

regarded as inefficient. In several cases, however, the inefficiency is to be attributed to teachers who had given up charge of the schools some months before the examination.

*Organization and Management.*—The organization and management of the great majority of the schools I have visited and examined continue to be satisfactory. It is chiefly in small schools having a large number of classes that serious faults of organization are met with. In these the difficulties to be overcome are certainly formidable. To help to improve matters, time-tables, with suggestions for their working, have been for the past two years supplied to such teachers as required them; and in most cases the teachers report that they have derived considerable benefit from the arrangements recommended. A few have complained that they have found them unworkable; but their exceptional experience may, I think, be attributed in large measure to faults of management and government, and want of resources. In a considerable number of schools marked improvement has been effected in the management and teaching of the infant classes, and I have great pleasure in recording the care and intelligence with which suggestions made by one or other of the Inspectors have been carried into practice by a good many of the mistresses. At the same time, in the smaller schools the work of the youngest pupils is still frequently deficient in variety, and is so arranged as to encourage habits of inattention and trifling. What other result can flow from the practice of setting infants to copy a word or a few figures for an hour or more, as is still done by some teachers? Even in the most intractable of small schools frequent practice of simple extension exercises after a leader, frequent changes of work, and extra intervals for play, might effectually lighten the round of infant lessons. The supervision of the desk work (chiefly writing and figuring) of the lower classes is still unsatisfactory in a considerable number of schools. This need not occupy much time or seriously interrupt the teaching of other work. The slates should always be suitably ruled; but this is not always attended to. In small schools monitors might very well assist in giving the needful desk supervision without interrupting their own work for more than two or three minutes at a time. There is much reason to complain of the training in methods of a good many of the pupil-teachers. In the larger schools especially, where the head masters do little or no regular teaching, they might fairly be expected to train up their apprentices in intelligent inductive methods. I greatly regret that their exertions in this direction have not been more uniformly successful. If the training of the pupil-teachers is weak and disappointing, the government and management of their classes are in most cases creditable.

*Instruction.*—*Reading* is, in general, very fairly taught, though, as in past years, fewer schools produce good reading than one would expect. As a rule, throughout the schools of this district too little is read in the course of the year, and too little practice in reading is given in the lessons as ordinarily conducted. In a considerable number of cases even a single reader is not gone through in twelve months. This is, I take it, a great mistake; and it is probably caused by the Inspectors using the books read by the pupils in examining the classes in this subject. If a book strange to the pupils were used to test their proficiency, I am sure that teachers would at once see the necessity for a greater quantity of reading to gain fluency and a wide vocabulary, and very careful reading of selected and often repeated lessons to gain distinctness, expression, and elocutionary graces. In the larger schools, at any rate, I think two reading books should be read through every year, and both should be submitted for examination purposes. One of the books might be simple in style and adapted for rapid cursory reading; the other should be fairly difficult, and should be treated in a more careful and thorough manner. The quantity of reading here advocated would not merely lead to greater fluency; it would also make the lessons more interesting to the pupils and stimulate their intelligence. For some years the satisfactory explanation of one word or phrase out of two, or of two out of four, has been required as part of the pass in reading. This is done to encourage study of the language and meaning of the lessons, and the margin for error that is allowed, it will be seen, is very liberal. Many teachers think it necessary to meet this reasonable requirement by a minute examination of the language of every lesson. Practically they aim at working the meaning of every word or phrase of any difficulty in all the lessons read into the minds of the pupils, and they devote so much time to this that too little is left for sufficient quantity and practice of reading. Now, seeing that so large a margin for error is allowed in the explanation test, such exhaustive treatment of the subject is quite unnecessary. I believe the intelligent training of the pupils and the requirements of the test applied would be best met by the discussion and teaching on a good method of a few selected phrases or passages in each lesson, with a more detailed treatment of a few specially suitable lessons. The method of handling the explanation of difficult words, phrases, and passages is the chief point for teachers to consider. If the method is inductive, if the explanation is elicited, and built up on the knowledge already gained, the consideration of a comparatively small number of examples will secure an intelligent training in explanation, and develop the power of dealing in like manner with passages never before seen or considered. To a teacher who says he cannot in a year get his classes over the whole of the reader used, I would give this advice: See that the reading lessons of your lower classes are thoroughly done; be careful not to advance your classes into books too difficult for them; from Standard III. upwards give as much time to practice in reading as you can (if necessary, combining classes), and let half your lessons be easy cursory reading, with little examination of language or questioning on the subject-matter; so long as the books read are within the capacity of your pupils, depend on it extent of reading will help and further the understanding of the language, and not hinder it; do not spend too much time on explanation of language, but trust to a skilful handling of representative passages and selected lessons to develop the power of dealing with similar ones. I humbly think that with due regard to these principles reading and explanation could be more effectively taught than is usually the case, and that spelling and composition would also benefit greatly. So convinced am I of the inexpediency of restricting the extent of reading to one book or a part of a book for each year, that I would gladly see the Board make it compulsory for all the standard classes to read through two suitable readers each year, as is now done in only one or two schools, so far as I know. In