

HISTORY.—More attention was paid to this subject during 1906 than in the previous year. The tragic death of Mr. Seddon at the height of his career afforded an opportunity for the inculcation of many a noble and inspiring lesson. When great men die their country takes them into its keeping that their memory perish not. He had small advantage of education in his youth, and so he valued it the more. His works stand for him. He was the greatest Minister of Education New Zealand has yet known.

Much more may be made of social history and civics. A suggestive book for teachers is "Test-papers in General Knowledge," by H. S. Cooke (Macmillan and Co.). In this connection more may also be made of the daily papers. Strikes bring up the subjects of employer and employee, of Arbitration Courts, of wages and capital, of division of labour, of labour organization, &c. The earthquake at San Francisco disorganizes the mail-service, and the teacher is enabled to throw into prominence alternative routes, and so on. Social history and geography both take account of these events. In this treatment of history, Blenheim Boys' stood well.

SINGING.—In fifty-two schools of the sixty-nine this subject was taught. During 1905 the number was forty-one out of sixty—a distinct advance.

NEEDLEWORK continues steadily to improve. Some splendid exhibits were sent to New Zealand Exhibition. The Fairhall pupils gained eight silver medals in needlework. Springlands, too, although it had a change of teacher, gained a silver medal and a certificate.

PHYSICAL INSTRUCTION was well taught in all the leading schools. Only four teachers have to be reminded that physical instruction is not optional. It need not be of a military character, but should be directed at least to strengthening muscles and lungs, and to developing an upright carriage. Breathing-exercises were practised in eighteen schools. These exercises not only strengthen the lungs, but improve the bearing of the pupils. The teacher may well give this part of physical instruction still more attention. No first-class school produces boys and girls with stooping forms or awkward gait. Sweden, apparently taking the cue from the great English public schools, has for some years systematically taught the organization of school games. As Sweden has, however, taught the rest of Europe how to use some forms of handwork for educational purposes, especially woodwork, it may be possible that the value of school games is arrived at by deduction. Germany has caught the enthusiasm, and conferences of teachers are frequently held to discuss play as a part of education, and to learn how best to organize games. This has reacted on England, so that the last code for primary schools includes permission to devote one afternoon a week to organized play, which afternoon shall count as an attendance for each pupil present. It is thought that the elementary-school pupils will learn from this "to 'play the game,' to 'give and take,' to devote themselves to and efface themselves for a common cause, to feel pride in the achievements of others, to accept victory with becoming modesty and defeat with due composure, and, speaking generally, to acquire a spirit of discipline, of corporate life, and of fair play." In the schools around Havelock, without encroaching on the school time-table, the teachers have greatly interested themselves in the children's games, and an amiable spirit of rivalry finds expression in the annual sports. We have not yet, however, reached the stage of the English code.

Moral instruction receives fair attention. A teacher who sends forth his pupils without ambition and moral earnestness cannot be considered efficient. There is a right ambition which undermines inertia and leads along the line of progress and reform, which makes the pupil discontented with what is mean, and anxious to realise the best of which he is capable. The tone and the discipline of the schools are, in general, good.

HEALTH.—In the larger schools this subject received fair treatment. Several teachers reinforced the lessons by bringing them into relation with first aid, and others found in this a variety of topics for essay-writing. The smaller schools may do more in the latter direction. The Board considered Dr. Mason's scheme of medical inspection of school-children, and generally approved of his suggestions, but could not see its way to provide the funds necessary to engage a medical officer.

NATURE STUDY.—References to this subject appear under the heads of "Handwork," "Drawing," "Composition," &c. Much progress has been made during the year.

HANDWORK.—Forty-one schools undertook handwork of some description. There were eighteen in 1904 and twenty-nine in 1905. The remaining schools are very small. It may, however, be observed that there is no school too small to use concrete methods in teaching. To omit handwork is, therefore, to show that its idea is not grasped—e.g., to use plasticine in order to plot a map in relief is surely a pleasing and instructive variation on the usual drawing of a map, and the mere fact that plasticine is used instead of the pencil cannot constitute this a new subject; so also when plasticine is used to illustrate the mensuration of walls or cubic content, or when bricks are used in drawing plans and elevations, and in illustrations of scale-drawing.

Ambulance and First Aid.—An incident of the past year is worthy of inclusion here; a child had fallen into a water-race, and after several minutes' immersion was recovered unconscious. Among the bystanders was a schoolboy who had been taught first aid, and under his direction the child was brought round. Some consider that but for the presence of that boy the accident would have ended fatally.

Elementary Agriculture.—In 1904 there were six school gardens; in 1905 the number had increased to seventeen, and now there are twenty-four, including three at private schools. The teachers have taken a keen interest in this late departure, and, as Mr. Bruce, our specialist in agriculture, says, they realise that it affords much help in dealing with the other work. Through the study and cultivation of plants the children acquire habits of observation and orderliness—the causal idea, the idea of planning work to ends, the idea of their inevitableness of natural results—which also tends to affect conduct in the schoolroom. Objects are taken from the garden to be used as studies in drawing; topics for essay-writing also abound. Diseases of plants are studied, and indirect lessons on human health taught. The school garden is a laboratory where many experiments are made. In short, the teachers find that