

remarks, "As teachers often advance as an excuse for not teaching singing in small schools that the children will not or cannot sing, I wish to mention that admirable singing has been obtained in several bush schools from a handful of children, within twelve months of the schools having been taken over by young men, who are winning their spurs, and are therefore determined to teach everything."

The teaching of the preparatory classes continues to be in the main most satisfactory. In the larger schools progress is somewhat retarded by the great size of the classes, and the inherent difficulty of securing sustained application during rather long lessons. I am convinced that the policy of keeping the classes or divisions smaller (seldom more than twenty), of taking the children to the floor for all reading-lessons, and of making the lesson-times shorter would make progress more rapid and more satisfactory. The average age at which pupils pass Standard I. is still high, and it is just as high in the large schools as in the small. In many of the latter, indeed, beginners reach the Standard I. stage more quickly. In the larger schools progress at this stage ought to be more rapid.

A good deal of suitable kindergarten work has been done in a number of the schools, and it is quite a pleasure to the children. It is likely to be taken up more freely during the coming year. Few of our infant and lower standard teachers are able to find two hours a week for kindergarten and manual training, one hour being as much as they think can be spared. I have asked the Minister if half the usual grant could not be made to schools that give an hour a week to the teaching of these subjects, and have been informed that it cannot. The Board should renew this application, when the Minister's decision might perhaps be modified. Even in kindergarten and manual training "half a loaf is better than no bread," and the Department, which exists to serve the taxpayers among other objects, might yet recognise this fact.

In one or two schools "brush-work" has been substituted in some of the intermediate standards for the ordinary drawing course, but it would be premature to speak of results, which, however, are not unpromising.

As yet nothing has been done to provide regular instruction in woodwork or practical cookery, though the Department offers substantial grants in aid of such classes on very reasonable conditions. Early in the year I suggested that immediate provision should be made for teaching these subjects in the city and suburban schools at two centres, one at Newmarket and the other at Newton East or Howe Street. To classes at these centres pupils from most of the city and suburban schools could easily walk. I was then, and still am, of opinion that these special subjects cannot be conveniently taught either at each school or at a single centre. It seems to me that there is urgent need of adequate provision for giving the girls of the higher classes a course of instruction in cookery not only in Auckland, but also at the Thames. In the other great educational centres of the colony a start in this direction has been already made.

As to methods of teaching, I fear a considerable number of the Board's teachers do not show any burning desire to learn; they cherish the comfortable ruts in which they have gained some success, content to rest and be thankful. Only a minority evince real dissatisfaction with their former aims and achievements by striving after something better and higher, and making themselves more and more living ministers of culture. This attitude is chiefly apparent among the younger teachers, who are less backward at trying experiments and casting about for methods of realising their aims. The aims are the fundamental things; they mould and leaven the whole mass of methods and procedure. Too many of our teachers are content with low aims; they work too exclusively for results, and not enough for the training and building-up of faculty, of general mental power. Habits of study, of earnest and attentive work among their pupils, count for too little with them. This is no doubt largely due to the very burdensome course of study prescribed by the Department. For nearly a generation our teachers have been working under these unfavourable conditions, and it is little wonder if their aims have taken a permanent set in a bad direction. It is also due in no small measure to the want of a systematic study of the aims of education at the threshold of their career, at good training-colleges, such as produce so salutary an effect in Great Britain and North America.

Among defects in methods of teaching a few points may be here referred to. Most noticeable, perhaps, is the neglect to use the blackboard constantly, and especially at reading-lessons, for noting and impressing points of difficulty, and for aiding revision at the close of the lesson. The reluctance of so many of our teachers to systematically employ this aid to thoroughness is almost unaccountable. Some think it takes up too much time; but properly used it does not waste time or effort, but economizes them. Another defect is the ineffective and unskilful use of simultaneous reading, and too frequent resort to it in the higher classes, where much individual practice of reading is most needful and valuable. Of like nature is the custom of hearing pupils read or answer questions in turn. This is a serious cause of listlessness and inattention. Equally to be censured is the neglect of sufficient blackboard drill in arithmetic, at which teachers keep whole classes too constantly employed in working examples on slates, while they merely check the answers. At least two-thirds of the teacher's time during every arithmetic lesson should be taken up with blackboard drill and teaching either of some standard class as in the smaller schools, or of some section of a single class as in the larger schools, the pupils being trained to do the calculations orally and smartly, to give clear explanations of all the processes used, and in all but mere mechanical exercises to state in a brief connected way the leading steps in the working when the solution has been completed. Though oral answering has improved of late, and continues to improve, there are but few schools in which it could not be made much better than it is. Some teachers do not take the trouble to train their pupils to give all answers in sentence form. It is comparatively easy to get this done if teachers are in earnest about it and insist on it. But it requires great skill and much perseverance to train pupils to give oral answers of satisfactory completeness, clearly set forth and often stated in a short train of sentences. Here especially good