

to be unfit to take the full course of exercises laid down in the drill-book. Owing to a member of the staff being on a visit to the Homeland, the two remaining instructors have had a very strenuous year, and, although practically all the country schools were visited, it was found impossible to devote as much time as usual to each.

In connection with those games which are usually associated with the drill tables, teachers continue to display much enthusiasm. Besides the physical benefits which accrue, games help to bridge the gap between teacher and pupil; and those teachers who give so much of their own time to the supervision of school games, such as basketball, football, and cricket, undoubtedly reap a reward in the improved relationship which is brought about.

*Health and Temperance.*—Both these subjects continue to receive due attention. The teaching is in the main dogmatic, but, as the aim is practical rather than cultural, and as only ascertained facts are presented, this is not a defect. Many teachers inculcate habits of personal cleanliness and tidiness in a practical way by holding regular inspection of hands, finger-nails, &c.

#### PROFICIENCY EXAMINATION.

The Proficiency Examination was, in the case of remote schools, held after the 1st October, when the second inspection visit was made. For the candidates from other schools examinations were held at convenient centres during the latter part of November and December.

#### GENERAL.

An attempt was made during the year to extend still further a knowledge of modern infant-room and junior-school practice by lending recent publications, sample occupations, and other class-room aids. These have proved particularly acceptable in the smaller and more remote schools.

The secondary departments of the district high schools continue in most cases to do good work, although some suffered to a certain extent through the interruptions consequent on a change in the staff. The work of the teachers in the smaller schools is exceedingly onerous, and the general success of these institutions is very gratifying.

The attendance at some schools was adversely affected, and the work of inspection was to some extent delayed, by the prevalence of measles in the district.

The teaching staff of the district in general consists of trained and efficient teachers, only a comparatively small number being untrained or uncertificated. The schools as a whole are fulfilling their function of building up character, instilling love of country, and inculcating loyalty to duty. In spite of certain adverse circumstances we are convinced that the past year marks an advance in the general efficiency of the schools. Education in this district appears at length to be definitely recovering from the wound inflicted upon it by the Great War.

To the Chairman and members of the Education Board, as well as to the Secretary and his staff, we wish to express thanks for their unfailing courtesy and the assistance they have readily placed at our disposal.

#### OTAGO.

At the end of the year 260 public schools were in operation in Otago.

Nevis and Makarora received one visit from an Inspector, and the organizing teacher spent a week at each of these schools. All other schools of Grade I and upwards received two or more visits during the year. Ten schools were visited by the Southland Inspectors, twelve by the Canterbury Inspectors, and the Otago Inspectors paid two visits to twelve schools in Canterbury and to ten in Southland. Some of the schools in Grade 0 were visited and reported on, and, with the exception of a few young children in some household schools established towards the end of the year, provision was made for the inspection of all standard children in these schools. Twenty-five private schools also received one or more visits during the year.

#### EFFICIENCY.

Our estimate of the general efficiency of the public schools is as follows: Excellent or very good, 10 per cent.; good, 47 per cent.; very fair, 33 per cent.; fair, 9 per cent.; weak, 1 per cent. One of the two schools classified as weak has been closed, and the children are now being driven to a centre. Of the twenty-two schools which are classified as fair, three are in Grade III and one in Grade IVa. In the last, and in one of the Grade III schools, a change in the headmastership has been made by the Board. The others are small country schools situated some distance from a centre, in the majority of which changes in the staffing had been made during the year.

Organization is, in general, quite satisfactory. In several of the larger schools considerable advance has been made in the direction of reducing the size of the large classes by the adoption of parallel classification.

The present policy of reducing the size of the class-rooms when alterations or extensions to buildings are being carried out will eventually lead to the more frequent formation of composite classes in schools of the higher grades.

We are pleased to report that careful attention has been given to the preparation of schemes of work and to the outlining of the daily programmes of instruction.