

SCHOOL BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS.

With regard to tidiness, cleanliness, attractiveness of the interior of schoolrooms and general surroundings, the very satisfactory conditions obtaining hitherto in a very large number of schools have been well maintained, and much credit is due to the teachers and their pupils for the interest and pride shown. In a considerable number of schools, however, the teachers cannot be complimented on their efforts in the matters referred to. Indeed, there would appear to be an almost entire absence of effort in some schools where evidently the teachers fail to realize that these matters contribute in a large measure to the education of their pupils and also of the people of the settlements. The following schools deserve to be singled out for the attention they give to the matters discussed in this section of the report: Whakarewarewa, Pukepoto, Wai-iti, Mangatuna, Opoutere, Matapihi, Te Kotukutuku, Te Reinga, and Wharekahika. It is well to remind teachers of the schools referred to adversely in this connection that in considering their claims for promotion much weight is attached to their record in this important aspect of the education of their pupils.

During the year general renovation in the way of painting and of necessary repairs has been carried out in a considerable number of schools. The need for economy during the present financial difficulties has been closely observed as far as Native schools are concerned, and as a consequence much important work has necessarily been held over in the meantime.

INSPECTION OF SCHOOLS, ORGANIZATION, ETC.

The general very satisfactory efficiency of the schools has been well maintained throughout the year, and it is pleasant to record that increased efficiency has been noted in quite a number of schools where there was room for improvement. From the point of view of efficiency the schools may be classified as follows: Excellent, 10; very good, 35; good, 30; very fair, 26; fair, 12; inferior to weak, 10.

With regard to the methods of teaching, it may be said that they generally proceed on good, sound lines, the result being that the pupils make good progress in a very large number of schools. In other schools where the results are not so satisfactory the explanation is to be found not in defective methods alone, but in the application of the methods, and in the lack of thoroughness at every stage. The value of constant revision of the work by the pupils, including the work done in their previous classes, is not always recognized. The preparation of the schemes of work shows improvement in a number of schools hitherto unsatisfactory in this respect, and the aim and purpose of such schemes are better appreciated. Instances are met with where the schemes of work of the assistants are not always available for use, and a request for them by the Inspector necessitates a search. Preparation of lessons is still neglected in a good many schools, the consequence being that the quality of the instruction suffers. Teachers should be in a position to show written evidence of the preparation of the daily lessons.

In the preparation of the time-tables the relative importance of the various subjects is usually recognized, and generally little fault can be found with the apportionment of the time available. In most schools it is found necessary from time to time to make adjustments and modifications in the time-tables, but there are a few schools where it would appear that a time-table once drawn up will serve almost for a lifetime, the only alteration made being the change in the date.

As a rule, little fault can be found with the manner in which the school registers and records are attended to. In a few schools, however, the entries are made in a more or less slovenly manner.

In most of the schools the order and discipline may be described as good; in a number, however, the position in this respect is not as satisfactory as it should be. The conduct and behaviour of the pupils in the playground, the manner in which they assemble, march into school, and set about the work set for them, their attitude and attention during the physical-instruction exercises, are an almost infallible index of the discipline of the school and of the personality of the teacher. Maori children are particularly amenable to the discipline of the school, and consequently in those schools where the discipline is unsatisfactory the fault, notwithstanding the latitude allowed the children in their own homes, lies undoubtedly with the teacher. In some schools monitors or troop-leaders are used with good results.

The necessity for personal cleanliness on the part of the pupils receives close attention from the teachers, who as a body cannot be reproached with neglect in this important part of the children's training and education. The teachers also rightly regard themselves as seriously concerned with the health of the children under their charge, and to their credit valuable work in this connection is done in the majority of the schools.

The number of certificated teachers in the service is gradually increasing, and it is noted with satisfaction that at the last examination a few more teachers have succeeded in raising their status. Their success should furnish an incentive to others, who really should have little difficulty in gaining the teachers' certificate. Teachers are aware that as an encouragement to effort in this direction the Department is prepared to assist them by defraying part of the expense they may be put to in securing instruction; and it would appear that instead of entering into futile discussions about the respective merits of certificated and uncertificated teachers the time might be more profitably employed in making an attempt to improve their educational status. It is frequently stated by teachers that, owing to the lack of opportunity of attending classes for instruction in those subjects where—as, for example, in elementary agriculture—a certificate of practical work is required, it is impossible for them to gain their certificates; and this assumption forms the basis of their reason for more or less complete inaction. Such assumption, however serviceable it may be as an excuse, is negated by the success of teachers who with no better opportunities *do* qualify for certificates. In order to do so, and instead of cherishing as an excuse what appears to be an