

occur, but I know that pupils frequently come an hour or an hour and a quarter late. A teacher might mark his roll at any time between 9.30 a.m. and 11 a.m. and between 1 p.m. and 2.30 p.m., and a pupil not then present would be marked absent, but few teachers are strong enough to do this, as a fall in the attendance with the consequent fall in salary is involved. In fact, a teacher has the choice of two evils: if he marks the roll early his salary may fall; if he marks it late he cannot get from the late pupils the work that should be expected from the number of their attendances. The Boards may fix a time for the roll-call, but the question is too important to be left to individual teachers or to Boards. The central department should take action and place all schools in the colony on the same footing. My own opinion is that the minimum period for an attendance should be one hour and a half for infants, and two hours for standard classes. School-hours are often shortened by a teacher's compliance with requests for pupils to leave early. Some teachers have been strong enough to refuse except urgent cases, and now have little trouble. Most teachers, however, prefer not to incur the contumely of refusal, and in some cases they have my sympathy. Exact definition of the period of an attendance would tend to reduce to a minimum this trouble also.

In this district the school day is generally four hours and a half instead of five hours as in other districts, and the weekly instruction is thus shortened by two hours and a half. Not unnaturally teachers devote the most of their time to the pass-subjects, and this shortening of the school day means that less time is devoted to the class-subjects—grammar, history, object-lessons, and so on.

In addition to visits for examination purposes, visits of inspection were paid to most schools, and in some cases more than one visit was paid. During these visits of inspection the organization, the discipline, the registers, the instruction and its quality, the methods and the skill with which they are handled, and so on, come under review. Another important point which must not be lost sight of, and a most important one in small schools, is the assistance an Inspector can give to inexperienced and earnest teachers. He may take a class to illustrate the working of improved methods, or, as the organization of a school of, say, five standards and the preparatory classes presents a problem of no little difficulty to a young teacher, he may take the whole school to show how the classes may be organized and the work of one class dovetailed, as it were, into the work of another. It will thus be seen that to bring about an improvement in the efficiency of the schools as much time as possible should be devoted to these visits. The Act, however, insists upon an examination every year, and the work in connection with this is so heavy, and the preparation of examination cards and the examinations of pupil-teachers and scholarship candidates take up so much time, that one has to curtail the period of inspection more than one desires. When I have been able to pay more than one visit of inspection, on the statutory or more formal visit a report has been written, but not necessarily on the others, which, as being less formal, I consider in some ways the more valuable. The feeling that a report does not follow a visit tends to combat the idea that the Inspector comes as a mere critic, and makes any assistance he may give the more appreciated. I should therefore like to see the work of examination lightened, so that more time could be given to these visits of assistance.

Oral work is improving, and in many schools is very creditable. This is due in great measure to full answers to questions being insisted upon, which makes the lessons, as it were, conversations between the teacher and his pupils. All lessons are benefiting by this, and the results are realising the hopes I expressed in my first report. In some schools, however, the conversational method of teaching is not employed during the year, with the result that the answers received are imperfect, the pupils' speech is ungrammatical, oral work is wanting in alacrity, and the pupils are unable to frame answers in the work they know. Good questions produce good answers, and some of the improved answering is, no doubt, due to improved skill in questioning. It has, however, often struck me that the questions are all on the side of the teacher and that the pupils do not ask questions on obscure points. Questions by the pupils should receive every encouragement, as they result from attention to the lesson and from an intelligent conception of its bearing. Moreover, anything taught as an answer to a question put by a pupil will arouse greater interest, and will consequently be better remembered than if it were merely told by the teacher.

In the larger schools the organization of the classes is generally satisfactory, but in the smaller schools, where the teachers have to manage several classes, it is often unsatisfactory, and in consequence much valuable time is wasted. Effective organization depends upon (1) the teachers' ability to draw up a time-table, (2) his ability to carry it out so as to keep all pupils profitably employed during school-hours, and (3) his interest in the work as shown by his preparing his lessons. The time-tables are as a rule satisfactory, but much of the non-success in many schools is traceable to defects in (2) and (3). Carrying out the time-table gives ample scope for ingenuity and skill, and I shall here give a few hints which may be of some assistance. Take, for instance, reading. On the time-table two classes, say, Standards IV. and V., may be shown as taking reading during the same half-hour. The time devoted by the teacher to each class will depend upon the size and proficiency of the class, but some such plan as the following should be adopted. While Standard IV. is being instructed Standard V. may read silently, using a dictionary for difficult words, may write out the meanings of phrases set upon the blackboard or marked in the books, may write a test in spelling or dictation (see below), and so on. During the lesson to Standard IV. difficult words and phrases are set upon the blackboard, and while Standard V. is being taught Standard IV. may write out these or do work similar to that assigned to Standard V. Such work as I have referred to admits of easy correction and keeps the pupils profitably employed. In spelling and dictation a teacher might save much time. If a class of four pupils has to be tested, the teacher should divide the passage to be dictated into phrases, and one of the four pupils may dictate it and at the same time transcribe it, so that he also benefits by the lesson. Without direction from the master, the books should be collected and placed upon the table. As a rule, however, teachers dictate to three or more classes at once, a procedure confusing to the pupils, and occupying time