

co-ordination of grammar and composition, and fitting the work of one class into that of its successor. This scheme should be entered in a note-book so that it can be considered in detail if needful. During the year the Inspectors have used the sets of questions on grammar and sentence-structure issued by the Department. The series for Standard III has been found to be much too easy. In the higher classes the cards have, as a rule, been unnecessarily long; this was especially noticeable in Standard VI, where the time required for the examination of the class has, largely in consequence of this, greatly exceeded the usual school hours. The pupils often experienced difficulty in understanding the drift of the questions. The exercises in sentence-structure were in other respects very elementary, and were sometimes marred by unnecessary suggestions. It is surely undesirable to cull examples for this exercise from poetical writings. Plain and easily intelligible prose is what is wanted.

For some considerable time after the work of the new syllabus was taken up, books suited to the new courses in arithmetic were not available. To this is probably due the disappointment which the Inspectors express with some of the work in this subject. In Standards I, II, and V the pupils on the whole failed to show as good a knowledge of the work taught as we have been accustomed to, though I do not see any reason to apprehend a permanent lapse of efficiency. The questions given in Standard I, though necessarily simple, were all or nearly all oral, and a thorough training was no doubt needed to answer them quickly and accurately. In Standard II many failed to do an easy addition sum because they were unable to write down in one of the lines such a number as twenty-eight tens, the knowledge of notation required being very often wanting. Such a mistake is not likely to recur at any rate in wholesale fashion. The work of the class was, however, on the whole satisfactory, and in some schools Mr. Mulgan and I have found it really good. The frequent weakness of Standard V class is no doubt due to faults of teaching. Both here and in Standard VI calculation is seldom accurate or rapid enough, and problems—in general easy enough—are poorly done. There are a good many schools, both large and small, to which these strictures do not apply, but on the whole the command of arithmetic in Standard V, and to a less extent in Standard VI, is not proportionate to the time and attention devoted to its study. The frequently expressed surprise of teachers at the lame performance of their most trusted pupils tends to show that nervousness, in large measure pardonable, makes the teaching appear worse than it is. Fuller attention to smart oral computation, and more practice in setting forth quickly and clearly how problems worked out on the blackboard or on slate have been solved, must be given if improvement is to be secured. Mr. Grierson speaks in very pointed terms of the inferior work done in Standard V arithmetic in the schools of his district, and the teachers concerned must rouse themselves, and wipe away this blot on their skill.

In most schools drawing is of satisfactory quality. In many of the larger ones the making of patterns and designs, in part original, both in pencil and in brushwork, receives much attention. The units disposed radially or otherwise in the design are necessarily on a small scale, and the completion of the whole often occupies three or more weeks. Too exclusive attention to this type of work is not desirable. Larger figures with freer curves, balanced or other, will give at least equal facility in using the pencil and brush, as well as afford a pleasing variety in the exercises. In the smaller schools little has been done to give a training in the principles of design. In very few schools does drawing from objects or from nature receive adequate attention; this—the ultimate object of all training in drawing—should be practised in at least the two highest standard classes. It is important that all original designs should be plainly marked as such in pupils' drawing-books. Brushwork has now been widely taken up, and is much more popular than pencil drawing. Where it has been practised for a considerable time a large amount of excellent work is generally produced. The capable direction of Messrs. Wallace and Cockburn has proved of great advantage in connection with this branch of drawing. Creditable work has, however, been found at various schools—Dargaville, for instance—that have not benefited by expert advice and direction.

The most radical of the changes introduced in the new syllabus concerns geography, where the course of study has been fundamentally remodelled. Course A deals almost exclusively with matters requiring personal observation, measurement, &c., on the part of the pupils, and it provides materials for a fine and interesting training. Mr. Mulgan's report to me on this subject may be quoted, as it is in general harmony with the impressions of the other Inspectors. "Geography, Course A, was on the whole well attempted, though considerable improvement may be looked for during this and following years. The chief fault to be found with the teaching is that too much reliance is placed on mere book knowledge, and too little is made of the opportunities provided by the natural surroundings of the school. The work of the river, for instance, should be learned by the study of some stream of which pupils have personal knowledge. The work of erosive agencies should be observed on some range of hills or sea-coast with which pupils are acquainted. The mathematical and astronomical portions of the subject continue to receive better and more intelligent treatment, though I cannot say that results have reached a satisfactory stage in a good number of schools. This is owing, in part at least, to a syllabus that is still overloaded, though an additional cause may be found in an attempt to crowd into a few months work that should be spread over the entire year." The special text-books written for this course are not without merits, but they give far too great prominence to geological changes, that need for their bare comprehension a vastly wider field of observation than school-children can possibly command. The peculiar characteristics of "old plains" now much eroded into valleys and ridges, the general line of ancient river-courses as inferred from widely scattered deposits of shingle often occurring at high levels, and the former outlets of such a river as the Waikato cannot possibly be learnt by observations restricted to the neighbourhood of a school. All this is book knowledge pure and simple. Such topics teachers will be wise to omit altogether. In inland districts coast-erosion can be made intelligible only by the use of suitable pictures. The phenomena presented by land and marine ice and those of glacier action, though no doubt interesting, and in the geological sense important, lie altogether beyond the range of pupils' observation, and can be made intelligible only by the aid of pictures. The illustrated