

In the absence of better material for making relief maps (though paper-pulp might easily be made), the recommendation of Mr. Petrie, Chief Inspector, Auckland, might well be adopted. "In every playground should be laid out a level spot, say, 10 ft. by 8 ft., neatly bordered by wood, for making relief maps of countries that are being studied. A supply of sand or friable soil should be kept alongside."

Course B, geography, affords opportunity for so varied a treatment, and the information given is necessarily so indefinite, that it is very doubtful whether lasting impressions of any value are being made upon the children's minds. This year we recommended in preference courses of work to be constructed from the alternative course, Clause 43 of the regulations.

NATURE-STUDY.—A course of nature-study or science is taken in fifty-one schools, and we see no reason why the former should not be generally taught. The small amount of school time required for the study would be scarcely missed, and in its correlation with other branches of work such as composition—oral and written—geography, drawing from nature, and modelling in plasticine, as well as in cultivating the child's powers of observation and reasoning faculties, it should prove of incalculable benefit.

Science, apart from physiology and physical measurements, which are taken as branches of handwork, is taught in the form of physics or agricultural chemistry in but few schools; but we hope that the establishment of a chemical laboratory in connection with the Nelson Technical School will so educate and stimulate teachers that it will prove a veritable science-workshop for the whole district.

NEEDLEWORK was taught in 101 schools, practically universally, as the few exceptions were those schools in which a male teacher is employed, or those in which there were only boys attending. We were well pleased with the neatness and cleanliness of the work, as well as with the regularity and evenness of the sewing, both in the samples, which were usually worked with coloured cotton, and the garments presented for examination. Thirty schools were commended for good work, and to five others even higher praise was awarded.

HANDWORK.—Handwork has been taken in forty-six schools, for the most part in a very satisfactory manner. A variety of branches has been undertaken, the chief being plasticine modelling, taught in twenty-seven schools; elementary agriculture, in twenty-six; elementary physiology, in fifteen; brush drawing, in twelve; and paper-folding, free-arm drawing, bricklaying, modelling in carton, and elementary physical measurements, in lesser numbers. These subjects of instruction have all been solely undertaken by the permanent teachers, with the exception of elementary agriculture, more fully referred to in another part of the report, which has been under the direction of a special instructor.

A considerable extension of this branch of work has been made during the year, chiefly in the way of placing the facilities offered by our present technical schools within reach of schools in the adjoining neighbourhood.

Classes for the instruction of teachers were again held in Nelson and Westport, the subjects taken up including drawing in its different branches, elementary geology, carton-work, cookery, woodwork, elementary botany, physics, chemistry, mathematics, and elementary physiology. In addition to the usual classes that have been carried on in the Nelson Technical School for the past two years, classes in agriculture were held for the first time at Wakefield, Richmond, Motueka, and Nelson, with a considerable amount of success. This class of instruction is, of course, as yet in quite the experimental stage. With the advantage of a chemical laboratory, for which the necessary grant has now been made by the Department, we look for a further development of this most important study.

COMPETITIONS.—A brief reference to the scheme of competitions instituted by Mr. Maginnity, Chairman of the Board, and formally adopted at the beginning of the year, will, we feel certain, prove of general interest. The object of the scheme as carried out was twofold. On the one hand it was an endeavour to encourage further study and research on the part of the youth of the district, who had passed through the ordinary primary school; while on the other it was an effort to stimulate the educational life of our present pupils. The competition was thus arranged in two distinct divisions—namely, Division A, for pupils attending our public schools, and Division B, for ex-pupils. Under the former division were included such subjects as drawing, writing, science (natural-history collections), and literature (essays). This section brought forth such a host of competitors, who sent in so much work of such a very high standard of excellence that we feel sure the object aimed at was most fully attained. In those sections that included drawing, writing, and science the judges had considerable difficulty in making their awards. We would like to call attention to one of the remarks of Mr. Kingsley in his comprehensive report on the natural-history collections. After expressing himself as much impressed with the number and quality of the exhibits sent in, he says, "It would be of very great service if anything could be done to encourage the formation of a small library in each school of books on the various branches of nature-study." We fully appreciate the great aid of such libraries of reference, and it is with pleasure that we are able to state that this idea has been anticipated in some of our schools, where a good beginning has already been made in the direction indicated. In Division B (open to ex-pupils), a rather limited number came forward. Nevertheless, we feel confident that the scheme must tend to much educational good throughout the district, and from the efforts we have had under review in Division A we hope to find many evidences of such benefit when visiting the schools during the current year.

EXHIBITION OF WORK.—For some considerable time we have had in view the holding of an exhibition of handwork, including writing and drawing, from the various schools under our charge. The usefulness of such a display has very often been brought home to us by the comparative disadvantages under which many of our teachers in the more remote parts of the district have to carry on their labours. Such teachers have few opportunities of seeing any work but that of their own schools, and have not the advantage of ready contact with new ideas and progressive methods of