

conducted choirs or orchestras. A regrettable feature is the number of young teachers who declare themselves unfitted to take the subject. This, however, should be only an additional reason for concentrating on some other means of developing musical appreciation.”—(*Hawke's Bay*.)

“We noted with pleasure the improvement in the status of music as a subject of the curriculum. It is no longer the Cinderella of former days. It is true that musical instruction as such is still of a somewhat meagre quantity, but there is no doubt that appreciation is being developed through the teaching of a lengthy repertoire of songs. The choice is not always the wisest that could be made, but we have left teachers a free hand in the hope that the fostering of the singing habit will lead to the consummation of our wish to give music its rightful place in the school.”—(*Canterbury*.)

*Elementary Science and Nature-study*.—“Forestry is meeting with increased attention, particularly in the country schools. Weather or other nature records have been well kept; but these are too often the work of the teacher, and in many cases insufficient deductions have been drawn therefrom. And, though rainfall records have been kept, it is rather surprising to find that the pupils do not know the rainfall of other districts in New Zealand. In fact, one great weakness of science and nature-study teaching lies in this lack of connection between observed facts—experiment or otherwise—and their application to ordinary everyday industry and life. The upper classes could, as part of their project work, gather examples of the application of experiments and of the contrasts between one district and another.”—(*Hawke's Bay*.)

*Environment and Equipment of Schools*.—“The value of a beautiful environment is being increasingly recognized. More attention is yearly being given to the appearance of school-grounds. In the majority of schools there is ample evidence that outside environment receives careful attention, teachers and pupils alike devoting pleasing care to the upkeep of the flower-garden, and taking a pride in making the surroundings of the school as beautiful as circumstances will permit. During the last few months the wealth of bloom so produced has been a most commendable feature of many of our country schools. Work such as this has a valuable place in the scheme of education, and does much to cultivate in the children a taste for order and beauty which will be reflected in later years in their own homes, and do much to relieve the drabness so often noticeable about the homesteads on the dairy-farms. A meed of praise, too, is due to quite a number of lady teachers in charge of country schools for the state and appearance of the vegetable plots, the care of which constitutes a part of the school curriculum. To provide for outside activities tennis-courts and basketball and football grounds have also been laid down. A greater interest is also being taken by teachers in the appearance of the class-rooms, and the number of unattractive rooms and untidy cupboards is steadily decreasing. On the contrary, the rooms and corridors are bright and cheerful, pictures of good quality and coloured posters adorning the walls. Brackets and ledges display pot-plants and freshly-cut flowers, and frequently from the ceiling of the corridor hang baskets of growing ferns. One notes occasionally a lack of care in connection with the school building; broken windows are allowed to remain, door-knobs are unfixed, and gates and hinges need mending. Many teachers are content to leave these matters to their Committees, whereas most of these minor repairs could be effected by the older boys.”—(*Auckland*.)

“The interior and external environment of the schools continues to receive careful attention and is annually increasing in attractiveness, and at least keeping pace with the growing passion for beauty exhibited by the most progressive industrial concerns and municipalities. In this respect the work of the School Committees cannot be too highly commended: in the fencing and planting of grounds, in the laying-out of gardens, and in the provision of special areas for organized games and physical exercises much valuable work has been done. And this enthusiasm is to be found not only in the towns, but in remote country districts as well. The amount of voluntary taxation imposed for these purposes shows how rapidly parents are outgrowing the conception that the teaching of the three Rs is the only function of the school.”—(*Hawke's Bay*.)

“We have found great variation in the attention given to the cleanliness of schoolrooms and out-offices. In the larger schools no difficulty has arisen in this respect, and the condition of the school premises meets all requirements. In the smaller schools, however, we have found many cases where schoolrooms are dirty and dusty. No difficulty should be allowed to stand in the way of adequate sanitary measures. We have found that among schools where proper attention is given to sanitation there are many in which the teacher has assumed the whole responsibility for the cleaning of the school and outbuildings.”—(*Otago*.)

*Physical Instruction*.—A new spirit is in evidence in this essential part of school-work. The importance of correct posture and its bearing on general health and fitness has been emphasized, and training introduced to effect improvement. The mere performance of drill is not considered to be all that is required. Folk and country dancing, eurhythmics, and organized games are employed not only as a means of improving the physical condition of the child, but also to secure complete co-ordination of mind and body, and to give the child some controlled outlet for his emotions. A desire to be physically fit and to be quick and graceful in movement must precede any great improvement, and it is the exploitation of this principle that will ensure the greatest advance. In addition to playground activities, swimming and life-saving are receiving increased attention. Apart from its value as an accomplishment, swimming is considered to be one of the best means of physical development, and it is therefore pleasing to note that an increasing number of school-children receive the swimming certificates issued by the various societies interested in this work. As evidence of the actual progress made in swimming, I may quote the following extracts in respect of two districts:—

“Swimming is taught in practically every school which has access to baths or suitable swimming-pools. A number of teachers hold certificates for swimming and life-saving. We again acknowledge our indebtedness to the local branch of Amateur Swimming Association for its practical interest in promoting this branch of recreation. Many teachers continue to sacrifice much of their time to the cause of athletic sports. They deserve unstinted praise for their action. Well-organized associations operate in North Taranaki, South Taranaki, and Ohura.”—(*Taranaki*.)