

very greatest moment. As stated in my report for 1919, "As most of the defects and poor health in school-children are due to causes operating in the pre-school period, no system which concerns itself only with children of school age can effectively deal with the problems of child-health. . . . In the building of a child's physique the first six years are of much greater importance than those of the school-going period. The effect of errors of nutrition in these earlier years can never in later life be wholly remedied."

Reference has already been made to the importance and widespread need of dental treatment.

SECTION 5.—SYLLABUS OF PHYSICAL TRAINING FOR SCHOOLS.

Early in 1920 it was decided that the Education Department should issue to teachers its own edition of a "Syllabus of Physical Training for Schools." The following is an extract from the prefatory memorandum of this edition:—

"The 1909 Syllabus of Physical Training issued by the London Education Board, which has up to the present been in use in the New Zealand schools, is now superseded by a revised and modified edition published by the Education Department of New Zealand. Permission has been granted by the Controller of His Majesty's Stationery Office, London, to use the text of both the old and new London syllabuses. These form the basis of this edition, which has been produced to meet the somewhat different conditions obtaining in New Zealand. This edition embodies the results of the experience gained in the seven years during which the system has been in operation in New Zealand, and also all that has been considered desirable to adopt of the fresh material in the new London Education Board's syllabus issued in 1919. It is based broadly on the Swedish system of physical-education exercises, which has been widely adopted on the Continent as well as in the British Navy and Army, and is here modified and graduated to suit the special requirements of growing children."

In producing this syllabus brevity in the text has been specially aimed at, and important words and sentences printed in bold type. A certain number of fresh illustrations has been prepared, the tables of exercises revised, and their number slightly increased.

Briefly stated, the aim of the system is to secure the careful and well-balanced cultivation of the physical powers of each individual child, and special emphasis is given to the essential importance of a spirit of recreation and enjoyment in physical training. "These exercises, if rightly conducted, develop in the child a cheerful and joyous spirit, as well as the qualities of alertness, decision, concentration, and perfect control of mind over body." In addition to the general educative value of this system of physical training, it serves a very definite *remedial and preventive purpose* not only in relation to such deformities as pigeon-breast, flat chest, and faulty posture, but also as an important therapeutic factor in such conditions as anæmia, poor nutrition, and adenoids. The special corrective classes held at the larger schools have proved an institution of very great value. For further information on the subject the booklet itself must be referred to, and the report of the Chief Physical Instructor under the Education Department.

TOOTH-BRUSH DRILL.

Tooth-brush drill has been still further developed. There is no doubt that the careful and systematic use of the tooth-brush can mitigate to a considerable extent the unhealthy state of the mouth commonly present in children suffering from extensive dental decay. Débris and decaying matter are removed, and not allowed to accumulate in and about the teeth. It requires to be specially emphasized, however, that the use of the tooth-brush does not remove the need for reform in diet as being the essential factor in the prevention of dental decay. The medical officer for one district states, "Tooth-brush drill is carried out daily in almost all the schools"; that the teachers are as enthusiastic about it as the children, and that teachers who have once given it a fair trial say that they will never give it up. A remarkable diminution of cases of enlarged and inflamed tonsils is stated to have resulted from this organized tooth-brushing, and in some cases an improved mental capacity and alertness in school-work. There is no doubt also that the atmosphere of the class-room is distinctly improved. Such results are not in the least to be wondered at, and those teachers who have in this way entered so whole-heartedly into the spirit of the school medical work deserve high commendation.

SCHOOL LUNCH.

The organized school lunch has been further developed during the year, and in one or two districts, at any rate, a large proportion of the schools have a sit-down lunch with hot cocoa. This lunch is an excellent opportunity for training in citizenship, and an important socializing factor in the school. The institution of a beverage such as cocoa is mentioned by one medical officer as a factor in preventing the waste of much good food which otherwise takes place owing to the dryness of the meal.

SCHOOL-CLEANING.

In small country schools where labour is often unprocurable some system of school-cleaning by the children is a necessity. Several such systems have been in operation (two of which were reported in *National Education*) in which the children under their own voluntary organization, and with the help of the teachers, undertake this work. As an educational factor of great value such a scheme cannot be too highly commended. When the task is approached in the right spirit it is invaluable in inculcating in the children a sense of communal service and responsibility, and a regard for the school as an institution for their common good and in which they can take a pride.