

and night would be the same all over the world; while occasionally it was stated that there would be six months day and six months night. The varying length of day and night within the arctic circle was not understood. The impression on pupils' minds with regard to this appeared to be that all places within that circle were six months in darkness and six months in light. These matters are mentioned as they bear upon some of the chief features of the syllabus in mathematical and physical geography. In the geography of New Zealand, "interprovincial transit" was not well known in several Standard IV. classes.

The indefinite character of the answers in the geography papers is a frequent subject of complaint. Thus, we were often told that Calcutta was in Asia, and San Francisco in North America, but were left to imagine the country, not to speak of the position, of each. For some reason or another pupils seem to think that the names North America and United States are synonymous. Recent events in connection with Venezuela may, it is to be hoped, dispel this illusion.

ORGANIZATION AND METHODS.—At our inspection visits we gave considerable attention to matters coming under this heading, and in our reports we wrote very fully when occasion required. A few remarks here, however, will not be out of place.

The number of schools at which really good methods are employed increases year by year. At the same time, it was often brought forcibly under our notice that many teachers, while generally using good methods, failed somewhat in the application and proper carrying-out of such methods. "But," to quote from a former report, "of far more importance than the method is the intelligence of the teacher that employs it. As Herbert Spencer points out, the success of every appliance depends mainly upon the intelligence with which it is used. An unskilful workman, though having the choicest tools, will botch his work; and bad teachers will fail even with the best methods. Indeed, the goodness of the method becomes in such case a cause of failure; as, to continue the simile, the perfection of the tool becomes in undisciplined hands a source of imperfection in results."

Many teachers have still to learn that it is their pupils who should bear the brunt of the work. There is too much random talking, and too much telling of what might easily be elicited by skilful questioning. As has been well said, "The need for perpetual telling arises from our own stupidity, not from our pupils'." To quote Herbert Spencer again—"To tell a child this, and to show it the other, is not to teach it how to observe, but to make it a mere recipient of another's observations—a proceeding which weakens rather than strengthens its powers of self-instruction, and deprives it of the pleasures resulting from successful activity." In oral class-teaching we often noticed too much of this telling. When a question was put, a pupil would answer by a word, or by a word or two; and the teacher immediately accepted the answer, rendering it lucid by himself putting it into the form of a statement.

The blackboard is not made sufficient use of at many schools. In an oral lesson, as a rule, an abstract should be put on the blackboard as the lesson proceeds; and a certain amount of time should be allowed for recapitulatory questioning.

Failure to impress upon the class and emphasize what is desired to be taught has often to be pointed out. One pupil gives the answer required, and the teacher passes on without driving home in the minds of all the members of the class the information given.

The omission to form beforehand a definite plan of the intended course of instruction for some months is a fault very frequently found. Too often the first few months of the school year are frittered away; and, when the examination date draws near, it is found that even to go once through the prescribed course a great spurt must be put on, while no time whatever is left for recapitulation and revision. Then the time-table is suspended; cram steps in, and runs rampant for a few weeks; the approaching examination is constantly flaunted before the eyes of the unfortunate pupils, and a point made of the disgrace (?) of failing; and altogether a most unhealthy state of excitement is engendered. In a school where such practices as these obtain, when the examination day comes round the pupils are in a high state of tension, and, naturally enough, several fail to pass their standards. Some unsuccessful teachers are much given to declaim against the examination system on the ground that it is it that is responsible for this unhealthy state of affairs. We, however, are quite clear in our minds that it is not the examination *per se* that is responsible, nor yet is it the examiners; but it is the teachers themselves, who, in place of working steadily throughout the year, and letting the examination take care of itself, lose a great deal of time in the first few months, and then, in order to overtake all the prescribed work, they put towards the end of the school year an extra strain upon their pupils, and hold the examination and the Inspectors constantly before them as a menace. How different it is in well-conducted schools! In such the examination is looked forward to with feelings of pleasure, and on the appointed day there is an entire absence of nervousness and unhealthy excitement.

In conclusion we may say that, taking the schools as a whole, we consider they are doing sound educative work, and that the teachers as a body are anxious to employ the best methods, and to mould their teaching on inductive lines. In some schools, certainly, we find a tendency to superficial, ill-digested work; but these are the exception, not the rule. Again, some very earnest and deserving teachers are not as successful as they might be, because they do not recognise that, while some parts of the subjects of the syllabus demand truly inductive or intellectual teaching, there are others which require the purely *memoriter* system of instruction. In the case of the latter—say, for instance, tables in arithmetic—if the pupils's memory fails there must be a breakdown.

The number of subjects in the syllabus is sometimes pleaded in excuse for poor work. In the case of the smaller schools, especially those with all, or several, standards and only one teacher, it will readily be seen that it is difficult to find sufficient time to handle all the subjects in a thoroughly educative manner, and that the work in some of the subjects is apt to be superficial and ill-digested. On these accounts we are of opinion that it should not be compulsory for schools of the class specified to take up all the subjects of the syllabus (history, for instance, might well be omitted); but, while holding this view, we are satisfied that much of the ill-digested work is due not so much