

lesson has, ever since training colleges have been established, been looked upon as the most effective instrument with which to train students in the art and method of teaching. I have tried the industrial method, letting each student criticize without guidance or direction; I have kept the criticism entirely in my own hands; I have divided the class into opposing groups, the one for the student, and the other against—I have tried every expedient I could think of or that I have read of to impart variety and real significance to the criticism lesson. The students of 1906—first year, that is—have had a decided advantage over their predecessors in the number and variety of criticism lessons.

B. The Senior Students (36): The senior students are most of them making an effort to keep at the University. Those who have passed through a University course know that two classes means at least from five to six hours a day taken up with attendance at lectures and the time necessary for preparation. If this were the only literary work the senior students had to do we might insist upon them doing a good deal of teaching; but, as with the junior, he has his course of literary or scientific and technical training to follow at the College. It is evident, therefore, that the seniors cannot give as much time to criticism lessons as the juniors. I have watched the senior course carefully for two years now, and I am sure we are giving all the time to observation and criticism lessons that can possibly be given under our regulations. In this part of our weekly exercises I have followed the plan adopted in some of the German university schools—namely, allowing considerable freedom of treatment of the lesson at the first presentation, encouraging the students to bring into their methods any feature whatever that seemed to commend itself to their judgment and experience. The only restriction imposed on the student was to this effect: that he must place on the blackboard before the lesson began, as explicitly as possible, the general and specific purpose of this particular lesson. The criticism was sometimes taken at the close of the lesson or on the following day, so as to allow of time to throw the criticism into proper form, as well as to give time for a more matured expression of opinion as to the merits and demerits of the lesson. The purpose, of course, in view in such a method of training is to get the student to rely upon himself, and to induce him to get out of the stereotyped methods usually prescribed beforehand to the "Notes of Lessons."

One of the most noticeable defects in the training-school system lies in the somewhat occasional and intermittent character of the course of lessons—they are isolated lessons; what is required is more continuous class-teaching. Here again I have worked, I am sure, on an improved system, but to carry it out more fully the practising school connected with the training college must be a larger one. A school of 250 or 350, as provided by the regulations, is not large enough. The practising school should be at least one of 500 in average attendance. Were this done I believe our New Zealand system of training schools, as at present organized, would compare favourably with any of the English or Continental normal colleges.

No. 4.

CONFERENCE OF PRINCIPALS OF TRAINING COLLEGES AND MEMBERS OF BOARDS OF ADVICE.

LETTER OF INVITATION.

SIR,— Education Department, Wellington, 7th January, 1907.

I have the honour, by direction of the Minister of Education, to invite your attendance at a Conference of members of Boards of Advice and Principals of Training Colleges, meeting at Wellington on Monday, the 11th February proximo, at 11 a.m., to consider any matters of common interest bearing on the control and organization of training colleges, the conditions of admission and allowances, the curriculum, or other topics in this connection.

I shall be glad to receive at your earliest convenience any proposals you desire to make for the consideration of the Conference.

I have, &c.,
G. HOGBEN,
Inspector-General of Schools.

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS.

MONDAY, 11TH FEBRUARY, 1907.

The Conference met at the Parliamentary Buildings at 11 a.m.

Present during the Conference: Mr. G. Hogben, M.A., Inspector-General of Schools (Chairman); Dr. W. J. Anderson, M.A., Assistant Inspector-General of Schools. Auckland Training College: Mr. H. A. E. Milnes, Principal; Mr. D. Petrie, Mr. Bagnall, Professor Thomas, Board of Advice. Wellington: Mr. W. Gray, Principal; Mr. R. Lee, Mr. T. R. Fleming, Mr. G. Carson, Board of Advice. Christchurch: Mr. E. Watkins, Principal; Mr. M. Dalziel, Mr. T. Ritchie, Dr. C. Chilton, Board of Advice. Dunedin: Mr. D. R. White, Principal; Mr. D. Borrie, Mr. P. Goyen, Professor Gilray, Mr. T. MacGibbon, Board of Advice.

The Chairman addressed the Conference.