

of attention in the child. The provision of a fully equipped gymnasium at Otekaike will be one of the additions which I shall ask the Minister to authorise as soon as we are ready to proceed in this direction.

In dealing with the education and training of feeble-minded children in England we have found that the formation of a school band has been productive of much good to the boys. The following is a newspaper extract which shows how beneficial this course has proved in England :—

“ At the Witham House School, Essex, England, the Metropolitan Asylums Board has a place for the treatment of a certain number of boys, classed as feeble-minded, who are between the ages of twelve and twenty-one, the object being to train as many of them as possible to become self-supporting. For this purpose various trades are taught, but the progress made was very slow, and the signs of success fell until it was decided to start a brass band among the patients. The result has been really extraordinary, for not only has the band advanced rapidly in musical proficiency, but the members of it, once their interest was awakened in the playing, have made ever-increasing strides towards complete sanity. To a newspaper representative, the Superintendent of the Home stated some short time back that the progress made by the players since the formation of the band had been marvellous, and the band-boys had become distinctly in advance of the other inmates in mental qualities. There had been several astonishing instances where the individual boys, whose cases at one time appeared hopeless, had made such marked progress since playing in the band that they would shortly be discharged as mentally fit. The music, he added, has had a charmed effect on the patients, who have advanced under its influences by leaps and bounds. I have great faith in the future treatment of the class of boys we receive here. As a result of the success which has been attained, it has been decided to provide the boys with special uniforms.”

The Witham Home, in Essex, now has, I believe, a whole-time regimental bandmaster on the staff, who imparts the musical instruction. I am hoping at no distant date to have our own brass band at Otekaike.

For those children who are unable to dress themselves properly, “ dressing-lessons ” will be given, as well as special exercises, such as lacing, buttoning, &c., for those whose fingers lack precision and the power of fine adjustment. Object-lessons on the common subjects, such as the furniture of the room, the laying of the table, of articles of clothing, the seasonable vegetables, fruits, and flowers, &c., will be largely made use of, and in this connection drawing, colouring, painting, paper-folding, modelling, wood-carving, &c., will be treated as correlated subjects.

As an example of a series of lessons, I herewith append a specimen of a Nature programme and its connections :—

Apples,—

- (1.) Nature lesson—apples.
- (2.) Story—“ The Apple-tree’s Story.”
- (3.) Game—“ Autumn.”

Expression lessons,—

- (a.) Modelling—an apple.
- (b.) Drawing—an apple and sections.
- (c.) Cutting—farmer’s ladder and basket.
- (d.) Brushwork—an apple.

This, practically, is what is known as an “ environment programme.” If with a normal child it is necessary to show the connection between the essential elements of a child’s environment and his own life, it is doubly so with a feeble-minded child.

Again, to enlist the children’s sympathy, awaken their intelligence, and promote their observing-powers, I propose to commence a series of “ nature walks and talks,” which will constitute a programme for one year’s field-work.

With regard to the teaching of “ number,” I may say that this is one of the most difficult subjects, as calculation so often proves a stumbling-block to the mentally feeble child. This subject has to be presented in its most attractive form, but there are many ingenious contrivances now to be had, and the old “ shop lesson,” which is really a more glorified form of the old childish nursery game, is a great help, as the articles—such as groceries, cardboard money, weights and scales, &c.—are always in evidence, and the children actually assume the position of buyer and seller, and are taught to view the thing as a matter of some importance. Interest is sustained, the intellectual faculties are aroused, and the tension or strain of an ordinary dry-boned arithmetical lesson is not felt; whereas, a further inducement to the child to do his best is the thought that, at the conclusion of the business part, there is the more pleasant function of participating in the eating of those portions of the products of the sale, such as sugar, &c., which, as a rule, is not a displeasing operation for a child.

Healthy outdoor occupation in the cultivation of the farm and garden and in tending the stock will form a useful part of the children’s work at Otekaike. On the farm, kindness to animals will be inculcated and fostered.

It will be part of my plan for the children to spend half the day at school and the other half at some manual work. In most cases it is found that healthy outdoor exercise is the best for promoting both physical and mental development. I have seen children who made little or no progress in the usual school-work take a great pride in watching some seedlings grow in their own patch of garden, and often some of the boys are quite keen when prizes are offered for the best-kept patch.

Other manual occupations will not be lost sight of, such as woodwork and wood-carving, for those who show a special aptitude. Basket-making, cane-weaving, coir-mat making, sash-line plaiting, &c., will be found useful for those who are physically unable to perform more laborious work. Macramé work is excellent for those children who are suffering from athetosis. These children frequently possess a considerable amount of artistic ability. I have seen children who appear to possess no idea of number