

In these schools the quality of the instruction varies considerably, owing to the fact that in this group are to be found nearly all the untrained teachers—the very class that should receive the help and direction of the Department's experts. The enthusiasm shown immediately after the training courses of 1915 has waned in many cases, while in others the pupils have been kept at work on a few tables until the work has become formal and uninteresting. Though the exercises are usually well done, with such attention to detail as will entail conscious exercise of the muscles, many teachers do not appear to attach the importance to the recreative effects that they do to the physical and hygienic. This is evidenced by the seriousness and perfunctoriness that frequently characterize the organized games, and suggests that some teachers have an inadequate conception of the scope of games in educational curricula. If teachers fully realized the value of games in developing a well-balanced character, in securing prompt response to the call of duty, in producing true manliness, in arousing a just ambition to excel in every phase of the battle of life, they would throw much more personal enthusiasm into this branch of school-work than many of them do now. Change of work and change of play are equally important, and teachers should be alert to prevent the games from becoming monotonous, by giving sufficient attention to natural tastes and aversions. This is particularly necessary in the case of girls, for the physiological cost at which their mental powers are developed will produce injury if physical instruction be not so regulated that muscular exercise will be associated with such games and recreations as cheer and elate the participants. It is with regret that we have to report the discontinuance of systematic training of pupil-teachers and probationers in physical instruction. The practical effects of this will be felt in all the large schools during the incoming year, for in such schools will be found from four to eight young teachers unable to render efficient help in the work of physical instruction, and that at a time when the demands of the corrective classes make it imperative that the teaching-power be increased.

*District High Schools.*—[See E.—6, Report on Secondary Education.]

*Manual Instruction.*—Imbued with a notion that a primary-school system should concern itself only with the literary and mathematical side of education, for some years many of our teachers evinced a want of appreciation of the aims and educative values of manual instruction, with the result that the manipulative exercises were regarded as additional subjects, and their inclusion was justified on the grounds that they were only counter-irritants to bookwork; but as the result of different leavens a fermentation of ideas set in, and manual work is now treated not as a new subject, but as a new method of applying the principles of Pestalozzi, which have for their objective the promotion of the child's development, morally, physically, and intellectually. Not infrequently have we found that pupils who appeared abnormally dull and irresponsible in the literary work have been wonderfully stimulated in self-expression through the exercise of the motor activities; while with all, in the hands of thoughtful teachers, such work generates the habit of self-reliance, keeps the interest and the attention cheerfully engaged, and reduces the disciplinary function to a minimum. From the point of view of the practical educationist the manual dexterity is developed at the age at which it should be developed if it is to reach the pitch needed in maturer years. Where the subjects of manual instruction are judiciously co-ordinated with the other subjects of study, and the schemes of work are carefully graded, we find the results most satisfactory; but in those few cases where the subjects are isolated, and the schemes lacking in continuity or constructiveness, a powerful educational factor is rendered inoperative and its efficiency impaired through careless treatment or want of appreciation of the aims and scope of manual instruction. Handwork is taken in all schools, the branches for the junior classes being in the main paper-work, colour work, and basket-work, and we record with satisfaction a more extensive use of plasticine. In the middle classes the favourite branches are colour work and carton-modelling. In the former branch we note a growing interest in the application of colour work in the drawing of natural objects, while in the latter there is still a lack of close co-ordination with measurement and number work.

In the senior classes, brushwork, woodwork, and cookery have been continued at the manual-training centres, while in the majority of the rural schools the pupils continue the elementary agriculture in connection with garden plots. In this subject much more might be done in regard to the principles underlying the subject, and in future we shall insist on this phase of the work receiving more attention than it has hitherto received. During the year the swimming classes at the Oamaru and Dunedin municipal baths were conducted with highly satisfactory results.

*Maori Children.*—[See E.—3, Report on Education of Maori Children.]

*Efficiency of the Schools.*—With regard to efficiency, the schools may be grouped as follows: Excellent or very good, 20 per cent.; good, 46 per cent.; satisfactory, 24 per cent.; fair to inferior, 10 per cent. This shows a fall of 4 per cent. in the best group, an increase of 6 per cent. in the "good" group, and a fall of 2 per cent. in the two lowest groups. When it is considered that nearly 20 per cent. of the teachers are untrained and uncertificated, the efficiency of the schools as a whole may be regarded as very satisfactory. The order, discipline, and tone of the schools are being maintained at a very high level.

*Proficiency Examinations.*—As in previous years, we have as far as possible continued the practice of examining pupils at their own schools at the dates of our announced visits, and have resorted to the centralizing examination only to a very limited extent. For the certificate of proficiency 1,658 pupils presented themselves from the public schools. Of these, 1,258, or 75 per cent., secured the certificate of proficiency, and 155, or 9 per cent., gained the certificate of competency. None of these certificates were endorsed. From private schools 133 candidates presented themselves for examination. Of these, 93, or 70 per cent., were awarded the certificate of proficiency, and 19, or 14 per cent., the certificate of competency. So far as the public schools are concerned, the percentage of candidates winning the certificate is about 4 per cent. lower than that of the previous year. In our opinion this is not to be traced to the effect of the regulations issued in October last.