

maintenance of the schools is £1 1s. 7d. per head of the population, while the expenditure for new buildings is 12s. 10d. per head. The figures are those for the year ending 31st July, 1906. The large amount spent on new buildings is due to the efforts made to supply the great deficiency of accommodation in elementary schools, which for many years compelled the authorities to double-bank the schools, using the same buildings for two lots of children each day.

The corresponding figures for New Zealand are, for all expenses of maintenance, 17s., and for new buildings, 1s. 2d. per head of the population.* Taking all the New York schools named, the cost per head of the average roll was £12 11s. 10d., and the cost per head of the average attendance, £14 3s. 2d.; in New Zealand it was £5 15s. 6d. and £6 15s. 5d. respectively.

The compulsory school age in New York is from 8 to 14, the age of beginning the primary-school course being thus very high, two years higher than in Switzerland, and one year higher even than in New Zealand. There is, however, a movement on foot to lower the compulsory age of entrance to seven or six; it will probably be lowered to seven, as the financial and other difficulties involved in providing the additional accommodation that would be rendered necessary by a reduction to six are very great.

The proportion of pupils in the eighth or highest grade is 5.3 of the total roll-number; in New Zealand the number of pupils in class VI forms 8.2 of the roll-number, and, exclusive of those in the secondary departments of district high schools, the pupils in the classes VI and VII together are 10 per cent. of the total roll—nearly twice as high a proportion as is found in the corresponding classes of the New York City schools. It must be remembered, however, that we have not here the constant influx of more or less illiterate foreign immigrants that in the American city lowers the standard reached by so many of the pupils. The serious character of the problem created by the continuous admission of large numbers of alien children may be realised from the fact of which I was informed by the principal of a typical large elementary school in the south-east of Manhattan, that more than half of the new "admissions" last year could not speak English when they entered the school, or could speak only a few words. The difficulty of dealing with such an element has put the teachers on their mettle, and the result is that the skill displayed in most of the schools in the teaching of English would afford an object-lesson to teachers in any part of the world; it has even reacted upon the methods used in teaching children from English-speaking homes, who in all the lower grades are taught in separate classes. The cultivation of oral speech, which is so prominent a feature in all the schools of Continental Europe, is equally emphasized here. Common things coming within the daily observation of the children, simple domestic operations performed by the children in the school kitchen, handwork of various kinds, pictures, toys, and games are all employed as means to make the children speak English clearly and readily, and are also so chosen and arranged as to make them realise the most important domestic and civic duties, and their great privileges as American citizens. The education they receive is not only thorough, but natural, human, and home-like, although perhaps it may be difficult to understand the appropriateness of the last epithet when applied to the methods of a school containing, say, 2,000 to 3,000 children; it is, nevertheless, strictly true. The consequence is that the school-teacher is universally respected, and, indeed, there are quarters in the city where it is said to be scarcely safe for a policeman to venture alone, but where the teacher is welcomed as a ministering angel.

Throughout the whole programme of the school work there is seen the influence of the ideas which are to be seen in their most pronounced form in such schools as the Horace Mann schools, described elsewhere in this report. True, the special methods based on those ideas are not carried out to the same logical extreme in the ordinary elementary schools; but all the teaching is intensely real, practical, natural, and consequently full of interest.

The school buildings are extremely good and often costly, sometimes passing the boundary-line in the direction of extravagance. The influence of the special medical officers of the Board of Education is shown not only in the excellence of the medical inspection of the pupils—so far as it has been possible to carry that out in so vast a population—but in the almost perfect sanitation of the most modern schools. The illustrations will give some idea of the kind of school building most current to-day in New York.

Kindergartens.

"The Kindergarten," says Dr. Maxwell, "gives right direction to the child's self-activity at his most plastic age, and introduces him in a happy

* The cost of the education system of Boston in 1906 was for all expenses of maintenance £1 4s. 6d., and for new buildings 6s. 11d. per head of the population.