

neglected or, if not neglected, done in so imperfect a way as to make it almost valueless. No experimental work is satisfactory that does not include (1) an accurate verbal statement of the principle the experiment is designed to demonstrate, and (2) the memorising of the statement. First understanding and expression, then remembering, these are the essentials of successful work in every subject. The truth is that the teaching of arithmetic should have two aims—namely, facility in the performance of arithmetical operations and development of thought and expression. It is unquestionable that continuous practice in expressing arithmetical operations in logical symbolism is of much greater educational value than is the example-mongering that too often goes by the name of arithmetic. Teachers sometimes complain that the text-books prescribed do not contain enough examples. In our opinion they err on the side rather of too many than of too few. If the examples worked were made to yield all they have to give, the books contain more than enough. Then, too, there is in this as in other subjects too much unnecessary explanation, difficulties being anticipated and removed by the teachers before they are encountered by the pupils. It cannot be too carefully remembered that what matters is not what is done for the pupil, but what they do for themselves; and of doing for themselves there is, we regret to say, too little in all our schools, but especially in those in which there is a teacher for every class. It is the case, not “of forty feeding like one,” but of seventy fed like one.

The reference to seventy reminds us of what we said in our last general report about the inadequate staffing of the schools. We do not intend to repeat here what we said there; but we cannot refrain from expressing our surprise that so serious an indictment should have been ignored by the Press and the teachers. Those who are curious to see the indictment will find it on page 35, paragraphs 4 and 5, and page 36, paragraphs 1 and 2, of our report. There never was a time when our schools were adequately staffed; and, owing to increase of work and changes in methods, they are less adequately staffed than they were.

We are seldom able to award the mark “good” to composition; for, even when the content is good, the form in which it is cast is too often marred by serious errors in grammar and setting. Grammar is the bed-rock of correct form in speech, and the time will never come when we can afford to neglect it. This, we regret to say, appears not to be the view of the Education Department, which now controls every detail of education, even to the books that may be used in the teaching of a subject and the kind of question an Inspector should give in arithmetic and composition.

We are glad to be able to report steady improvement in the teaching of geography and science. The facts of these departments of work may not be so well known as they used to be, but they are certainly approached and studied in a way that is more in accordance with the method of research. In this connection we would suggest that less money should be spent in wall maps and more in globes and pictures of typical geographical and industrial features. A Navy League map and a good physical map of New Zealand would be a sufficient equipment of wall maps, for the personal study of his atlas is the best form of map-study for the pupil. Every school should have a good globe and a set of stereoscopes and stereoscopic pictures. These would be of vastly greater service to the pupils than are the wall maps now so liberally supplied.

Handwork is practised in a large proportion of our schools, but it is our experience that too much attention is paid to mere doing and too little to the manner of doing and the expression of what is done and what the doing teaches. In the accurate expression of accurate impressions lies the chief educational value of this as of other work.

In elementary agriculture teachers have been feeling their way, doing a large amount of good work, but generally giving prominence to the craft side and the production of good crops of flowers and vegetables instead of to the training in habits of observation, experimentation, and inference that such work is designed to give; and what they set themselves to do most of them do well. It now remains to give less attention to craft and crop and more to observation, experiment, and orderly development of thought and expression. In gardening, observation best grows out of experiment, the experiment asking the question and the pupils watching for the answer. Here, accurate quantitative measurements and their accurate record are of great value. It is precisely in this department of the work that occurs our most signal failure, the records often being so imperfect, ill-written, and unmethodical as to be nearly valueless. In the majority of the schools insufficient attention is given to care of the tools, all of which should, after use, be cleaned and oiled, and neatly placed in the tool-house. On the whole, however, steady progress is being made; teachers, pupils, and parents show great interest and enthusiasm in the work; and agricultural and horticultural societies have encouraged it by instituting competitions for school exhibits. At the Dunedin Horticultural Society's last show one of our schools succeeded in winning in an open competition the second prize for vegetables.

The mean efficiency mark “good” for physical instruction is largely due to the military drill of the boys, which is generally very good in the large schools, and reflects great credit on the assistants who conduct it, often at considerable sacrifice of out-of-school time. The physical exercises of the middle and junior classes and of the girls of the senior classes are often so slack and slouchy as to have little or no good effect on physique and carriage. One of the chief aims of such exercises should be a good carriage of the body. Among the girls of our senior classes good carriage of the body is too often conspicuous by its absence. As a rule, ten or fifteen minutes a day should be given to physical exercises and drill; in addition, there should be a special lesson of about half an hour's duration once a week, and the purpose of every exercise should be explained to the children.

Last year we said that Albany Street School was the only Dunedin school in which wall decoration had been seriously attempted; this year we have pleasure in adding Union Street School, the Committee of which has done a fine year's work in this direction.

We have, &c.,

P. GOYEN,	} Inspectors.
W. S. FITZGERALD,	
C. R. RICHARDSON,	
C. R. BOSSENCE,	

The Chairman, Otago Education Board.