

of the grammarian; but, though the syllabus deprecates the unnecessary use of technical grammatical terms, it does not forbid their use altogether. For example, if a child is required to understand the functions and their relations to the other parts of the sentence, of the italicised words in "*Amidst thy bowers the tyrant's hand is seen.*" it is sufficient, according to the new regulations, that he should recognise them as an answer to the question, "Where is the hand seen?" But if a teacher feels that he can convey to the pupil a clearer and more intelligent comprehension of these functions and relations by making use of the term "adverbial adjunct of the predicate," so far as we read the syllabus, there is nothing to prevent his doing so. Moreover, instruction on such lines will frequently lead to highly satisfactory results—satisfactory, that is, from the grammarian's point of view. For as a distinguished educational authority at Home shrewdly remarks, "Many children acquire a ready facility in applying mechanically the most elaborate analysis that perverted ingenuity can devise." We advise all teachers who still hanker after the old order of things to read Professor Meiklejohn's "Art of Writing English."

In about 50 per cent. of the schools handwriting is marked "very satisfactory to good," in about 25 per cent. "satisfactory," and in another 25 per cent. "fair to moderate." Weakness in this subject is mainly due to lack of systematic instruction not only in the formation, spacing, and joining of the letters, but also in the manner of holding the pen and the position of the body. Writing as a subject in school method has not in the past formed a sufficiently important part of a teacher's training. Few pupil-teachers appear to have any higher idea of teaching writing beyond putting a headline on the blackboard. This is one of the faults which we may look to the new training-college to remedy. The bad writing of many children is undoubtedly due to the different styles of writing that are taught during their short school life. We are by no means advocates of a uniform system of text-books, but we do think it would be a decided advantage if a uniform style of handwriting were adopted in all the schools in the colony. In many of the districts in this province the population is very shifting. At one school in particular, out of a roll-number of 997 children, no less than 581 had been admitted since the last examination, and among these newcomers there were a least half a dozen different styles of handwriting. Now, to have satisfactory results in writing in a large class, uniformity is essential, and, in cases like the above, one of the greatest obstacles to this uniformity is the continual influx of new children who have been trained in a different style of handwriting from the one in vogue in the school. There are at least seven or eight totally distinct styles of copy-books in use in the various educational districts of the colony—no two alike in the form, method of joining, spacing, and slope of the letters, and any change from one to the other entails on teacher and child a vexatious waste of time and energy.

There is still a considerable difference between the quality of the work done in the arithmetic of the upper standards and that of the lower standards. From Standard IV downwards the results are as a rule satisfactory to good, while in Standard VII to V they are seldom more than fair to satisfactory. As in the majority of cases the teachers of the upper classes are the more experienced and efficient, this difference should not exist. The explanation seems to us to be that in this subject the syllabus makes relatively too great a demand on the upper standards. In schools in the higher grades the treatment of numbers recommended in the syllabus has resulted in much improved work, but in schools under sole teachers a practically entirely oral treatment of arithmetic in the Preparatory and Standard I classes makes too great a demand on the time of the teachers.

What was formerly known as elementary science has, in this district, been largely displaced by nature-study and elementary agricultural knowledge. A few of the larger schools with laboratory accommodation have taken up chemistry under the Manual Technical Act, and are doing highly creditable work. Those schools taking up elementary practical physics are working on the lines of Sexton and Sharman's text-book, but with only moderate results so far. The number of schools in which instruction is given in elementary agricultural knowledge, combined with cottage gardening, is steadily increasing. The recent appointment as agricultural expert of Mr. W. C. Davies, whose work at Mauriceville West has given him quite a colonial reputation, will now insure for this subject a treatment in some degree adequate to its importance to an agricultural community. In addition to giving instruction to school-classes under the Manual and Technical Act, Mr. Davies will organize Saturday classes for teachers at one or more of the chief centres, and as soon as the laboratories can be fitted up and the grounds put in order, the work will be in full swing. With the exception of needlework, which forms part of the ordinary school course, the only subject in domestic economy receiving special treatment is cookery. The usual classes for the city and suburban schools have been satisfactorily conducted by Mrs. Neeley, at Newtown and the Terrace; and similar classes have been conducted at twelve centres in the Wairarapa by Miss Millington.

We are strongly of opinion that the science subjects would benefit by receiving more attention than at present is given to them in the Junior National Scholarship Examination. The papers for this examination are issued by the Department, and were naturally considered as an interpretation of the syllabus and a guide as to the standard to which instruction in public schools should attain. We are fully alive to the danger and evils of teachers attaching too much importance to examination requirements and results; but, at the same time, while we have examinations in our schools, it is advisable that they should give to each subject of the syllabus its due share of consideration, and we do not think that one or two odd questions in a general-knowledge paper are calculated to encourage teachers who may have made some special branch of elementary science, such as physics, a prominent feature of their programme.

In 1905, 110 schools obtained capitulation under the Manual Act. The great majority of the schools have taken brushwork and plasticine-modelling, and with some excellent results. We frequently see specimens of modelling and original design with the brush that would be no disgrace to a professional artist. Provision has already been made at Thorndon for classes in woodwork. We have recommended the Board to supply to the Department for a grant for another centre in South Wellington, and before the close of the year we hope to see similar centres in the Wairarapa.