

With greater freedom from the examination incubus will come to both Inspectors and teachers greater opportunities for realizing the highest aims and ideals in teaching. Education will then come into its own, and cramming will be banished. There will be time to consider the rights of the child rather than the necessities of the teacher; there will be freedom for the pupil to advance at the pace and in the manner best suited to his mental and physical development, and time also for the Inspector to inspire the teacher by example as well as by precept. I feel sure that under a freer system of inspection the official estimate of the efficiency of the teacher will not lose but gain in reliability. Hand in hand with any such reform must go increased opportunity for the Inspector to study the more recent developments in educational thought and practice. It will not do for him to be as closely tied as he is at present to an unceasing round of visits, and to have little opportunity to replenish his store of ideas and draw fresh inspiration from the fountains of knowledge. There must be time and opportunity both for study and discussion, and I can conceive of nothing better than the inspectorial staffs organizing reading and discussion circles with their teachers.

This is not the place to enter upon a long discussion of the modern movement of educational method in the direction of securing more willing co-operation on the part of the pupil. Madame Montessori's system, the Dalton Laboratory plan, and suchlike methods of auto-education are but modern developments of the older heuristic methods, and mark a distinct break from the "forced feeding" system which dominated the schools of our childhood and which is even yet not quite banished from the land. According to the tradition of the past the more information a child absorbed the better he was educated. Hence the system of judging the extent of a child's education by measuring the amount of information he could reproduce. The extent to which such a system of appraising the success of any education system has failed is apparent to every thoughtful and observant man or woman. To be successful, every education system must take cognizance of those qualities, attributes, and powers that condition the mental, moral, and physical advancement of the race. It is the aim of the new education to do this; but it cannot succeed in its aim until the method of assessing the value of the teacher and his work is altered. It is the aim of the new education to enable the pupil to build up by his own efforts a body of usable knowledge, not a mass of second-hand information most of which, though reproducible on an examination-paper, is ill-digested and unserviceable. The resemblance between the Chinese and Egyptian methods of instruction and much in our own method must be apparent even to the superficial observer, and the absurdity of the so-called education test given to the Oriental is not entirely absent from the appraisement of work in New Zealand schools. Under the newer methods of instruction the pupil may have a smaller body of memorized information, but what he has he holds and can use. The present-day pupil does not equal the pupil of the past in repeating a long list of the coast features of a country, but he knows more real geography; he cannot, as a rule, give one a list of dates and historical events, but history is of more vital interest to him; he does not know as many absurd "rules" in arithmetic, but he has an infinitely greater love for reading and much greater facility in English composition. And if the new education can secure the interest and whole-hearted co-operation of the pupil, the old-time troublesome problem of maintaining discipline will disappear, for the pupil will govern himself; while the mental and moral effect of his entering into the acquirement of knowledge with whole-hearted earnestness cannot be overestimated, and must play an important part in the development of character. A note of warning should, however, be sounded here. During the period of transition between the old and the new the educationist runs the risk of losing his sense of relative values. The importance of what may be called the fundamentals should never be lost sight of, and no system or method of education can be considered as having served its purpose unless it enables the pupil readily to acquire a knowledge of and skill in the simple tools of his craft. The knowledge built up by painful effort during past centuries will be a closed book to the pupil if he cannot read, and read, moreover, with facility and understanding; the field of mathematics a barren waste if he knows not the multiplication table; his letters a laughing-stock if he cannot spell. But the new education does not disregard the importance of the fundamentals, and the only difference between the old and the new in this respect is the manner in which the pupil attains a mastery of his tools. It has been impossible here to do more than indicate the significance of this difference; to the educationist it is everything. Trained in the infants' department through, say, the Montessori method, and in the higher classes through some other form of self-education, the secondary pupil, the pupil-teacher, and the university student will not, as is now so frequently the case, show themselves unable to prosecute their studies on their own initiative; their training will have aimed to make them self-reliant and resourceful, able to take the best from their hours of leisure as well as from their hours of work.

During the year additional Inspectors were appointed to the Auckland, Otago, Canterbury, Wanganui, and Taranaki Districts. Notwithstanding this increase, the districts are by no means liberally staffed. The average number of schools and the average number of pupils per Inspector (including public and private schools) in each district is as follows: Auckland, 66 schools, 5,647 pupils; Taranaki, 56 schools, 3,863 pupils; Wanganui, 56 schools, 4,370 pupils; Hawke's Bay, 54 schools, 5,273 pupils; Wellington, 59 schools, 5,702 pupils; Nelson, 74 schools, 3,776 pupils; Canterbury, 73 schools, 6,513 pupils; Otago, 54 schools, 4,786 pupils; Southland, 66 schools, 4,283 pupils. When it is considered that in addition to visiting the schools the Inspectors have numerous other arduous duties, it will be seen that the difficulty of finding time for anything but routine work is a very real one indeed.

The two problems most prominently before the Inspectors in recent years are (1) the problem of the retarded pupil, and (2) the problem of post-primary education. As regards the former, I have pleasure in drawing your attention to the earnest desire on the part of the Inspectors to evolve some system by which pupils will be classified more in accordance with the level of their intelligence, and