

enunciation is often indistinct. We regret to report that expressive soulful recitation is the exception, while the subject-matter of the recitation often calls for attention. We have been pleased to note that in Standard VI in some of our schools attention has been given to some of the more important means whereby the author of the poem which is being studied has achieved his most striking effects—i.e., the value of the rhythm, rhyme, alliteration, and figures of speech.

*Nature-study.*—A study of the scheme of work frequently gives evidence that the ground covered in this subject is very limited, and that consequently there is unnecessary repetition. It is not an uncommon practice for a class to merely revise the course it followed in the previous year. The subject is thus robbed of that freshness, that living interest, which it should possess. If the teacher considers it advisable to repeat the course for another year he should see that the subjects are treated more fully and extensively. Teachers when planning out their experimental work in nature-study would find useful a small text-book called “Botanical Experiments for Schools,” by Ida H. Jackson, M.A., which is published by Blackie and Son, London.

*Composition.*—A gradual improvement has been shown in this subject; but letter-writing is too often weak and wanting both in quantity and quality. The writing of business letters seems to be neglected in many schools, and more practice in this work is essential.

*Discipline.*—In not a few of our schools where the order is good the discipline is not sufficiently forceful and stimulating to secure satisfactory results. The self-activity of the child should be wisely directed. Children, as a rule, tend to follow the line of least resistance, and must be constrained to exert themselves mentally until industrious habits are acquired. Again, many teachers do not realize the importance of checking habits that tend to militate against the work of the school. As an indication of habits to be eliminated may be mentioned the following: (a) The snapping of fingers to call attention to the fact that the pupil is prepared to answer; (b) prompting a child when reading; (c) calling out answers when not called upon to do so; (d) slovenly attitudes when sitting or standing.

*Teachers' Saturday Classes.*—Saturday classes for the instruction of teachers under the Manual and Technical Regulations were held during the past year at New Plymouth and Stratford. The courses undertaken comprised the following subjects: Drawing, cardboard and plasticine modelling, cookery, hygiene, and dairy-work. In all, sixty-six teachers attended the classes—thirty-four at New Plymouth and thirty-two at Stratford. The regularity of attendance has been far from satisfactory, and it seems to us that some steps should be taken by the Board to require a deposit from each teacher attending these classes, this deposit to be refunded if the attendance has been satisfactory. This appears necessary, as some of the teachers, if we are to judge by their attendance, are simply playing with the work, and do not seem to appreciate the efforts made to enable them to qualify themselves for their profession. At the beginning of last year the Department made a grant for the training of uncertificated teachers other than pupil-teachers and probationers. Accordingly, classes were established for this purpose at Stratford, Opunake, and Urenui, the roll numbers being respectively twenty-eight, five, and four. The regularity of attendance at these classes was also very disappointing.

*School Manual Classes.*—During the year there were 100 schools in operation in the district, and the greater number of these took up handwork in some form or other. In addition to the ordinary handwork subjects, instruction in woodwork, cookery, agriculture, dairy-work, chemistry, physiology, and first aid, physical measurements, advanced needlework, botany, swimming, dressmaking, surveying, ironwork, &c., was recognized in 151 cases. Instruction in agriculture and dairy-work has been made a special feature. Forty-one schools have taken up agriculture. In each of the school-gardens a plot is usually set aside for experimental work, and each child is required to have a plan of the ground and keep a record of the gardening operations, showing the various manures used and the weights of the crops, &c. In addition, a course of instruction is given in elementary chemistry bearing on the work done. Twenty-five schools have covered a comprehensive course in dairy-work. Most of the schools taking up this subject are now well equipped with the apparatus for carrying on the necessary experimental work, and the pupils have had practical instruction in the chemical and physical properties of milk and of milk-testing by means of the Babcock tester. A special agriculture and dairy-work instructor visited the schools several times during the course of the year.

*Rural Classes at Stratford District High School.*—The following report by the headmaster of the District High School, Stratford, will give some indication of the course of instruction in rural subjects that has been carried out for several years in that institution. The number of pupils attending the rural classes in the secondary department of this school has again increased during the year. The progress of the scholars has been satisfactory: the second-year class, particularly, has done good work. In all subjects of their science course the pupils have evinced keen interest. In the cognate subjects—chemistry, physics, dairy science, and agriculture—the interest taken was very keen indeed. This was due, in my opinion, to a certain extent at least, to the fact that the instruction given was mainly practical. The laboratory work in agriculture was chiefly confined to the analysis of soils and manures, and the knowledge so gained was applied to the manuring of the soil in the experimental plots. The greenhouse has again proved of great utility. Early plants—tomatoes, cabbages, cauliflower—were grown in it, and when these were removed tomatoes for the season's crop were planted out. Unfortunately, blight soon made its appearance among them, and the plants were for the most part badly affected. The experience gained by the boys in dealing with the pest must be of great value to them. Pruning, spraying, &c., were all done by the boys. Experiments were continued on the growing of lucerne, with special reference to the value of soil-inoculation both by transference of soil from an inoculated plot and by green manuring with clover. Fairly extensive experiments have recently been started on the comparative values of various manures applied to the growing carrots, swedes, mangolds, and potatoes, and the results of these will be available next year. Orchard-work was introduced during the year. In the early spring eighteen fruit-trees were purchased, and Mr. R. McK. Morison gave a demonstration on the planting