

An effort is made to keep training-college students under medical supervision, those showing disability being referred to the School Medical Officer for examination. In Auckland Dr. Wilkie arranges to see all women students at the beginning and end of each college term.

In the main centres School Medical Officers give a course of lectures to training-college students on child-welfare and school hygiene. It is to be regretted that the crowded college curriculum makes an extension of this work impracticable.

SCHOOL BUILDINGS.

There has been a great improvement from the hygienic standpoint in the school buildings erected during recent years, allowing as they do ample cross ventilation and good lighting.

In order that more exact information might be obtained with regard to school buildings and sanitation a special report form was drawn up for the use of School Medical Officers. The usual procedure in reporting defects in school buildings and sanitation to the proper authority has been carried out, but fuller information on the subject of school environment has been made available, and forwarded to the Senior Inspector of Schools for the district.

The annual reports of School Medical Officers contain a mass of detailed information regarding school buildings and upkeep which it is not practicable to summarize for the purposes of this report. It is intended, however, to send the information to the Director of Education for distribution to the local Education Boards. From a perusal of the reports from various districts, however, certain conclusions may be drawn.

There is no doubt but that the standard of cleanliness in the primary schools has improved in recent years. There is also no doubt but that it still falls, except in the minority of schools, far below a standard which would be considered satisfactory in the average home. The personality and influence of the teacher are evidenced to a great extent by the school environment. Where, as occurs in a certain number of country schools and in Native schools, the children (under supervision of the teacher) are responsible for the care of the school a higher standard of cleanliness was noted. A (fortunately decreasing) number of teachers appear to have little sense of responsibility in the matter, and allow lumber and dust to accumulate without taking any action. One cannot speak too highly of the efforts of others to secure school surroundings that are not only clean and orderly but attractive. School-cleaners relinquish with difficulty old-fashioned methods. Dry sweeping is extremely common. A few schools use a vacuum cleaner.

School-grounds in general show improvement, but in many places progress is slow, and no effort is made to attain anything beyond the minimum essential for order and cleanliness. Playing-areas, as might be expected, are better in large city schools. School-gardens, generally speaking, receive better attention in recent years, and in an increasing number of instances add greatly to the beauty of the school environment.

A common defect is faulty drainage of the grounds. Outbuildings are often a long distance away at the end of a grassy stretch, necessitating wet feet for the pupils. The standard of cleanliness of outbuildings is often low. Where no water carriage exists common defects are blockage of the pipes from the boys' urinal, resulting in a nuisance; and inadequate protection against flies, as by the provision of automatically-closing lids or by the use of kerosene.

Drinking Supply: There is an increasing number of bubble fountains in use, but especially in country schools the menace of the common mug still persists. Tanks are inadequately or infrequently cleaned out. In some areas there is no record of the school-tank ever being cleaned; in others this is done only every two or three years.

Washing facilities: Common defects are, an inadequate number of basins, and the indifferent way in which these are kept. No towel is provided or the common towel is used, thus assisting to spread common skin-diseases as impetigo and scabies. A few schools use paper towels and in others the teachers are to be congratulated on successfully instituting the individual towel.

Cloak-room accommodation is often inadequate. The pegs are too few and too close together, thus assisting in the spread of verminous conditions and common skin-diseases by means of clothing. The want of proper facilities for drying damp clothes is to be noted in most schools.

Overcrowding, defective ventilation, and defective lighting are to be found in a minority of schools. Provision is being made gradually to obviate these conditions. Many schools with adequate means of ventilation are stuffy because of the failure of the school-teacher to use facilities at his disposal.

OPEN-AIR SCHOOLS.

The open-air schools movement continues to progress. New types of open-air schools have been erected in Taranaki and in Auckland. With reference to the open-air school at Fendalton, Dr. Phillipps reports: "In examining the children I noted the following points—(1) the throats of the children had a more healthy appearance than the average—that is to say, there was little infection, and the tonsils were small; (2) children tend to wear fewer clothes than in the ordinary schools; (3) the posture was better than the average; (4) the children appeared brighter and more alert. On leaving the class-room they always ran in getting from point to point of the playground—an expression of abundant vitality."