

The attendance registers and school records are as a rule very carefully attended to, and the need for taking exception to the manner in which they are kept seldom arises. In connection with the quarterly and annual returns, however, many teachers fail to send in perfectly accurate returns. Teachers are again reminded that all departmental correspondence must be dealt with expeditiously and filed for reference.

During the year more schools have fallen into line with the system adopted in a large number of schools of supplying hot cocoa at the midday recess to the pupils during the winter months. The system, which is an excellent one, has now become an established custom and is greatly appreciated. The benefit to the health of the children is so evident that the teachers of those schools where the system has not yet been adopted should make a serious attempt to enlist the co-operation of the scholars and their parents.

The annual picnic and the annual concert are also now well established in Native schools, and they still continue to be regarded as most important events in the respective districts, where they prove of much value in securing the practical interest of the parents in the school and its work.

At the annual examination for teachers' certificates several teachers from Native schools succeeded in improving their status. Their success is gratifying and should serve as a stimulus to others.

Head teachers of Native schools, in common with those of public schools, will benefit by the increase in the new salary scale that has been adopted. The assistants in Native schools will also receive some increase in their salaries.

#### GENERAL REMARKS.

The following paragraphs have special reference to various subjects of the school course:—

*Reading and Recitation.*—In a fairly large number of schools the pupils read clearly, fluently, and intelligently, and show that they comprehend in a satisfactory manner what they read. In a great many schools, however, there is much room for improvement in the matter of comprehension, and teachers must realize that unless their pupils grasp the thought content of what they read, and are able to interpret satisfactorily to others what they read, they are not reading in the true sense. This inability on the part of the pupils is no doubt the chief defect in the reading, and any method which results in reading without comprehension of what is read can only be regarded as an inefficient method. Even in the earliest stages of reading, the teachers must aim at securing a proper understanding of the subject-matter of the reading-lessons. The monotonous style of reading frequently heard is due partly to the lack of comprehension and partly to lack of effort on the part of the teachers to secure something like satisfactory expression and modulation of the voice. These matters should be insisted on by the teachers, who naturally must be able to demonstrate what is required. The ability to read must be accompanied by a desire to read, and teachers should use their best endeavours to provide a school library and encourage their pupils to read. Recitation of poetry is far from satisfactory in a good many schools. Frequently the selected pieces are unsuitable and offer little opportunity for dramatic effort or practice in expression and in the modulation of the voice. They are frequently imperfectly memorized, and the rendering of them is frequently marred by inaccurate pronunciation. The recitation pieces and simple dialogues should provide an additional means of getting rid of the monotonous style which is so common.

*Language Instruction (Oral and Written English).*—The quality of the instruction in this subject varies very much indeed in the schools, and only in those schools where it is well taught is the general quality of the school-work of a high standard. In a large number of the schools the quality of the instruction ranges from satisfactory to good, and in a very considerable number it can only be described as ranging from poor to fair. There is little doubt that the comparatively poor results achieved in English are due to inefficient teaching. The subject, particularly oral English, is so all-important that it demands the utmost attention of the teachers. They must recognize that the work of teaching the Maori children to speak, write, and understand English, and thus by means of the acquired language become acquainted with European customs and ways of thinking, constitutes probably the principal reason for the existence of Native schools. There are many difficulties confronting the teacher in teaching this subject, the principal one being that the mother-tongue of the pupil is so fundamentally different from English that, "to say nothing of the hereditary aptitudes, the Maori child from the time that he begins to speak and think has his vocal organs and his thinking-faculties moulded in such a way that he could hardly be rendered more unfitted for speaking English and using it as an instrument of thought if his vernacular had been specially devised for the purpose." Another serious difficulty is that the teaching of English to the pupils is hampered by their training in the use of Maori being continued along with their training in English. The difficulties connected with the teaching of the subject must be met by the employment of intelligent methods. The paramount importance and value of oral work, meaning thereby practice by the pupils in speaking, and not practice by the teachers, must be clearly realized, and to ensure success teachers must bring to bear all their skill, imagination, and resource upon the preparation of their schemes of work and upon their actual methods of teaching. It is not sufficient that the pupils hear English spoken by the teachers; they must have abundant practice. Teachers must not be deceived into thinking that because the pupils understand a great deal of English they therefore can use that English in oral speech. Then, again, they must not be deluded into thinking that all is well with the spoken English because their pupils have learned to read. Pronunciation, expression, and accentuation must receive careful attention in order that the monotony of utterance which too many teachers are satisfied with, both in oral English and in reading, may be avoided. In coping with this defect, recitation, repetition of stories, and dialogues will be found very useful. The use of these adjuncts, however, must not be regarded as a substitute for specific and definite instruction in oral English on the lines set forth in