

there is on that account the greater need for observation work carefully directed by the teacher. Clear and correct mental images can be built up only as the result of clear and correct observation, and the value of nature-study lies not only in getting the children to understand why the thing is so, but in getting them to desire to know more about the thing.

We find in a few schools that there is little or no observation work, and children still determine the points of the compass by their right or left hand, only to be perplexed beyond recovery when they are placed in an unaccustomed position. It would be a good plan if teachers were to take the children outside much oftener than they do at present, and to have them make notes of the observations taken. With regard to the political geography, the programmes submitted are in some cases too comprehensive to admit of careful teaching, frequently containing no matter of value or interest, while in other schools they are very meagre indeed.

*Handwork.*—(a.) Sewing: There has been an increase in the amount of practical work done in the schools during the year, and we regard this subject as being generally well treated. In many schools we find that the elder girls are being taught to make useful garments; in the best schools sewing-machines have been supplied with good results. Classes for the adult women are still maintained in three or four schools, and prove of much benefit.

(b.) Drawing: The work in drawing in most schools may be described as fair, although in a few schools it reaches a high standard. Teachers have not yet given full attention to the syllabus of work defined in the regulations for Standards IV, V, VI. The opportunity of correlating the drawing with the nature-study is not taken very frequently, and drawing from flat copies instead of from natural objects is still too prominent. In the former, even though the pupils' attempts at reproduction be crude, there is a distinct gain in the cultivation of the observational powers, and in the arousing of interest; in the latter, the work is mere imitation, calling for very little mental effort.

(c.) Elementary Manual Training: Elementary manual training still continues to receive a good deal of attention. For the lowest classes paper-folding, we think, is most suitable, as it can be made to assist both the English and the drawing. There are few teachers, comparatively speaking, who avail themselves of the opportunity thus offered for making the handwork and the drawing of mutual advantage. Frequently, too, we fear that in the desire to make a large display for inspection, the training of the pupils in habits of careful observation and exactitude, and in neatness of manipulation, is lost sight of. It is not necessary that teachers should take up a great number of forms of handwork, nor is it desirable that they should do so. The intention of the syllabus is that manual training in some form or another shall find a place in the curriculum of every Native school, not that all forms of handwork must be taken. The various forms of handwork are specified in order that the children may be given a change after they have been engaged with one particular branch for a considerable time.

(d.) Woodwork: Fourteen workshops have been in active operation during the year, and they continue to afford useful instruction to the pupils as well as material benefit to the people. The boys were taught to make various useful articles—such as tables, cupboards, dressers, bedsteads, boxes, stools, gates, &c. Houses for both Europeans and Maoris have also been built. Boys who have had some preliminary training in the school workshop show that they have acquired an undoubted advantage thereby, and make the best of our apprentices.

(e.) Elementary Practical Agriculture: This subject is not yet receiving so much attention as it deserves, and, except in the case of a very few schools, makes but slow progress. It is very desirable that every school should have not merely a flower-plot but also a garden where experimental and observational work can be done, and it is most important that observations made by the pupils shall be carefully recorded by them in note-books kept for the purpose. No doubt many teachers are loth to venture into this branch of the work, owing to their feeling comparatively ignorant of the subject. The only course open in such cases is for them to learn from their failures; knowledge derived in this way will be much deeper than if gained from text-books.

In places where the teachers have made a success of agriculture the school garden has undoubtedly offered a splendid object-lesson to the parents of the district, who have been forced to admit that their own methods of cultivation of various crops are capable of being vastly improved.

We shall be glad to see a much wider appreciation of this subject, and trust that teachers will do the best they can, making an honest effort to deal with a subject the importance of which cannot be overestimated.

(f.) Domestic Duties: Instruction in domestic duties, including lessons in plain cookery, practical needlework, and, as far as possible, housewifery, continues to be given in several of the schools, with very satisfactory results.

*Drill and Physical Instruction.*—The handbook of physical exercises supplied by the Department has not yet come into general use, though, of course, in every school physical instruction is given. We see no objection to each teacher's exercising his own choice in the matter, provided that a suitable set of exercises is adopted. But if physical instruction is to be of the slightest value it must be given regularly, and must be pursued with vigour. We feel bound to state that in a few schools the exercises are done in so perfunctory a manner as to be almost barren of results. Further, it is not unreasonable to expect that after a year's practice the elder pupils, at least, should be able to perform the exercises without having to be instructed by the teacher, or led by a fagelman on the day of inspection. A high degree of excellence is attained in this subject in several schools, where the drill is performed with great precision and energy.

*Singing.*—In some of our schools the singing is excellent, and in a very large number of them it is very creditable indeed, while in the remaining few it is of inferior quality. In the last case, the inferior results are due to inferior teaching. In many quarters ability to sing is regarded as a natural gift peculiar to Maoris, and it is hence inferred that good singing is heard in all schools where there are Maoris. Our experience does not lead us to this conclusion; we have heard vile singing in Maori schools, and in no Maori school where the singing is not well taught have we heard good singing. Further, we find