

Another excellent effect of good tone in a school is the honesty of working. In schools where the pupils have a proper conception of what is right and straight, and are so anxious and keen to do their best for themselves and their school that they have neither inclination nor time for dishonest work, it is evident that if their training there gives them habits of steady, honest industry they are receiving incalculable good.

It is satisfactory to report that corporal punishment is sparingly resorted to in most of the schools; where there is undue resort to it—while the order may be good—the discipline and tone are bad. In many schools corporal punishment is not resorted to at all, as the teachers exercise a strong moral influence over their pupils. This is particularly noticeable in several schools where women are in charge.

Generally speaking, the methods of teaching employed in a great majority of the schools are good, and in these schools the intelligence of the pupils is brought to bear upon their work. Attention is given to thoroughness in the instruction, and the pupils seldom fail to make a good showing when they are subjected to tests. In a considerable number of schools, however, while good methods are followed, it is observed that the application of the methods is ineffective.

Teachers of Native schools, from the very nature of their calling, must particularly concern themselves with the health, cleanliness, welfare, and comfort of their pupils, and in this respect they exercise considerable influence over the parents. Their ministrations, however, are not confined to the children, but are extended to all members of the community alike.

The system adopted in a few schools, some three or four years ago, of supplying hot cocoa to the pupils at midday during the winter months has been extended to a large number of schools, and is a pronounced success. The system is appreciated by the parents, who generally contribute freely towards the expense incurred. A considerable number of schools are lagging behind in this respect, for more or less satisfactory reasons.

In the majority of schools the annual concert and the annual picnic are most important events, and in these activities the people take the greatest interest. The funds raised are devoted to various purposes for the benefit of the schools concerned—picnics, improvement of school-grounds and fences, the provision of tennis-courts and material, prizes and books for the library, the provision of cocoa, &c., for the pupils during the winter months, purchase of sewing-machines, and also of materials for organized games. It has been ascertained that during the year no less a sum than £1,300 was thus collected. One school was successful in raising £115 by concerts, while several others each collected over £50.

The success achieved by several teachers at the annual examination for teachers' certificates is gratifying, and their success should serve as an encouragement to others to make an attempt to improve their status.

In connection with the Winter Show held in Auckland during the year a great many schools forwarded exhibits of various kinds for competition in the educational section, and many prizes were gained by pupils from the Native village schools. The needlework of the girls won special commendation.

GENERAL REMARKS.

In this section of the report the following paragraphs have reference to various subjects of the school course:—

English Subjects.—Language Instruction: The supreme importance of this subject in Native schools particularly has been so emphasized in all previous reports that to urge once more upon teachers the need for concentrating upon this vitally important subject all the skill which they as teachers possess is almost a work of supererogation. The quality of the work varies very much in the schools—in a fair number of the schools it is very good, in a fairly large number it ranges from satisfactory to good, while in a very considerable number it is of inferior quality. There is a good deal of inefficient work in the subject, and too many of the teachers regard the attainments of their pupils as the limit of attainment possible for Maori pupils, whereas the real explanation of the lack of proficiency is the very indifferent quality of the teaching.

Reading.—Satisfactory improvement is being made throughout the schools generally. In a large number of schools it is satisfactory to note that the teaching of reading is dealt with intelligently, and the pupils are encouraged to read as many books as possible. Recitation in many of the schools is a poor affair, and frequently the pieces chosen for the purposes of recitation have little or no interest for the children. In other schools, however, where the teachers have some literary tastes, more discretion is shown in the choice of pieces for recitation, and the pupils recite intelligently and with satisfactory elocutionary effect.

Arithmetic.—In a fairly large number of schools this subject is very well taught, and the pupils usually do creditable work. In the majority of schools, however, the methods of teaching in the preparatory classes and, say, Standard I are relatively better than those employed in the higher classes, where it is commonly found that the pupils, although they can perform certain operations mechanically, have failed to understand the scope and objects of these operations.

Geography.—In a fairly large number of schools comparatively good work is done, but it is felt that in many of the remaining schools the methods of instruction are far from being entirely satisfactory, and that instead of being one of the most interesting and instructive subjects geography is often the dullest. Particularly is this so with regard to observational work, in which it is found that the rational method of studying thoroughly the geography of the home district from actual observation, and dealing with the home country before proceeding to a knowledge of far-off lands, is not followed systematically. In previous reports reference has been made to the insufficient use made of the globes, of maps, atlases, and illustrations and pictures.