

attendance at school, to apply on the proper form, three days before the announced visit of the Inspector, for examination in the standard required for their purposes.

The new system of examination for the proficiency certificate wrought, all things considered, remarkably well. A few parents here and there grumbled at the inconvenience occasioned by their having to send their children from home for examination; but the great majority recognised the necessity of the new order of things, and did not grudge the slight sacrifice it involved. As a matter of fact, the system of free education is not endangered by the new style of examination. Children are still educated free; the expense in certain cases (only a trifling part of the total cost of examination) is no fee for tuition, but is necessarily incurred to secure certificates of actual intrinsic value to the recipients.

The fear that the success of country children at these examinations might be imperilled by the strangeness of their surroundings proved to be almost wholly imaginary. The conditions of examination were really more favourable than in former years; and, as a result, the nervousness exhibited by country candidates was less noticeable than formerly. Indeed, in the case of several centres, some of the best work was done by those candidates who had travelled farthest from the scenes familiar to them to attend the examinations.

Since the results of the proficiency examination are higher in one district than another, it has been asserted that the reason must be a difference of the standards imposed by the Inspectors. The fallacy of this assertion is at once apparent when we consider how many other factors are at work besides the Inspector's notion of efficiency. The predominance of small schools in a district, the comparatively large proportion of uncertificated to certificated teachers, the remoteness of many teachers from centres of educational life and influence—these and other conditions have to be taken into account when the results of different districts are taken into consideration.

The annual schemes of work presented by a good many of our teachers still leave much to be desired in the way of fullness and clearness. In many cases no account whatever is given of the work in such subjects as nature-study, manual instruction, drawing, physical instruction. In regard to these and other subjects, instead of a detailed programme of work, we often find a curt reference to the pages of some text-book. In the case of geography, and also of history, we had reason to suspect that in some cases the second part of a two-years course had been omitted, the first part of the course having been repeated instead. The convenient words, "Incidentally treated," are in tolerably frequent use to describe the method of work, and sum up the instruction given in such subjects as moral instruction and health. In regard to this practice, we should like to point out that, though the syllabus provides that these subjects need not appear in the time-table and may be incidentally taught, every teacher ought, in his own interests, to preserve some record, however brief, of his work in these as in other subjects.

As the announced visit of the Inspector may hereafter precede by one to six months or more the close of the school year, it will be necessary for every teacher to keep, month by month, an account of the ground covered in all the various subjects of instruction. Otherwise, the basis of the Inspector's examination will be most indefinite, and the results of the examination almost useless as a test of efficiency. A circular describing in some detail how such a record as has been referred to may be satisfactorily kept has been sent to all our teachers. It may be advisable in future to supply each school with a suitable diary in which each day's work may be entered in sufficient detail, and to indicate the form, clear and definite though necessarily brief, which each entry should take. The keeping of such a diary would not be a very irksome task, provided it were attended to with unfailing regularity.

Without any charge of inconsistency, we may be allowed, with one breath, to welcome the coming of the probationer and to regret the passing of the pupil-teacher. If the pupil-teacher system demanded too great a sacrifice of youth, if its ideas of the capabilities of young lads were extravagant, if in practice it tended to encourage mechanical methods of teaching and to foster narrowness of mental outlook, it quite as certainly provided that the teacher who had come under its sway knew his raw material well; knew well, too, how to wield it by punctual, orderly, and systematic use of the forces at his disposal to the ends he deemed ideal.

The probationer, even in older countries than ours, is still upon his trial. A complete scheme for his further education and training has yet to be evolved. He comes to his work well equipped, educationally, for his age. His daily labours in the school are lighter than the pupil-teacher's were, and, in his studies, the dark cloud of a forthcoming examination does not loom perpetually on his field of vision. In school he learns, by practice and observation, those means of control and those methods of instruction which generation after generation of teachers has amassed by toilsome experience, deferring systematic examination of the principles on which these methods and means are based till he reaches a maturer age. It is not too much to hope that when, in comparative ease and comfort, he has gone the rounds of the Training College, the University, and, let us hope, the Agricultural College, he may come back to us splendidly vigorous in mind and body, and excellently equipped for the work of teaching.

The Saturday training classes were so organized this year as to be helpful most of all to uncertificated teachers who wished to improve their status. The wants of certificated teachers were, however, not neglected. The industry and enthusiasm of the well-qualified corps of instructors were productive of much good to those students who were inspired by like good qualities. Experience, however, shows clearly that, in the case of some uncertificated teachers, it is necessary to insist on a satisfactory amount of interest and industry in return for the undoubted advantages accruing from attendance at these classes. During the forthcoming session, therefore, it is proposed that instructors of the various classes in which uncertificated teachers are enrolled be asked to make periodical reports on the punctuality, regularity of attendance, attentiveness, and industry of the uncertificated members of their respective classes.

The harvest holidays, coming, as they do, at a time when the utmost regularity of attendance is possible, interfere very seriously indeed with school-work. A period of only four or five weeks may