

seven failing to take up this subject. Of course in a great many schools several standards are usually grouped for vocal music, and it behoves the teacher desiring a good result to see that the exercises taken are suitable as far as possible to the children's voices.

In some schools but little attention is paid to the selection of the songs presented. Many teachers, well able to get excellent singing from a class, are quite content to keep to the same list of songs from one year's end to another. We think it is now necessary that a fresh programme should be drafted each year. We would again point out the need for regular and systematic practice.

GEOGRAPHY.—Although due allowance must be made for the extensive changes in the geography requirements, we must consider this as one of the weakest subjects of the year. The questions set for examination dealt in a direct manner with the chief points in the required work, nevertheless exactly two-thirds of the schools examined were below "satisfactory." Certainly some of the larger schools made commendable efforts to deal with the subject in a practical way. In some we found ingeniously devised apparatus for finding the altitude of the sun, while in one school the headmaster complained of having to turn out at all hours at night to obtain information for his boys about various heavenly bodies that were being observed. On the other hand, we found in a number of the smaller schools, the teachers waiting to be directed on every new point, or waiting the production of new text-books on the subject. We have already fully recognised the difficulty, especially in the smaller schools, of the want of suitable text-books, but we are of opinion that in the geography, as now arranged for the various standards, there is scope for such originality of practical treatment on the part of the teacher as would produce far better results than if he confined his methods to those that can be presented in any ordinary text-book.

With the removal of many of the difficulties that are naturally incidental to the introduction of a change, we confidently look for a considerable improvement in the subject during the coming year.

DRILL.—Great improvement is shown, both in the number to whom some form of physical training is given and in the quality of the instruction. In only eight schools had the subject been entirely neglected, and fully three-fourths of the whole now do very satisfactory work. Strangely enough the neglect of breathing exercises and the evident failure to co-ordinate the instruction with lessons on health were the most common faults.

MORAL INSTRUCTION.—We find some difficulty in estimating the amount and quality of the instruction given under this head. We are fully satisfied that our teachers generally appreciate the value of such instruction, and do not neglect to impart it. The truest test of its efficiency will be found in the after-life and conduct of the child. The different heads under which suggested courses of instruction may be grouped are each and all important and worthy of the attention of every parent, and if the teacher, without the co-operation of the parents, succeeds in instilling in the minds of his pupils good ideas upon a tithe of them he will do well. Suffice to say that we, so far as we have been able in the short time at our disposal to gauge the conduct of the children, are well satisfied with the result. Before us the children have been simple, natural, honest, and intent, instances of even petty dishonesty or attempting to obtain undue advantage being almost unknown.

HISTORY.—Little difference is to be noted in the treatment of history (which has been entirely oral), except that this year selections were made from the lists of subjects specified in the syllabus. In many cases geography B has been substituted for it as an alternative course. There is much need for improvement in the arrangement and setting-out of schemes of work, and we shall, as already notified, expect to find submitted to us for approval at coming inspection-visits, definite and systematic programmes as prescribed in the regulations.

NATURE-STUDY AND SCIENCE.—Nature-study has been begun by several schools, but in only a few cases on correct lines. There seemed to be some doubt in the minds of many teachers as to the manner of treatment of this subject. Local conditions must, of course, to a great extent govern the syllabus of work undertaken, but in all cases it is necessary for the purpose aimed at—viz., the training of the faculty of observation—that the study of the objects and phenomena should be made by the children themselves. During the coming year we look to see this subject more fully taken up, for we feel sure that the advantages derived from the necessary training would be evident in many other branches of the school work.

HANDWORK.—Thirty-two schools (double the number reported last year) have taken up some form of handwork with very satisfactory results. The chief branches undertaken have been plasticine-modelling, brushwork, and ambulance, while in some preparatory classes bricklaying and paper-folding are carried on.

At some of the larger schools school classes have been conducted in cookery, woodwork, and dress-making; also technical classes in dressmaking and continuation classes in shorthand.

Further, classes for the instruction of teachers have been held in ambulance and brushwork, drawing (brushwork, free-arm, blackboard, and model), and woodwork.

In nineteen schools managed by male sole teachers needlework has been taught as a branch of technical instruction.

Since our last report the Reefton Technical School has been built, equipped, and largely employed throughout the year, and we are pleased to state that the grant has at length been made for the Technical School in Nelson.

NEEDLEWORK.—Though fewer schools, thirty, have gained high commendation in needlework, the number classed as satisfactory is rather better than last year. The reports from local examiners were not so numerous as heretofore, the judgment of the quality of the work for the most part being solely determined by the Inspector.

The Pupil Teachers' Entrance Examination was held as usual in June, when twenty-three candidates presented themselves, of whom eleven passed, the papers set being on the new-syllabus lines.