

is the lack of precision and responsiveness in the physical exercises. We are pleased to record that such exercises are selected as will best develop the physique and promote the health of the pupils. With these objects in view, we are glad to see that breathing exercises are coming more and more in general favour.

In the majority of our larger schools cadet corps have been established, and this year these have been formed into two battalions, No. 1 comprising the schools in the northern part of the district, and No. 2 those in the southern. Owing to the difficulty in procuring suitable ranges, cadets have not been able to get sufficient practice in the use of the rifle. We are glad to see that this difficulty has, to some extent, been overcome by the establishment of miniature-rifle ranges.

GEOGRAPHY.—Course "A" geography, we are pleased to record, is well treated and in harmony with the spirit of the syllabus. The teaching aims at cultivating the observation of the pupils. On the other hand, we would recommend that, in drawing up a scheme of geography, teachers should embody in it a certain amount of political geography, as suggested in Course "B." It is not uncommon to find pupils, even in Standard VI, ignorant of the position of some of the most important countries of the world.

HISTORY.—Considered as a reading lesson, history has received regular and fairly intelligent treatment. In some of the schools where the teachers are somewhat inexperienced, there is not sufficient use made of maps, pictures, and other auxiliaries, with the object of vitalising the teaching of this subject.

We are pleased to note that, after the prescribed portions of the historical reader have been taken as a reading lesson, some of our more experienced and thoughtful teachers make a selection of ten or twelve subjects, which they treat as special lessons. Where this plan has been adopted, we have as a rule confined our questions to the work covered by the list. We would suggest that, as far as possible, the teacher should choose such subjects as would give him an opportunity of treating history in such a way as to develop in the pupil true patriotism and a strong belief in the possibilities of his own country.

NATURE-STUDY.—A genuine attempt is made by most teachers to meet the requirements of the syllabus in the important subject of nature-study, but a few yet fail to understand its true spirit and scope, and fall back on such subjects as do not lend themselves to observational and experimental treatment, or make a spasmodic effort to teach all about roots, leaves, &c., from a botany-book. It is made by them too much of an information lesson; they forget that it is a method rather than a subject. The teacher should assume the attitude of an experimenter on the same footing as his pupils. It is surely not asking teachers too much to keep a list of notes, showing experiments and methods of treatment meted out to the subject.

Such specimens, &c., as can be kept, and which are used in the course of these lessons should be available at the Inspector's visit. It is a commendable feature that, in some of our schools, pupils are encouraged to bring specimens and thereby form the nucleus of a small museum, which must be valuable for reference in connection with such lessons as reading and geography.

NEEDLEWORK.—Needlework, as regards quality, is very satisfactory, but, in many instances, the prescribed course is not fully covered. Under the Manual Regulations, more of the larger schools might be expected to take up advanced needlework.

HANDWORK.—It is now universally recognised that, in our primary schools, we should aim at equipping the pupil not only in literary acquirements, but in such subjects as are likely to be of use to him after leaving school. He should be given the power to readily acquire any mechanical occupation he may take up as his work in the future. We therefore think it most important that some form of handwork should be introduced into every school. We would go a step further, and express the opinion that the regulations should be drawn up making attendance at technical schools compulsory, within certain limits, after the pupil has left school.

In twenty-two of our schools, agriculture was recognised by the Department, and Mr. Morison, the Board's agricultural expert, reports that the work progresses favourably, and much useful work is being done. In a farming district, such as Taranaki, teachers might well consider the advisability of taking up agriculture, dairying, or some other kindred subject.

At the beginning of this year instructors in woodwork and cookery were appointed, and classes were established at New Plymouth and Stratford. These were made centres for the neighbouring schools. As an evidence of how this privilege was appreciated, it is sufficient to remark that almost every school that could possibly come in took advantage of it, and close on seven hundred pupils attended these classes.

PROMOTION OF PUPILS.—Most of our teachers exercise a wise discretion in promoting pupils from standard to standard, and, as the results of our tests agree on the whole with theirs, we have no hesitation in accepting their promotions.

The standard of promotion should be kept high, and in our best schools this is done, and consequently, in these schools we do not find that every pupil in every standard is promoted, as sometimes happens in schools in charge of weak and inexperienced teachers. Teachers should be chary in promoting children who have, for no good reason, been very irregular, for it stands to reason that these poor attenders must have missed the school training which is such an important part of their education, and, though they may gain a bare pass, yet they cannot possibly have covered the course laid down in the syllabus in such subjects as drawing, nature study, &c.

SCHEMES OF WORK.—In many cases the schemes of work for each class required by Regulation 5a have not been drawn up as fully and definitely as they should be. These schemes should be mapped out at the beginning of the year, and should show at least the minimum amount of work intended to be covered in each subject for each quarter. When the Inspector visits a school, he should be in a position to know generally what work has been done prior to his visit, and these schemes should be available so that he may, if necessary, test the thoroughness of the work done.