

## CONDITION OF SCHOOL BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS.

Generally speaking, the teachers and pupils of Native schools are much interested in improving and beautifying the school surroundings. Where the teachers are enthusiastic and energetic in this matter wonderful work can be done with the assistance of the pupils if they are encouraged and if their efforts are directed and supervised. In many places the school property with its well-kept fences, its well-laid-out gardens, and its trees, forms the principal features of the landscape, and the pupils and parents alike are proud of their school. The influence of schools in this connection can be seen in the efforts of the people to keep their houses tidy and their gardens in good order. In last year's report reference was made to the existence at some schools of nurseries for the propagation of trees suitable for planting in the school-grounds and at the homes of the children. It is satisfactory to note that other schools are following suit, and that more attention is being given to tree-planting. It should be unnecessary to remind teachers in places where there is a difficulty in securing suitable trees that the Department will render assistance in this connection. It would be a simple matter to name schools where the sites, which a few years ago were practically empty waste spaces, are now a delight to the eye. There are schools, however, where the teachers are more or less neglectful in this important matter of improving and beautifying the school-grounds; and even the portion of the glebe set apart for the teacher's own private use bears evidence of neglect.

The cleanliness of the school buildings is generally very satisfactory indeed. The duty of sweeping and dusting, and washing of the schoolroom is done, as has been stated in previous reports, by the pupils under the supervision of the teachers. The Department supplies all the necessary equipment for the purpose, and the expenditure thus involved is the only expense incurred in the sweeping and cleaning of the schools. The pupils as a rule cheerfully carry out their duties, and take much pride in keeping the schoolrooms clean and tidy. It is a rare occurrence in Native schools to find scribbling on the walls of the buildings, and the desks in the majority of the schools are as clean and free from disfigurement as they were when first installed. In a few instances the supervision of the teacher in the matter of school-cleaning is somewhat perfunctory, and the inspection of the out-offices is not as thorough as it might be. Attention to the interior attractiveness of the schoolrooms is in a number of schools not entirely satisfactory, and, apart from the loss of the influences exerted upon the pupils by an attractive schoolroom, it becomes difficult to understand how teachers can be content to carry on their work in unattractive and uncongenial surroundings.

## ORGANIZATION, INSPECTION, METHODS OF TEACHING, ETC.

To a greater or less extent the remarks made under this heading in the previous year's reports still apply with equal force. The general organization of the schools is, on the whole, very satisfactory indeed, and the work of the schools is carried on with attention to regularity and punctuality. Attention has still to be directed to the insufficient supervision on the part of a number of head teachers, of the work of their assistant teachers. It is not sufficient that a head teacher should confine his attention to the work of teaching the pupils under his particular care. He must see that his assistants are carrying out their duties regularly and efficiently, and he should be in a position to know whether the methods of instruction are satisfactory, and whether satisfactory progress is being made by the pupils. The schemes of work and the work-books should receive his careful attention, and the junior assistants particularly should be guided and instructed in their work. It is his further duty to ensure that there is an equitable allocation of the work among the members of his staff. It is not uncommon to find that some head teachers have insufficient number of pupils under their immediate charges, their explanation being that, with the majority of pupils in the preparatory divisions, the number of pupils in the upper-standard classes is small. Then, again, the idea still seems to persist that the work of teaching the younger preparatory children can be safely entrusted to the inexperienced junior assistants. Such practice indicates a lack of conception of the needs of the situation. In quite a number of schools the supervision of pupils in the playground and of their games is not entirely satisfactory. This is a duty that must not be neglected, and the duty should be undertaken in turn by all the teachers on the staff of a school.

In the work of inspection and examination visits were made to all the village schools with one or two exceptions, to all the mission schools, and to all the boarding-schools. Visits were also made to places for the purpose of investigating applications made for the establishment of schools. The reports on the work done by the village schools and by the mission schools indicates that generally a very satisfactory standard of efficiency has been maintained. From the point of view of general efficiency the village schools and mission schools may be classified as follows: Weak, 12; fair, 15; satisfactory or good, 44; good to very good, 55; excellent, 12.

The section of the report dealing with secondary education contains a reference to the work of the boarding-schools.

With regard to the methods of teaching adopted in Native schools it may be said that they are in the large majority of the schools very satisfactory indeed. The pupils make good progress and the teachers are anxious to improve their own efficiency. It has to be repeated, however, that the least satisfactory teaching is done in the subject of English—language teaching. This is the most difficult subject that confronts the Native-school teacher, and if good work is to be accomplished, sound and rational methods must be used.

The health, cleanliness, and general comfort of the pupils are matters with which the teachers rightly concern themselves. Supplies of medicines are provided by the Health Department, and these are carefully dispensed by the teachers. During the winter months hot cocoa is supplied to the children in a large number of schools at the midday recess. The funds necessary to meet the expenditure are raised in various ways by the teachers and parents, and there is little doubt that the children benefit from the efforts made on their behalf in this direction. The annual concert and the annual picnic continue to be matters of great interest and enjoyment in the various settlements.