

sible for such improprieties as “partickler,” “tremenjous,” “sorce” (source), “placuz” (places), “dishers” (dishes), “ut” for “it,” “paintud” for “painted,” the joining of the final consonant of one word on to the initial vowel of another, as “ourise,” “yourears” for “our eyes,” “your ears,” &c. We shall expect the marks for reading awarded by teachers at their term examinations to show more evidence of the detection of these faults than they do at present. The proportion of schools in which we are able to express satisfaction with the recitation is still very small. There are exceptions, of course, but, generally speaking, we find little medium between “stagy” elocution and declamation and mere mechanical and halting repetition, and we do not know which is of the less literary and educational value. As we said last year, the regulation requiring a minimum of 200 lines to be memorized is partly the cause of the unsatisfactory treatment of this subject. It hampers the teacher in his selection of pieces, and encourages him to make too much use of the poetry as a home task.

*Spelling.*—As judged by the special tests and from the class composition, spelling is good, and we here state what we have frequently stated before, that far too much time is taken up in our schools over this subject. Frequently more time is given to the hearing and dictating of spelling exercises than to the teaching of such an important subject as composition. As one of our greatest educational authorities points out, if it were not that we had to write spelling would be an altogether useless accomplishment, and that it is only when we write that any deficiency in this respect comes to light. All that should be necessary then is to teach the correct spelling of words which are in every day use and which appear in the ordinary written composition; while, as a matter of fact, valuable time is being taken up in teaching the children in even the lowest standards to spell words that they will never use either in written or in spoken language. Our system of examination is not free from blame in this matter, as it has encouraged teachers to cling to the tradition of the time when the English of a class was represented by one solitary book, in the reading of which the pupil was drilled till he knew it by heart. It is our intention for the future to select our tests mainly from the *School Journal* and the continuous readers, and in all cases to check the result with the spelling in the pupil's own composition.

*Writing.*—On the whole writing is satisfactory, and where we have found it otherwise the cause has not been far to seek—lack of supervision or of systematic blackboard demonstration during the so-called writing-lesson. These faults are most in evidence in schools under sole teachers, who use the writing-lesson merely as a means of occupying one class while another class is doing oral work. No time-table can be considered satisfactory that does not provide for a simultaneous writing-lesson at least twice a week for all classes.

*Composition.*—Fullness and freedom of expression are now general characteristics, and there is really no comparison between the eight stilted lines of the old syllabus S3 and the really excellent compositions that we now frequently get from S2 and even from S1. The work of S1 to S3 is in not a few instances relatively better than that of the upper standards, as we find some teachers who, relying on the previous work of their pupils, are inclined to neglect the systematic teaching of composition in S5 and S6. The result of this neglect was apparent in the weakness shown by some schools in the letter-writing test. Our remarks last year on punctuation are still to the point. Unless the pupil is made to realize that the full meaning, force, and clearness of his written verbal expression are dependent on correct punctuation, the learning of mere mechanical rules and the punctuating of set pieces will be of little benefit to him.

*Arithmetic.*—The efficiency mark in arithmetic is the same as in former years—“satisfactory” to “good” in S1 to S4, and, as judged by the test-cards, “moderate” to “fair” in S5, and “satisfactory” in S6; and as far as we can gather, much the same standard of results obtains in other districts. We have over and over again expressed in reports our opinion of the harm done to the rational treatment and to the educational and practical value of this subject by the too-exacting requirements of the public examinations. Practical and oral arithmetic will continue to be neglected so long as they have such little examination value and so long as the teacher feels that his only hope lies in incessantly drilling his pupils in the mechanical solutions of types of the complicated problems that are likely to be set at a public examination. It is to be sincerely hoped that, so far as the primary schools are concerned, the new syllabus will make some reform in this matter.

*Geography.*—Much of the work presented in geography was distinctly good, and the improvement noted in last year's report has been well maintained. Where the work has fallen short of requirements we are confident that this result is not attributable to lack of zeal or effort on the part of the teachers so much as to mistakes in treatment and to indefiniteness of aim. This judgment is based more especially on the schemes of work and the methods which we have found in operation. Defects noticeable in schemes of work are—(a) The aim and method of treatment are not indicated with sufficient definiteness; (b) overlapping of the work beyond reasonable requirements even of the concentric method frequently occurs, and pupils in consequence “mark time,” lose interest, and make little progress; (c) continuity is made to suffer from the absence of a comprehensive scheme of work covering the progress of the pupils from the lowest class to the highest. With regard to treatment, the following points are recommended to the careful attention of teachers: Greater emphasis should be laid on the intimate relationship between physical and commercial geography. Pupils should be led to discover or infer for themselves much information which is often presented by the teacher as a list of facts for memorizing. Many of the minute details of the geography of our own country (e.g., unimportant physical features, the names of small townships and of stations on the railways) might with advantage be omitted from the schemes, as it has value neither as pure knowledge nor as a means of interpreting and realizing the world beyond the pupil's environment. More use should be made of newspapers, the Official Year-book, and the like as useful means by which the pupils can be led to discover in an interesting and stimulating manner much valuable matter.