healthy development as does that of the boy. Emphasis is laid on the necessity for impressing upon parents the fact that the character of the homes, the ambitions they possess for their children, the quality of food and clothing, airiness of rooms, length of sleeping-time, the demands of work, and the provision for amusement are all factors making the physical foundation upon which school-work has to be built.

Some matters that need attention are pointed out for the benefit of parents and teachers. Clothing is often excessive. Sandals are too commonly used during bad weather. Hot cocoa would be a great advantage to school-children at lunch-time. Late hours, nervous excitement, and long attention to music are condemned. Small girls are often required to practise two hours daily.

The doctor points out that the exercise of swimming is a splendid preventive of deformity, which is much rarer among swimmers than among non-swimmers. Many schools require improvements in the way of furniture, lighting, and heating.

With regard to the care of the teeth, the doctor refers to an excellent practice which was followed in connection with one school. After the Medical Inspector's visit the headmaster arranged with a dentist from the nearest town (sixteen miles away) to go once a week for fifteen weeks and during school hours to attend to the teeth of those children whose parents desired it. A room of the school residence was lent for the purpose. Thus the time of travelling to Oamaru was spared the parents. This was soon fully appreciated, and a large proportion of the children had their teeth attended to.

The report supports the modern method of encouraging the children in infant departments to write and draw on blackboards instead of on slates. This not only gives bodily freedom, but preserves the eyesight of the children.

The summary of the types of defects found among the children are embodied in the tables appended to this report.

SUMMARY OF DR. E. C. GUNN'S REPORT.

Dr. E. C. Gunn, who had the supervision of the large central district lying between New Plymouth, Napier, and Blenheim, reports on her inspection of this district up to the latter part of the year.