unseen books. The children again and again failed to recognise words with which the teacher declared they were familiar. That they were in a sense familiar with them was shown by the instantaneous recognition of them by the children who listened while the puzzled child spelled them aloud. By dint of frequent repetition they had been made familiar with the sequence of sounds, "w-h-i-c-h which," just as they had been made familiar with the sequence of words in the too frequently read book; but familiarity had rendered it unnecessary for them to observe closely each word-picture, and lax attention to form had weakened the power of observation. We urge the use by the preparatory classes of at least three sets of books; one set to be thoroughly worked through, and the other two to be merely read, corresponding parts being taken consecutively. It will be found that the same words form the bulk of the reading-matter in all three books, so that the use of the three will not add largely to the labour of dealing with new words. At a small cost sets of books could be got for the school, and with careful handling would serve it for years.

Judged by the failures, the spelling would be considered as very good; but when we find children who have passed in formal spelling making numerous mistakes in the spelling of the geography, and more especially of the composition, exercises, we cannot but question the value of the test applied under the regulations. This test, however, has been cancelled by Order in Council, 26th October, 1896, and we intend in future to give from the class reading-book a passage of five or six lines and six selected words, allowing a pass if not more than three errors are made.

One per cent. of those present in the four higher standards will cover the failures in writing, which must be regarded as very satisfactory. In some schools the children, with few exceptions, were passed on the evidence of their penmanship in the written work of the examination. This is a fair test of efficiency, especially of the penmanship of the upper standards; but its application to all the schools would probably at first raise the percentage of failures in the subject.

Freehand drawing was judged by work done during the examination, the pupils being required to reproduce on a small scale large drawings with which they were unfamiliar. The results were on the whole very good. In a few cases the girls of Standard V. had not practised scale drawing. "Teachers may claim exemption for girls from examination in geometrical drawing," but the Department holds that scale drawing is not practical geometry.

The arithmetic results are not consistent with the actual teaching of the subject. Of the pupils present at the examinations, 44 per cent. failed in arithmetic in Standard VI., 48 per cent. in Standard V., 31 per cent. in Standard IV., and 17 per cent. in Standard III. This statement may take many by surprise, but we feel it to be our duty to make it, and hope it may lead to discovery of the causes of failure. The tests are supplied by the Department. The tests for Standard III. are generally regarded by teachers as too easy to test capacity for Standard IV. arithmetic. Teachers generally concede that Standard IV. tests are fairly trying. The tests for Standards V. and VI. are regarded in a general way as difficult, but serious objection is seldom made to any individual problem. We must look to the treatment of the subject in the schools. Blackboard exposition is, on the whole, very good; but it may be that there is too much of it, and that the children receive too much help, and are not thrown sufficiently on their own resources to make them self-reliant. We believe that sufficient importance is not attached to logical arrangement, and even to mechanical neatness, in setting down solutions. There is frequently a want of the concrete in the first stages of teaching the rules. In country districts, where the children have no opportunity of buying at a store, we frequently find Standard III. pupils unable to divide a quantity of money among their companions, or to take out of it change for a customer buying one of their books. From want of materials we have not tested children in the manipulation of quantities of sand, the division of lengths of tape, &c.; but we feel sure that such exercises would prove as valuable as the manipulation of coins. The same may be said of dealings in bonds and shares, and the making of profits and losses. Such exercises accompanying mental arithmetic and the easy problems by which each rule is introduced would enable the pupils to take a much firmer grasp of the principles involved. We suppose there is sufficient enterprise among our publishers to supply at small cost all the printed forms necessary. In the schools with one teacher there is comparatively little time for blackboard exposition of arithmetic; the greater part of the work must be done at the desks, with but little explanation and direct supervision; and we are not surprised when we find failures in arithmetic in these schools. In many cases, however, higher value might be obtained from the desk arithmetic. The following is the general routine: The children work for forty or fifty minutes, the answers are read, and the sums are marked "Right" or "Wrong." In some cases the marking ends the business; but in others the sums that are wrong are worked at the blackboard irrespective of the character of the errors, and in others the children work again, in their own time, the sums in which they were wrong. We suggest that work be stopped when about two-thirds of the time has passed, answers read, slates marked, and work resumed by those who are right. Those who are wrong should examine their own work, find the nature of their error, correct it, note it for reporting to the teacher, and resume work. The errors which remained undiscovered would require investigation with the teacher's help, either at the desk or at the blackboard. Were the pupils trained from Standard I. upwards thus to examine and report on their own work fewer problems would be considered, but a greater number of correct solutions would be obtained; the subject would afford a better discipline, and the children would have greater success on examination-day. Mental arithmetic is still weak, and cannot strengthen, as it should, the written arithmetic. It may be that our tests have been too limited to do justice, and that our examination results are not an accurate index of the children's capacity to do this class of work. We intend to test with five instead of three problems, and hope that the extension of scope will produce better results. We may mention that in the course of our inspections we frequently see children, while doing their written arithmetic, figuring out results that ought to be worked out in their heads. This practice must tend greatly to weaken their power of mental calculation.