

lessons, and informal talks on plant, bird, and animal life of the pupil's own district are not sufficiently general. Fewer lessons on such technical matters as pollination, dissection of flowers into petals, stamens, pistils, &c., are needed; and direct observation of and contact with Nature herself by the pupils should receive more encouragement.—(*Canterbury*.)

*School-gardens*.—Practically all schools above Grade I have school-gardens, and in many cases these add materially to the attractiveness of the school-grounds. But beside the æsthetic value there is an educational value in observing processes of nature and drawing correct conclusions from these observations. From the turning-over of the first sod in the garden the inquiring spirit should be at work (Why do we dig the garden?) up to the reaping of the fruits of the pupils' labour (Why is this crop so poor, or so good?) Practical outdoor experiments have been suggested for teachers to carry out, but in many cases with little results—"a change of teachers," "a dry season," or, "a wet one," "the growth of weeds during the holidays," "depredations by rabbits and other animals," being the commonest reasons assigned for failures. Enthusiasm on the part of the teacher and pupils can overcome most of these, and valuable lessons may frequently be learned from so-called failures. We should like to see more simple experimental work carried on indoors to illustrate and explain the processes at work in connection with plant-life, and suggestions will be made to teachers in connection with this phase of the garden-work.—(*Southland*.)

*Physical Instruction*.—Physical instruction should not be looked upon as a subject; there should be developed in the pupil an attitude towards life, an attitude never to be relaxed. It is not so much what the pupil does in the squad: the crucial question should be, Is he so trained at school that in every hour of his waking life he carries himself in a manner that is physically healthy and pleasant to look upon? One significant remark will give point to this statement: A School Medical Officer, in reporting on applicants for probationerships, said that there were very few candidates among the young women who knew how to carry themselves properly. If this be so, one wonders what effect such teachers will have on the pupils with whom they come in contact. We have a physically vigorous school population. It would be a pity that with such a fine foundation the pupils could not also be distinguished for their striking bearing.—(*Hawke's Bay*.)

Most teachers are keenly interested in this branch of their work. Some of the classes make an excellent showing, and their displays bear testimony to the thoroughness and efficiency of the instruction. In most of our schools outdoor games and sports are well organized and supervised, and a word of praise is due to those teachers who devote so much of their spare time in encouraging their pupils in rational and healthy recreation.—(*Canterbury*.)

The physical exercises seen during our visits were performed in nearly all schools with precision and smartness. From this point of view we were quite satisfied. We did not find, however, that all teachers paid sufficient attention to the posture of the pupils during drill, and there was rather too little evidence that the lessons (if any) on the carriage of the body were being put into practice in the class-room. Further, we frequently find that the lessons which were presumably learned at school have not been carried into the street, the park, and other public places. We ask all teachers to make a special note of this aspect of physical instruction. We found little indication that the practical work of the drill period had been properly correlated with the lessons on health—a correlation which the Senior Physical Instructor has consistently and strongly urged.—(*Otago*.)

*Handwork*.—At the woodwork and cookery centres the pupils are receiving efficient instruction on right lines. The handwork in the schools has not yet reached a sufficiently high standard, but we expect an improvement during the coming year. Many of the handwork lessons seen by us give evidence of too little preparation on the part of the teachers. Young teachers, especially in the lower classes, cannot present an effective manipulation of the material they are using unless they have previously made a practical personal preparation for the lesson they are taking. There is no reason why a finished model should not be shown as a standard of work to be aimed at.—(*Wanganui*.)

*Infant Departments*.—The continued improvement in the instruction of the infant departments of the larger schools is very noticeable and very pleasing. Modern methods, including the classification of pupils according to ability, and the use of concrete material for individual work, are being everywhere adopted with gratifying results. We note also with appreciation that similar methods are being more extensively used in the smaller schools, in some of which the help given by the organizing teacher has had a very fine influence.—(*Otago*.)

*Environment*.—Attention to both the exterior and interior environment continues to be a prominent feature of school activity. Many of the interiors, especially of the newer schools, are made very attractive by the judicious arrangement of pictures; while there is evident a conscious desire in the arrangement of walls, tables, and notices such as time-tables, to secure as much beauty as possible. The tradition that the interior of a school need be no other than that of the dreariest of homes dies hard; but the tide has obviously turned. The co-operation of the public has been secured. In a few cases, staff-rooms have been furnished and decorated like a sitting-room, though in this respect we lag behind many good English schools. We fail to draw upon that great and ever-ready reservoir, the wonderful creative ability of the school child. We have not yet succeeded in organizing that ability for the public good, or even for the good of the school. Many school-grounds are most attractive, but it is to be regretted that in too many cases this is the result of hired labour. That this is quite unnecessary is evident from the beautiful grounds of some large schools where the whole effect is due to the pupils alone. Rightly organized, these grounds could give a fine training in the appreciation of applied art and in civic duty. In more than one school attention has also been given to the orderly arrangement of the road immediately adjacent to the school. In fact, our schools might become a potent factor in making our countryside a thing of beauty and a joy to all.—(*Hawke's Bay*.)

*Retardation*.—An analysis of the annual class lists discloses the fact that retardation is all too common in our schools. Some few years ago retardation was especially noticeable in the primer