Standard V. and Standard VI. there was a very marked improvement. This, no doubt, was mainly due to the questions being considerably easier than in any previous year since they were issued by the Education Department. At the same time, we consider the questions were quite difficult enough to be a fair and reasonable test of the requirements of the syllabus. We were pleased to find more uniformity as regards difficulty in the various sets of questions. In Standard V. bankrupt sums, and in Standard VI. compound interest, were more frequently wrong than any others. At Jackeytown School the three pupils in Standard VI. worked all the sums correctly.

Upon our inspection visits we noticed that the number of schools at which arithmetic is well taught is increasing. Blackboard teaching, we were glad to note, is getting more common. At too many schools, however, the teachers still do too much of the work, and so the attention of the whole class is not as well sustained as it should be. That the teaching at many schools must still be far too mechanical was plainly shown by the silly nature of some of the errors. Inaccuracy, we suppose, must always be expected, but there can be no excuse for, say, several pounds being given for a few shillings in an item in a bill of parcels, for the amount a bankrupt pays in the pound being set down as more than a pound, for length and breadth being multiplied together to find distance round. In teaching problems the chief fault we noticed was that, while suitable easy illustrations were set, little attention was paid to the principle involved. But it is the principle that should be taught until it can be stated by the majority of the pupils and be applied to similar cases of greater difficulty than the easy example.

In mental arithmetic there is still much to be desired. In the lower classes counting on fingers is far too common. In Standard III. the pupils were very backward or slow in the simplest calculations with various coins. Thus, such questions as "30 pencils at ½d. each?" "5 books at 2s. 6d. each?" "Half a sovereign + a crown + a half-crown + six threepenny-pieces?" were frequently quite beyond the majority of pupils in a class. In Standard IV. the experience was somewhat similar. "Ten half-crowns – ten florins?" would produce many answers in pounds. Then, again, the pupils often were quite unable to make use of in oral work their knowledge of aliquot parts. The question "2,400 at 1s. 8d. each?" frequently brought not a single response till the preliminary question "What part of a pound is 1s. 8d.?" was put in despair. But examination does not include induction. In Standard V. and Standard VI. improvement was very noticeable, but still there was a great lack of readiness in recognising short methods, and such numbers as 20, 240, 480, 960, 1,760, 2,240, and such like had no significance. In turning a number of pence to pounds the pupils were very inaccurate—*e.g.*, "One ton at a 1d. per lb.?" We spent a great deal of time at this subject, teaching rather than examining it, and we were often surprised at the cumbersome methods employed. Thus, in Standard V. not one pupil recognised the shortest method of finding the price of 239 articles at 6d. Again, in Standard III., instead of saying at once "Nine halfpennies are 4½.," pupils invariably said "Nine twos are eighteen, four into eighteen," &c.

Geography improves but slowly in Standards IV., V., and VI. We still have to urge the need of more intelligent teaching as opposed to memory work. The quality of the answers on the surface features of the continents was often very poor. Lists of names of mountains, for example, were readily given, but the answers showed little or no grasp of the relative positions of the ranges, their directions, and the watersheds they form. In this connection we cannot insist too strongly upon the necessity for rough sketches upon the blackboard during the progress of the lessons. "Geographical advantages" evidently do not receive due attention, for when we particularly asked for them with regard to a port or a capital the answers in nine cases out of ten conveyed no reference whatever to them, but simply stated other facts not implied in the question. With regard to mathematical geography, the same confused and hazy notions as noted in former reports were still in evidence. Again and again we were told that *within* the Arctic circle there is during the year only one day and one night, each six months in duration. The same also was said of places *on* the Arctic circle. In short, this was the stock answer to all questions with any bearing on the Arctic and the Antarctic regions. But the syllabus requires a knowledge of the significance of the parallels of latitude, with special reference to the seasons within the Arctic and the Antarctic regions. Some of the poor answering in these standards we consider to be due, in a large measure, to the fact that pupils are not trained to express in writing what they really know. Standard III. geography was often very fine, sometimes very poor; the mean was seldom found. Local geography was generally the weakest branch of the subject; but geographical teaching from the very first should be illustrated by local examples. A few teachers try to cover too much ground, and there appears to be a general impression abroad that the rivers upon which capitals are situated are required. Hence we sometimes found pupils who could not recognise the Andes and the Amazon prating about the Eastern Ghats and the Manzanares. We confess we should like to see geography placed amongst the "class-subjects."

Drawing steadily improves. Scale-drawing is very popular, and was often really excellently well done. Freehand on the whole was good, but at too many schools we found evidence of ruling and measuring where they were expressly forbidden. Several teachers appear to think that in Standard IV. freehand drawing it is allowable not only to rule the guiding-lines, but also to rule squares, triangles, &c., round the copies, and then proceed to do the same on the drawing-paper before "blocking out" the figure. We found many of our copies ruled in this manner. The oral requirements in Standard II. and Standard I. were neglected at several schools. Standard IV. geometry, while not as good as we might reasonably expect it, has improved. Model-drawing in most of the few schools at which it was taken was poor.

In composition the results received were more varied than in any other subject. In Standard VI. and Standard V. the examination cards, as usual, showed three different requirements—first, a letter upon one of the several prescribed subjects, the majority of which were taken from a list presented to us by the teachers as having been treated during the year; second, a simple piece of paraphrasing; third, a few sentences showing corrections of false grammar, proper usage of words,