

It is interesting to note that the work of many of our pupils in the new art and in crafts has reached such a good stage that it is considered desirable to arrange an exhibition of primary work during 1947.

(6) *Agricultural Clubs*.—Boys' and girls' clubs continue to flourish, and several districts report substantial increases in entries of completed projects. In many dairying localities calf clubs are featured, and there is no doubt of the community interest aroused in the work. In a few cases a form of rivalry has been engendered, and this forces an over-emphasis on calf-club work. The award of substantial money prizes to local winners and to contestants for group classes, a step regarded with disfavour by educational authorities, is not in the best interests of the calf-club movement. The home and school garden clubs are proving a fine medium for encouraging vegetable production and for providing material for observation and use in the school lessons on nature study and elementary science. It is pleasing to note a growing interest in horticulture. The realism of all these aspects of school work makes a strong appeal to parents and children, and the club movement in rural localities has probably done more than any other school movement to bring the school and the community into closer and better relationship.

(7) *Libraries*.—The paramount importance of intelligent reading and the need for the fullest development of library facilities are well recognized. In this field of school work the scope for local effort and interest and adult co-operation is obvious. In several centres Book Weeks have been held, besides shop displays, free use was made of the radio for book reviews and talks, while follow-up work took place in the schools. Generous grants have been made to Education Boards for the provision of books for reference and for general reading, and, despite difficulties of supply and increased costs, steady advance towards adequate libraries has been made. Up to the present, middle and senior classes have been better provided for than the junior and infant, but more books are becoming available for the latter classes. The wide range among pupils in reading ability renders suitable grouping of pupils and grading of books essential. Modern practice has shown that slow readers make more rapid progress when interest and confidence are established through books which have a controlled vocabulary range and yet still retain content suited to the children's development. Some schools make provision for this, and the practice could be more widely adopted.

The best results are obtained when school libraries are systematically catalogued and a library period is allotted to each class. Students at training colleges receive training in modern library practice. Urban schools are fortunate in obtaining fine service from the public libraries, and the country schools are being supplied with excellent books by the Country Library Service as quickly as facilities will allow.

REVISION OF THE SYLLABUS: TEXT-BOOKS

The thanks of the Department are due to the committees of Inspectors, teachers, and specialists who have undertaken the onerous work of revision. New prescriptions in oral and written English, arithmetic, and health are in official use. A tentative scheme in art is in operation, and a new course in history and geography is shortly to be tried, with a view to final revision. Drafts of new prescriptions in needlework and spelling are in the hands of teachers for comment. The committee work in nature study and elementary science and in reading and literature is nearing completion, and a committee has been set up to deal with writing. The investigation into reading is comprehensive, and includes the pre-reading stages of infant work. The new prescriptions, incorporating the best ideas of past practice and of recent advances in education, aim at bringing the work of the schools into line with everyday social experience, the approach being practical and the treatment as realistic as school conditions permit. Methods are planned to encourage maximum pupil activity. Large quantities of material and equipment are needed in connection with some of the new courses of work. Much has been accomplished, but much more remains to be done when existing shortages of labour and materials have been overcome.