

imagination is of primary importance; hence simple and attractive narrative must form the substance of the instruction. In this connection it is pleasing to note that in some schools oral history is successfully introduced as early as S1 and S2. Schemes of simple historical stories are arranged dealing with famous men and women and stirring deeds, and thus the early interest of the child is aroused and the ground is prepared for more serious and solid work in later years. With regard to the history schemes presented during the year, we are pleased to record that in many cases praiseworthy efforts have been put forth to associate history with geography and other subjects of the curriculum. Being essentially human subjects dealing with man and the life of man, history and geography are interdependent, and neither can be studied without reference to the other.

*Writing.*—The attainment in this subject still shows a fairly wide range. In very many of our schools carefully written and methodically arranged exercises give abundant evidence that the subject has received careful and systematic treatment. Some teachers, however, set a very low standard, or are inclined to neglect the work as far as instruction or proper supervision is concerned. Far too many instances of irregularities in size, form, spacing, weight, and style are in evidence. Accuracy in letter-formation and strict attention to detail, as well as facility and rapidity of movement, should at all times be insisted upon. Where a system is not taught by the medium of a copybook, it is often found that head teachers fail to set a uniform style for the school. If all teachers would disallow everything in the nature of scribble and always insist upon a free-running style in which all letters are correctly formed, the slur so often cast by business people upon the writing of our schools would soon disappear.

*Drawing.*—This subject is satisfactorily taught in most schools, and in some very creditably. In others there is no decided elaboration of the scheme of work and too little attention to the aims and methods professed. A want of the correct knowledge of the underlying principles of drawing is often responsible for a badly graded selection of objects for freehand work. Instances are still to be found where instrumental drawing is taught uncorrelated with the other subjects of instruction, whilst in many schemes there does not appear a really progressive course in design and colour. Much of the work in drawing is still too laboured. Pupils should be taught to express their ideas by means of pencil or brush with the same facility and rapidity as they are taught to use their pen in writing.

*Singing.*—This subject continues to be fairly well treated by a majority of teachers, at least so far as the actual songs are concerned; but there is still much room for more systematic and thorough treatment. In view of its importance in the scheme of general culture, it is worthy of at least the same consideration as that given to other subjects. Where the treatment is perfunctory the pupils lose invaluable training. Much of the instruction as laid down in the syllabus receives, unfortunately, too little consideration. This applies more especially to that portion dealing with musical notation. If pupils are to receive permanent benefit they must acquire the ability to read music, and to sing from notes rather than by ear only. In some small country schools where the teacher is unable to teach singing, and no provision has been made to meet the requirements, the want of its brightening and stimulating influence on the school-work generally is felt to be a distinct loss.

*Physical Instruction.*—This very important branch of school training receives due recognition at the hands of teachers, aided by an occasional visit from the earnest staff of physical instructors, the members of which are the same as last year. It is unfortunate that the large number of schools to be visited and the long distances to be covered make such heavy demands on the time at the disposal of the latter that it is found to be quite impossible to devote adequate time to each school. Under the conditions it is considered that something in the way of a refresher course for teachers might with advantage be attempted at the various centres. Practically all our teachers make ample provision for carrying out an approved course of exercises, but it is felt that a refresher course would prevent staleness and add zest and enthusiasm. A more intimate knowledge on the part of teachers of the exercises, with the corresponding physiological effects of each, could not but prove highly beneficial to them and their pupils. In reference to organized games and other outdoor recreation, it is found that most teachers adopt a correct attitude, but there are still some who appear to regard these as outside their school duties. The attention of the latter is directed to the regulation on page 25 of the syllabus, dealing with physical training.

*GENERAL.*—Heavy rains and floods, and later an outbreak of influenza, seriously interfered for a time with the attendance of many schools. It is satisfactory to be able to report, however, that, except in a comparatively few cases, the general efficiency of the teaching has been well maintained. Although there are some teachers who are unprogressive and some schools that are not quite efficient, a substantial majority of the teachers carry out their work with zeal, show commendable enthusiasm, and render valuable service to the State.

During the year there have been many changes in the staffing of the schools, and we regret the loss to the service of men and women who have been long identified with the cause of education. They have the satisfaction of knowing, however, that they have done their duty and been largely instrumental in building up a system which, in spite of much criticism, bears favourable comparison with that of other lands. Those who have taken their places have made a good impression, and we believe that the outlook to-day for the whole district is healthy and promising.

From the members of the Board we have received faithful support, and the usual excellent relations have prevailed. We regret the retirement of the Board's Secretary, Mr. Lane, who during all his long term of service was exceedingly helpful to the Inspectors. His unflinching courtesy, honesty of purpose, and faithful discharge of duty have been much appreciated. To this staff for all their kindnesses and for help rendered in connection with our professional duties we tender our sincere thanks.