

civics are followed, but the treatment of the topics is often hard and dry. We are pleased to state that it is probable that the syllabus in history will be remodelled, and that more time will be allotted to this subject.

Geography.—A departure from the old methods of teaching geography has been noted, and in but few schools has the subject been inefficiently taught. In most schools importance has been attached to the correlation of geography and history, and by pictures and other means the geography lesson has been made a live one—one approached by pupils and teachers alike with pleasure. The old methods of wearisome note-taking are gradually disappearing under pressure from the more interesting graphic methods in use in our best schools. We are not satisfied, however, with the courses prescribed generally for Standards IV and III, where these two classes are grouped for the subject. In addition to covering Standard III work, the syllabus of work for Standard IV should be extended so as to give the children a much more extensive knowledge of the world than can be gained by cursorily covering for a second year the geography of New Zealand. We propose issuing for the guidance of our teachers some notes showing how the course for Standards III and IV might be improved.

Drawing.—The work in this subject, generally speaking, leaves room for improvement. Many of the exercises presented in books are beautifully set out and finished, but we feel that too much time is devoted to the finish of the drawing and too little to the teaching of the principles on which the exercises are founded. It is most important that the children should show facility in rapid reproduction of an exercise that has been practised step by step. Many of our schools present for the various classes a wisely graded scheme which enables the teachers to follow up a well-defined course of instruction in each class: where this is done the treatment of this subject leaves little to be desired. Every one of our teachers should closely study the excellent notes on the teaching of free drawing as published in different issues of the *Education Gazette* for 1924. Not all our teachers realize that drawing is a means of self-expression, and that each child should be afforded ample opportunity for such expression. The programmes for each term should include practice in freehand and instrumental drawing and in colour and design. In future we shall expect to see more attention paid to instrumental drawing from Standard I upwards.

Singing.—We feel that the value of singing as a cultural subject is not appreciated to its full extent, and consequently the teaching of it is taken up seriously by only a few teachers. The syllabus of instruction laid down is an excellent one, but we are doubtful if the majority of teachers have had sufficient training to enable them to treat the subject successfully. However, much more than at present could be done, and we expect teachers to pay greater attention to singing (including voice-production) during the coming year. Part singing also deserves more attention.

In our larger schools much might be made of fife and bugle and drum. School bands could be quite successfully carried on. A few of our progressive schools make excellent use of the gramophone in developing musical appreciation.

Nature-study and Agriculture.—The character of the work in nature-study and agriculture is gradually undergoing a change in the schools. Teachers are realizing what a force these subjects can be in the intellectual development of the individual, and how sound work in these subjects must result in the development of citizens with a fuller interest in natural production and social organization. The training in scientific method is considered most important, and efforts are being made in developing habits of scientific thought by judicious discussion and note-taking. The notebooks are a record of the changed attitude towards the work, and show quite definite advancement. Isolated schemes for each division in the school have been replaced by schemes continuous throughout the whole school, but with difficulties graduated to suit the different divisions. These schemes are producing greater efficiency. Correlation between school-work and the work of the district is being encouraged, and is giving a broader outlook to the scholars. This is in some cases resulting in the recognition by the teacher of the bias of the child mind, and effort is then made to develop this bias along natural lines.

WORK OF ORGANIZING TEACHERS.

The improvement in the quality of the work of those schools under the instruction of the two organizing teachers has been very marked. We desire to specially recognize the good work of these two organizers, who have ungrudgingly given of their best throughout the year, and often under conditions that bring upon them very considerable discomfort. Their reward, however, lies in the gratefulness of teachers and in the knowledge that the pupils under their supervision have made sound progress throughout the year. Every visit we pay to the schools under the organizing teachers reveals the thoroughness and the efficiency of their services.

SCHOOL BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS.

During the year the Board, guided by the practical advice of its architect, continued its policy of remodelling unsuitable school-buildings. We have nothing but praise for the improvements so effected, and hope to see the policy continued as far as funds permit.

Owing to increased interest in the appearance of the schools and their surroundings—interest fostered by the helpful advice of the Board's agricultural instructors—during the year steady improvement was effected in the laying-out and general care of the grounds. But we still have sites to which nothing has been done for years, and these are an eyesore to all that pass by.

CONCLUSION.

Once again we would place on record our sense of the value of the hearty co-operation of the Board and all its officers throughout the year. To all our proposals full consideration was given, and our thanks are due for the interest shown and the help afforded.