

Here and there I have found *physical drill* performed very well indeed, but generally it is carried out in a perfunctory manner, or entirely neglected. Teachers throughout the district have been advised to take their classes in breathing-exercises and physical drill daily, to have the work performed with vigour, and always, when possible, in the open air. The necessity for physical training in the schools is becoming more and more fully recognized, and the Department is appointing trained instructors who will visit the different districts for the purpose of teaching this important subject on scientific lines. These instructors, however, will probably have to confine their attention for some time to come to the larger centres. In the meantime, teachers who have no opportunity of learning the work under the permanent instructors of the Defence Department or otherwise cannot do better than carry on along the lines of the drill-book on issue to the schools, or obtainable at the Board's office. This book is fully illustrated, and no difficulty should be experienced in arranging a suitable varied course of exercises.

In consequence of the inauguration of the wider scheme of universal military training, the authorities have found it advisable to demilitarize the Public School Cadets. For many reasons this is to be regretted. Only those who have been able from personal experience to note the effects of the Cadet system can appreciate the fine general influence the special training had upon the schools. In particular, most teachers will acknowledge a debt of gratitude to the past and present boy non-commissioned officers for the splendid work they have done under that system. Cadet companies and detachments may, if teachers choose, still continue to carry on as such; the Cadets may wear the uniform, but not so the officers unless they are commissioned; and a certain amount of company drill and rifle shooting may be done. At the Inspector's annual visit Cadets were inspected at Greymouth, Cobden, Runanga, and Blackball Schools. Private James White, of the Cobden detachment, is to be congratulated on winning the "Wanganui" Challenge Belt, the competition being open to all primary departments throughout the Dominion. The Rev. T. F. Taylor, the Scout Commissioner for the West Coast, acted as the Board's instructor in physical drill at some of the more distant schools, and no doubt the boys there have derived considerable benefit from his tuition.

The schemes of work in *geography* are not generally in accordance with the syllabus requirements. Each of the three branches—physical, mathematical, and political—requires due attention; but in many programmes of work one or more divisions are practically unprovided-for. It is quite possible in a suitable scheme of work to combine the three branches, and to lighten the work by spreading it over two or more years. No use appears to have been made of modelling in plasticine or clay as an aid to the study of geography. I am not prepared to say to what extent local natural features have been studied, but there is at least one instance of a school in a most favourable situation where no reference seems to have been made to the many fine natural examples with which the locality is blessed.

*History* has received very scanty treatment. The Historical Reader is in general use, but if the reading is not supplemented by oral instruction the results must necessarily be somewhat meagre. Teachers are advised to arrange their schemes on the concentric system; but, in any case, they should show how the programme of work as suggested in the syllabus is spread over the different classes for two or more years. It is probable that history would not prove so irksome if it were correlated more intimately with composition, geography, and drawing. Usually the pupils have a very fair knowledge of elementary civics.

In the larger schools *elementary science* is well done. As a rule, however, nature-study is not effectively treated, and in many cases there is no indication that it receives any attention whatever. Some form of nature-study is required in every school. In certain grades no definite course is demanded; but though it may have no place in the time-table, it nevertheless should be dealt with in a general way, and the scheme of work should show how this is done. This branch of study can be satisfactorily treated in conjunction with handwork, drawing, geography, and composition.

*Moral instruction* must be given in all classes, and instruction in *health* in Standards III to VII. In every well-conducted school these subjects will necessarily receive full attention, whether they are provided for by regulation or not, and there is abundant evidence that they have been faithfully dealt with throughout this district. It would be well, however, if some indication of the nature and mode of instruction were set out in the schemes of work.

The *needlework* inspected was almost invariably good, and in one or two of the schools the girls have gone well beyond the requirements of the syllabus. Teachers have been recommended to have the work of the very young children carried out with large needles, thick coloured thread, and very coarse material, such as forfar or art canvas. If this were done, the danger of straining the muscles of eye and hand would be avoided, and even children below Standard I could receive elementary training in this most useful subject.

The value of *handwork* in correlation with other subjects is not fully appreciated, and the district as a whole compares rather unfavourably with others in this connexion. It does not seem to be understood generally that handwork need not be taken as a separate subject, but should be used as a means of supplementing the general teaching. When classes are recognized the necessary material is supplied, and there is at once available a valuable aid towards making the ordinary work more interesting and definite. Thus, a good deal of the arithmetic and drawing may be mastered by the intelligent application of stick-laying and brick-laying; modelling in plasticine may be used in conjunction with drawing, nature-study, and geography; and paper-folding, carton-work, and cardboard modelling are similarly valuable in connexion with arithmetic, mensuration, and geometrical drawing.

#### General.

The percentage of attendance for the district was 87.1 in 1911, and 88.6 in 1912. The percentage for the whole Dominion in 1911 was 89.3, and for the Otago District 91.7. I have not been able to investigate the general conditions affecting attendance, but from information gained in the course of conversation with teachers I am of opinion that a decided improvement would be brought about if the compulsory clauses of the Education Act were more rigidly enforced.