

than those which we should expect in order to obtain similar commendation in a large school. Some years ago the Inspectors recommended that two consecutive bad reports, or the continued alternation of a good and a bad report, should be deemed sufficient reason for dispensing with the services of the teacher concerned. We believe that, if this recommendation had been formally approved by the Board and embodied in their regulations, it would have had a good effect. Furthermore, we consider that no teacher whose work has been found to be unsatisfactory at the first examination of the school while under his charge should be transferred to another school, even though such removal be not promotion, until he has shown satisfactory work. We regret to have to say that, judging from what we have observed when visiting a school without notice, some teachers, and those not the least experienced, seem to regard their time-table as something of ornament rather than of use. We have sometimes found nothing on the time-table to show when the teacher is actively engaged with a class in contradistinction to silent work. On other occasions we have expected to hear a geography, grammar, or other oral lesson given, and have been surprised at the teacher proceeding to examine the class, or desiring them to "write a composition on your last lesson." When this happens we naturally conclude that the teacher has not prepared his work for the day. There is no doubt as to the necessity for such preparation. All authorities on school-management agree in this: that no teacher should enter school without having carefully thought out and prepared the lessons he intends to give. The time at which these lessons are to take place should always be clearly shown on the time-table, and the teacher's notes should be ready for inspection. We are quite aware that it may be necessary sometimes to omit a lesson, or, rather, to substitute one for another; but these occasions should be rare, and it is certainly unwise, to say the least, to select the day of the inspection visit as a fit time for such a change in the prescribed routine.

With regard to some of the subjects of instruction we offer the following remarks:—

There has been a decided improvement in arithmetic, both as regards accuracy and rapidity of work. In most schools the scholars showed a greater capacity for dealing with the simple problems which form part of every paper set. Increased attention, however, must be given to mental arithmetic.

Reading is perhaps one of the weakest points in our schools. We believe that the use of the new reading-books in Standard VI. and Standard V. will do much to produce a natural emphasis and modulation of the voice, as a result of a real comprehension of the subject-matter. We should be glad to see more than one book in use in each of the lower classes. We consider that it would be a decided advantage if several books were read during the year. The ability to spell correctly would be greatly increased, and, assuming the books to be well within the understanding of the children, their ideas would be widened, and the practice of original composition made more easy.

In the new standard regulations more prominence is given to composition as distinct from formal grammar. For many years past the scholars in this district have been trained to express their own thoughts in their own words in the form of letters or essays on given subjects, and, as a rule, the Inspectors have allowed good composition to atone for weakness in parsing and analysis of sentences. The composition exercises sent in during the year have been for the most part free from grammatical errors, though in other respects they too rarely merit commendation. This subject must be taught as well as practised. A good plan in teaching lower classes is that the teacher should display a picture or object, and, with the aid of the blackboard, get the scholars to write down in sentences of simple but appropriate language what they observe for themselves. In the three highest classes instruction in the writing of commercial and official letters should be regularly given.

The handwriting in the exercise-books has improved; generally speaking, fair specimens are shown in the copybooks. In Standard VI. and Standard V., however, many teachers have neglected to fully conform to the standard regulations.

Drawing calls for little comment; it has, without doubt, improved, and we have found that the full requirements of the syllabus have been more generally complied with. The new regulations affecting this subject have the merit of leaving little uncertainty in the mind of the teacher as to the amount of work to be done.

Geography has been, on the whole, fairly well taught, though the answers to questions on the mathematical and physical branches still leave much to be desired. They are usually too meagre. It is often hard to say whether this arises from imperfect knowledge or from inability on the part of the scholars to express themselves fully and clearly at a written examination. In some of the smaller schools, where this part of the work is generally taken orally, we have had reason to be pleased with the progress made.

It is rare indeed to find an object-lesson worthy of the name. Notes are freely used, but the lesson itself is frequently given in such a dull, mechanical, and unsympathetic way that it is not surprising to find the results so worthless. Speaking on this matter, Canon Daniel, Principal of Battersea Training College, says, "Children are not sufficiently required to use their senses. They are allowed to observe by deputy. They look at Nature through the eyes of books and through the eyes of the teacher, but do not observe for themselves. It might be expected that in object-lessons and in science lessons, which are specially intended to cultivate the observing faculty, this fault would be avoided, but I do not find that such is the case. I often hear lessons on objects that are not object-lessons at all. The object is not allowed to speak for itself, eloquent though it is, and capable though it is of adapting its teaching to the youngest child who interrogates it. The teacher buries it under a heap of words and second-hand statements, thereby converting the object-lesson into a verbal lesson, and throwing away golden opportunities of forming the scientific habit of mind."

In our last report we mentioned that we found, when questioning a class in elementary science,