

*Efficiency of Schools.*—At the schools inspected during the early part of the year we met with very general complaints from head teachers concerning the backwardness of the children at that stage and of the handicap imposed upon them by the loss of time incurred through the compulsory closing of schools in the previous year and the consequently imperfect state of preparation attained by the children in their former classes. An unusually good working-year has apparently remedied many of the defects. The proficiency results were as high as before, and at later inspection visits we found no lowering of the standard of attainment, whilst on the other hand a greater proportion of the schools were doing efficient work, and in our judgment the teaching in some showed higher quality than had been previously displayed. Our estimates of the efficiency of 125 schools inspected are briefly summarized as follows: Good to excellent, 3; good, 31; satisfactory to good, 37; satisfactory, 36; fair to satisfactory, 13; fair, 4; moderate, 1; efficient, 107; non-efficient, 18. All of the eighteen schools classed as unsatisfactory were under the charge of sole teachers, of whom all but two were uncertificated. It is somewhat surprising that the number is so small considering that there are forty-eight other uncertificated sole teachers, some of whom are without training or previous experience. This class of teacher, especially that to be found in a Grade 0 or I school, still forms our greatest problem. The lonesomeness of the life, the unsuitability of lodgings, the distance from a centre, and the lack of tutoring and companionship are deterrents to many from entering such service, and lead to too frequent desertions from it. The product of the training-college, and sometimes now that of the probationer or junior-teacher course, will scarcely accept such a position, so that the recruit must come from the public school, at best from the secondary class. Usually the training has been that of painful experience.

The appointment towards the close of the year of three organizing teachers marks a new era of development. They will be able to give to these hitherto neglected teachers the help and practical training in school-management so much needed. The organizing teachers should find full scope for their energies in the districts to which they have been allotted, and from the zeal with which they have entered upon their duties we anticipate great benefit to this education district, which unfortunately abounds in small schools. The hearty co-operation and support of Committees and parents should be solicited by the Board to enable the work of the organizing teachers to attain a full measure of success. We would urge the appointment of a fourth organizing teacher, to operate from Tapawera as a centre, as around it are situated sixteen sole-teacher schools.

Of the 107 schools marked "efficient," seventy-one have been more warmly commended by us. All but two (which are marked "satisfactory") of our larger or head-teacher schools are included in the latter group, and we cannot refrain from expressing our appreciation of the grand work done by our headmasters. In enlightened methods, in zeal and devotion to duty, in unsparing effort, in thoroughness of execution, in the duties of citizenship, and in nobility of personal character they, as a rule, set an example that cannot but have a most powerful influence upon the great work in which they are engaged—character-building.

*Efficiency of Subjects.*—The treatment accorded to different subjects varies considerably in different types of schools according to the ability and individual taste of the teacher. In no case can a subject be considered satisfactorily taught unless all classes have received full and efficient instruction. In 120 schools records of our judgment concerning the subjects of instruction are fairly complete, and a brief summary is tabulated below, the term "satisfactory" being taken to include those schools on which higher praise was bestowed.

Schools.	Reading.	Spelling.	Writing.	Composition.	Recitation.	Arithmetic.	Geography.	History.	Physical Instruction.	Nature Study.	Drawing.	Handwork.	Singing.	Needlework.
Satisfactory .. ..	104	76	107	95	107	83	74	75	103	79	111	99	83	104
Unsatisfactory .. ..	16	44	13	25	13	37	41	39	9	25	8	16	14	6
Not taught .. ..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	13	..	5	22	10
Not recorded .. ..	..	..	..	..	..	..	5	6	8	3	1	..	1	..

The subjects that present the most difficulty to teachers are evidently spelling, geography, history, and arithmetic. Want of skill in teaching, the uncertain development of the child due to previous faulty training, especially in the initial stage, or the difficulty of a subject from the child's point of view, does not fully account for the fairly general failure in the treatment of certain subjects. The young teacher of to-day has too often acquired only a superficial knowledge of some of the subjects he is called upon to teach. A certificated teacher may not be free from this reproach, and we welcome the suggestion to raise the standard of the certificate examination, not necessarily by setting more difficult questions, but by using more discrimination in the marking. With the many improvements and the wider range of subjects now in vogue we should guard against a loss in thoroughness.

We have, &c.,

The Director of Education.

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