

In small schools the grouping of classes almost *ad libitum* is recommended. To allow any greater freedom of classification than this, to a weak teacher, would be fortifying him in his incapacity by enabling him to classify the badly-taught pupils of the year in the same standard another year.

In last year's report we sketched the plan of science instruction: and we have now much pleasure in further reporting progress in its three branches.

1. *Kindergarten Occupations and Mat-plaiting, Stick-building, Clay-modelling, and Colour Teaching.*—All four occupations are taught in twenty-seven schools, three of them in eighteen schools, two in eight schools, and one in six schools. No instruction is given in the remaining twenty-six of the smallest schools. Apathy is displayed by their teachers, which we hope to see overcome. Some have promised to make a start. Mat-plaiting is most generally and most successfully taught, and much progress has been made. Many schools now taking up only one or two occupations will take up an additional one next year. Everywhere the work is found very interesting. As the Board supplies all the material used in school work, the School Committees are recommended to purchase material for making mats, &c., which may be taken home.

2. *Object-Lesson Work.*—Many of the head-teachers have given this subject much thought, and improved series of lessons are given on a more scientific basis, with experimental instruction. The assistant-teachers and pupil-teachers are becoming more and more efficient in manipulation, and appear to take greater interest in preparing their lessons.

In examining object-lesson work we have adopted the plan of calling upon class teachers to produce the list of lessons given during the year, and then we have asked them to give a certain test lesson over again before us. This is a plan which we shall continue to adopt, as it is the only way of really ascertaining what practical illustrations have been given. In this way, also, we have seen some very good experimental work in chemistry science classes.

3. *Elementary Science: Chemistry, Physics, Physiology, and Botany.*—At least one of these subjects was taken up this year in every school, although the teaching was very limited in some of the smaller schools. In five of the largest schools satisfactory instruction was given in certain classes in three subjects of the programme. The intelligence of the work in these schools is much commended. Improvement is also apparent in the conveniences for storing apparatus, though much remains to be done; and in many cases considerable additions have been made to the stock of apparatus—partly by expenditure of moneys locally raised, and partly by the teachers' handicraft. The Board continues liberally to supply all apparatus and material used in the experimental part of the teaching.

The drawing instruction, under the direction of Mr. A. D. Riley, of the Technical School, continues to improve. Large classes in scale and model drawing are taken in nearly all the schools of Class A; and the head-teachers, where the best work is done, have devised improved methods of illustration. At the last annual first-grade examinations 4,012 papers were worked. The tests were more severe than in former years, and the following passes were made: Freehand, 638 passes out of 1,477 papers; geometry, 807 passes out of 1,405 papers; scale, 543 passes out of 830 papers; model, 144 passes out of 300 papers.

We recommend that pupils should not be presented in freehand before they are in Standard V. Hitherto many Standard IV., and even Standard III., pupils have come up in freehand; but as this subject is taken in all standards, it is undesirable to present the pupils too young, and no advantage is gained, unless the pupil is then leaving school. It is recommended that scholars be presented for geometry in Standard IV., for scale and freehand in Standard V., and for model in Standard VI.

The course of instruction in Swedish drill adapted by Mr. de Mey, drill-instructor, is generally pursued; and, now the code is in print, teachers will be better able to carry it out. During the past year the Government offered to send military instructors to teach drill in the City schools. This assistance has been useful in partly relieving the Board's officer for country work, and in introducing another good form of drill. The work is carried out fairly well, but better results would be obtainable if the same efficient instructors could continue to take the same class in hand. At present a class is taught by several sergeants in turn, with the obvious difficulty of not knowing where to take up the work. The Thorndon School has set a good example in training an excellent drum and fife band, which plays during the time drill is taken, and gives the time for the performance of the several movements of the limbs.

Last year we reported that sixteen schools had formed school libraries, with about 3,000 volumes. This year we have forty schools with libraries, numbering over 6,000 volumes. The following is a list of school libraries according to last returns; but several others, including Newtown, Carterton, Hutt, and Park Vale, have since made good progress: Te Aro, 500; Greytown, 430; Fernridge, 400; Terrace, 380; Thorndon, 350; Clyde Quay, 350; Masterton, 300; Featherston, 283; Pahautanui, 275; Mauriceville W., 210; Clareville, 200; Johnsonville, 188; Mount Cook Boys' 183; Manakau, 155; Maungatainoka, 150; Kaitara, 150; Karori, 150; Pahiatua, 140; Gladstone, 131; Mount Cook Girls' 124; Dreyerton, 120; Dalefield, 114; Mauriceville E., 111; Petone, 106; Waihakeke, 84; Otaki, 80; Belvedere, 78; Waihenga, 67; Kaiwarra, 62; Mangaone, 60; Korokoro, 44; Opaki, 34; Wangaehu, 36; Hutt, 36; Tawa Flat, 32; Kaitoke, 30; Ohau, 25; Vogeltown, 20; Eketahuna, 20; Te Whiti, 18. Also at the Taueru and Wainuiomata there are public libraries located in the schools.

The Board has set apart a sum of £50 for assistance to school libraries outside the City of Wellington. This will be chiefly distributed among small schools for starting libraries. Assistance will, however, only be given to supplement local effort.

We are pleased to notice that very moderate home-lessons are given. Some time ago a suggestion was made, which was generally approved by the teachers, that there should be an off-night in the week for home-lessons (say Wednesday night), to enable children to take tea with their friends, attend an entertainment, or otherwise have a free night in the middle of the week. In some cases this good rule is not observed, perhaps because it has been lost sight of.