

I quote the following account of the health camp held at Turakina under the charge of Dr. Elizabeth Gunn last November :—

“ The camp is run on military lines is so far as everything is done by time-table, and a school bugle band sounds the signals of the different periods of the day's programme. The children live in tents and marquees, sleeping on beds on which are placed palliasses filled with straw. Daylight-saving is also adopted in camp, so that the children get the full benefit of the fresh morning summer air. At 5 o'clock (which is by the sun 4 o'clock) the cooks get up and start the fires ; and at 6.30 the general reveille is sounded, before which no talking is allowed in the tents. At 6.40 each child gets a mug of hot cocoa, and then washing and dressing takes place, and the children indulge in 'physical jerks' before breakfast at 8 o'clock. After breakfast time is devoted to bedmaking and the tidying of tents, and this is followed by the saluting of the flag and then tooth-brush drill. Sun-bathing (which should more properly be called fresh-air bathing) is a feature of the camp life, as this is carried out even when there is no sunshine and in all weathers. School lessons are taken till 10.30, when a rest period is given, and another drink of hot cocoa or milk is served out. More lessons and some of the lighter duties of camp life occupy the rest of the morning till dinner-time at 12 o'clock. Rest in the open air is prescribed from 1.30 p.m. till 3 o'clock. No reading is allowed during this period, and after the first day or two Dr. Gunn said most of the children sleep for that time. At 3.15 another drink of milk is served out to the campers with what is known as 'scrunch' (baked bread and butter). Games, singing, and gramophone music occupy the time from 3.30 until tea at 5 o'clock. At 6 o'clock, or sunset time, the flag is again saluted, another tooth-brush drill parade is held, and games are indulged in until bedtime, which is at 7 o'clock. The 'last post' is sounded at 7.30, after which no talking is permitted. Children thoroughly enjoy the life, and not only gain in weight, but are soon found to be better in general health and taking a keener interest. Care is taken that the diet is simple, well-balanced, and nutritious. Breakfast consists of porridge with plenty of milk and no sugar, and after the first few days all the children take it with relish. Well-cooked meat is served once a day with plenty of vegetables, and milk puddings form an important part of the diet. The children are not given bread and butter in the ordinary way, except at tea-time, when they are given baked bread with butter and honey or jam. Milk is used freely both as a drink and in the preparation of various dishes, the supply being about one pint per head per day. There were no children in camp who did not improve, and some had put on from 6lb. to 14lb. in the four or five weeks of camp life. After the camp they were still watched and their cases followed with care and attention, and of the 118 who were in the last camp only ten did not go on improving—a remarkably small percentage.”

Health camp at Levin : A health camp was held at Levin, on the Central Development Farm, for mentally backward children attending special classes, Wellington City (in all twenty-eight pupils). The funds for this were raised by private subscription, subsidized by the Education Department and augmented by a small grant from the Health Department. Any one who visited the camp was convinced of the benefit to be derived from it. The children were thoroughly happy, mentally more alert, and physically more robust. The educational value of transplanting them to an environment filled with the interest of country life was very great. There can be no doubt that health camps of this kind might be made with benefit an established part of the education not only of backward children, but of normal children. A month of life in such surroundings and under such conditions not only give health, but provides “education” in the widest and best possible sense of the word.

*Nutrition Classes.*—The nutrition class at the Normal School, Auckland, established under the supervision of Dr. Meeredy two years ago, was carried on this year under supervision of Dr. Henderson. This class is of special interest in that it demonstrates that simple and readily available measures are sufficient to bring about improvement in the physical condition of weakly children. The class for 1925 has an average attendance of thirty-one. It contained fewer cases of malnutrition, but included many who were suffering from slight organic trouble. The chief features of the class are the insistence on common health laws, the supervision of the daily lunches, the utilization of fresh air as much as possible, and frequent rests, the longest being the midday siesta of thirty to forty minutes. Co-operation of the parents was secured by personal interviews and a general meeting at which the object of the class is explained to them. In this way an improvement was brought about in the regime of the child's life out of school. At the end of the year Mr. Law, headmaster of the Normal School, reported :—

“ Another year's work in connection with this special class has served to convince all who have come in contact with it of the great value it has been in the interest of pupils who are physically below normal. After having watched the children at work throughout the year, a year that was made more trying than usual because of the shortened period of work and the more exacting conditions, I am more than ever convinced that the majority of our city pupils between the ages of five and ten years would benefit considerably from a similar course of work, rest, and diet. A most noticeable feature in connection with the whole class was the lessening of evidence of fatigue at the end of the day's work. In fact, the children all were more energetic than those in the normal control group. The year's progress in school-work again proved the value of the class, which is now beyond the experimental stage ; all the pupils made a steady progress and presented class-work of as good quality as those who were physically stronger.”

The credit for the success of this class is largely due to Miss Earle, the teacher in charge, for her interest and untiring zeal.

*Open-air Schools.*—Modern science has demonstrated convincingly that sunlight and fresh air play an indispensable part in promoting good nutrition, and that children who spend a large part of their lives shut away from the stimulation of these beneficent agents are forced to incur grave penalty by loss of vigour and by impaired physical development. It is therefore essential that school-construction should be so carried out that the maximum benefit from sunlight and from fresh air is obtained.