

Greater completeness of preparation is expected in reading, writing, spelling, arithmetic, and composition. Teachers of aided and other small schools, especially, have been advised to arrange, in the other subjects, to secure definite results—to modify the amount rather than the quality of the work.

It will be useful to add a few notes in connection with the individual subjects of instruction. Reading, as I have stated, has not reached a high standard of efficiency. The fault lies in the treatment of the subject in the lower divisions of the schools. Lessons should be given in which special attention is directed to pronunciation of words, fluency, phrasing, expression, and comprehension of the language and matter. It is only by systematic teaching that good results can be obtained. In the infant department much greater attention should be given to phrasing and expression. It will be found, if this is done, that more rapid progress will be made. The omission of the letter "h," the curtailment of the affix "ing," the mispronunciation of the words "a" and "the," and the neglect of the necessity to sustain the voice at the minor stops were all very common. While skilful teaching will overcome in a great measure the faults referred to, real excellence will not be secured unless a wider range of subject-matter is provided. I am not prepared at present to recommend the use of additional reading-books, as, until many of the mechanical difficulties of the subject have been overcome, it will be better to concentrate the efforts of the scholars on the lessons of a single book. The pupils of the higher standards should be, however, directed and encouraged to pursue a course of useful reading, where possible, outside the ordinary routine. Spelling was generally well prepared. The programmes of recitation were very full, and the knowledge of the verses accurate. This subject shared with reading a lack of suitable force and expression.

Like reading, writing is, again with honourable exceptions, in need of improvement. This applies with greatest force to the junior classes. An illustration of the course to be followed is given in the first copy-book of the series in use; yet a disregard of all system was the rule. Including figures, all writing should be performed, especially by the youngest pupils, slowly and with great care. Time given thus is saved in consequence of the more rapid progress produced by the carefulness called into play.

It was seldom that I found the requirements in arithmetic insufficiently mastered, and excellent papers were frequently presented. Seeing that from a quarter to a third of the school time is devoted to this subject alone, a considerable amount of success is to be expected. Time might be economized and the value of the work increased if in the infant classes and lower standards tables and exercises in numbers received more attention. Teachers should spare no effort to eradicate the habit of counting on fingers—a defect very prevalent in the schools of the district. Another cause of weakness in a few schools is the use of formulæ in working certain rules by the higher standards.

Composition has been in general efficiently taught. Some attention is needed to the proper forms of letter-writing. Grammar was uneven in quality, being often neglected, presumably owing to its position as a class-subject. In hardly any school have I found the conjugation of the verb successfully mastered by the pupils of Standard V. Of this particular, as of the whole subject, the parts most necessary for the attainment of correct speech and composition should receive the greatest attention.

The treatment of the subject geography was in several respects unsatisfactory. Many teachers had attempted to cover too wide a field, and, in consequence, the answers to questions on important matters were generally too meagre to be of value. Pupils, too, were frequently able to give a full verbal description of the position of a river or a town, but failed to point it out on the map. Here, again, more thorough methods are necessary.

In view of the conditions under which many of the schools work, a satisfactory attempt has been made to overtake the work in remaining subjects of the syllabus. In drawing, a number of the teachers not only produced good results in the standard work, but also entered pupils for the first-grade certificate under the Wellington School of Art. The main difficulty in many schools is a want of knowledge of certain branches on the part of the teachers. This could be overcome to a great extent by placing drawing among the compulsory subjects in the pupil-teacher course, and by encouraging the junior assistants to secure second-grade certificates. In all the schools the model drawing suffers from the want of suitable models.

As much as can be expected at present is being done in the teaching of science in the schools. It should be understood, however, that mere definitions of scientific terms and principles are insufficient without interesting teaching by means of simple explanation, experiment, and illustration. The lists of object-lessons given during the year were in nearly all cases too short, and the work for the various classes was often badly graded.

A fair attempt has been made to satisfy the syllabus in history. It has been suggested, with reason, that reading-books containing an account of the securing of our rights and liberties, a history of the British Colonial Empire, and simple lessons in civic life and its duties would better serve the purpose of colonial youths than the usual course of English history. Such a plan would revive interest in history as a subject of instruction.

Singing is excellently taught in several of our larger schools, but it is not widely adopted as a subject of instruction. Physical education is almost without an exception confined to a little company drill, and that is taught by only a few teachers. In school the conduct of the pupils during the examination was satisfactory, but in the street I have noticed a somewhat frequent adoption by the pupils of the colonial salutation, "Hullo! Mr. ———," when addressing elders, including the teachers. As the tone of the address generally suggests good intentions, a little instruction in more usual forms of politeness is probably all that is necessary.

Satisfactory marks were in most cases obtained by the girls in sewing. In view of the derangement of the work in mixed schools caused by the sewing lessons, it is to be regretted that the amount of work required is not reduced. In these days of sewing-machines, much of the sewing at present demanded could well be dispensed with. The permission to omit geometrical