

excellence been maintained in his school up to the present, he would not have sought to change. One lesson may be learned from this incident—whatever style may be adopted, if it is to be successful, it must be taught with earnestness and untiringly supervised. The well-kept copybooks and neatness of the written exercises generally in many schools are evidence of such teaching and supervision; but there are still a fair number of schools in which too little importance seems to be attached to the acquirement of excellence in writing. As to the complaints of business men that boys do not write so well as they used to do, it is some comfort to reflect that their predecessors had the same thing to say when the complainants of to-day were the schoolboys of that earlier time.

In many of our schools oral composition in the infant-classes and lower standards is receiving more attention than formerly, and in many instances a gratifying measure of success has been achieved. The improvement is most marked in those schools where the wider reading-course has been adopted and where the lessons in nature-study are outstanding features of the school-work. When we come to consider the work of the upper standards we have reason to be satisfied with the way in which most of our teachers have set themselves to grapple with the difficulty of training their pupils in written composition. As a consequence of the intelligent treatment of the subject we have found improvement especially noticeable in the essay-writing of the Sixth Standard. We would direct the attention of some teachers to a point that has seemingly been overlooked in the preparation of their Sixth Standard pupils—namely, that they are to be trained to write simple business letters. The need of a few special lessons in this branch of the work was apparent in the crude and unintentionally discourteous terms in which such letters were frequently couched.

In the teaching of number very good work is done in the infant-classes, and the results of our tests in Standards I, II, and III are generally very satisfactory. The pupils of Standard IV have not shown to advantage, and those of Standard V make a less satisfactory appearance than those in any of the other standards. In Standard VI 73 per cent. of those examined passed in arithmetic. With one notable exception, where every pupil passed, the large schools fared rather worse than the other schools, the percentage of passes being 69. As we have often pointed out, the country children of the Sixth Standard are generally more rapid workers than the scholars of large classes in town schools, and on the whole they are more accurate. We leave the solution of this state of matters as a problem for town teachers.

In a fair number of schools good work was done in mathematical and physical geography (Course A), the teachers realising that the value of the lessons mainly depended on the extent to which their treatment of the subject was based upon the actual observation of natural phenomena by the children. Many teachers, mainly through lack of training and sometimes for want of knowledge, failed to make use of this method of treatment, and, relying on the contents of some tiny text-book, gave the children only words and bewilderment. In the political geography (Course B) the children made use of Nelson's "The World and its People," and in their reading from this and from the *School Journal* they had opportunities of acquiring some knowledge of notable places in their own and other lands. For use in the schools the Board has purchased five stereoscopes, with a very large number of views of places of interest in the Dominion. We wish it had been fifty instead of five. With such aids to teaching the lesson in geography will surely be a delight.

In dealing with history and civic instruction teachers have mainly depended on the use of history readers, the reading being supplemented by explanation and questions on the subject-matter. We would remind the teacher that it is essential, before a history lesson begins, to have the map displayed, so that the places of interest referred to in the text may be pointed out without loss of time. Had we not frequently noticed the absence of the map during the progress of the lessons, it might be superfluous to suggest its use in this way. For instruction in civics some teachers have found splendid material in "The Citizen Reader" (New Zealand edition), a copy of which every teacher should have.

In the large schools regular courses of lessons in elementary science and nature-study have been satisfactorily carried out. The most interesting lessons have been given in the schools where the children have shared in the cultivation of the school gardens. In about a dozen schools during the past year cottage-gardening has been taken as one of the subjects for which grants are earned under the Manual and Technical Instruction Acts; and it is most gratifying to report how successfully the gardens are managed. Indeed, some of the gardens are worth going a long way to see, and the exhibits from them have been a feature in the annual shows of local horticultural societies. Besides the schools in which cottage-gardening is recognised as a school subject, quite as many others have flower-gardens under the care of the children, among whom the desire that each should have the prettiest plot creates and fosters a friendly rivalry in a most delightful and health-giving hobby.

Handwork in various forms finds a place in the programme of a large proportion of the schools, and many very good specimens of brushwork and plasticine modelling are shown. We note with pleasure the increase in the number of pupils taking carton and cardboard work, the practice in this affording an excellent training in neatness and accuracy, and laying a sure foundation for the clear understanding of the mensuration of surfaces and simple solids. Very good work continues to be done in the woodwork classes, and some remarkably fine isometric drawing is shown by the boys attending these classes. We have now two specially trained teachers of cookery engaged in teaching girls of the Fifth and Sixth Standards at several centres. Their classes are skilfully managed, and are deservedly popular.

The military drill of the cadets calls for a special word of praise—in fact, one or two of the companies go through the movements with a precision and cleanness of action seldom attained by any but "regulars." In all the schools physical drill is practised, the best results being obtained in the schools where for five or ten minutes each day both boys and girls go through the exercises in the open air.