

part of the teacher; the successful teaching of these two subjects does not call for any high intellectual endowment on his part.

RECITATION.—The selection of pieces for presentation is often very poorly made. It is utterly useless to burden pupils' minds with trash which has no manner of right to be called literature.

ARITHMETIC.—The elementary mathematics of our schools has its formulæ as well as the more advanced mathematics of the University. These formulæ, of course, should not be mere formulæ, but have constant concrete realisation. Yet we frequently find that the simple tables of addition, of multiplication, of common weights and measures, are so vaguely known that pupils, even in the higher standards, cannot use them accurately in the solution of easy problems. When a Standard VI boy, by mysterious waggings and noddings of his head, tongue, or fingers, gives evidence of having to reach by investigation the sum or the product of 6 and 7, or is not quite certain whether two or four pints is a quart or a gallon he discloses at the same time the fact that he has been badly taught. Once the steps of the simple arithmetical processes have been concretely realised, a thorough practical knowledge of the tables mentioned becomes an absolute necessity—a knowledge so thorough that the recall of any simple arithmetical fact may be certain, accurate, instantaneous—automatic, we might almost say. On the other hand, with regard to the metric tables, the general fault is the want of ability to realise the actual dimensions and weights of which they treat. This defect can be removed only by sufficient individual practice in weighing and measuring actual objects.

DRAWING.—Object-drawing is very gradually displacing drawing from copies, cards, and diagrams. We would suggest that for every class, or group of classes, a list of objects be drawn up, to be entered in the annual scheme of work. The results in design-drawing, both freehand and geometrical, are so promising in the case of a few schools as to force the wish that more attention were given to this branch in the other schools. The results in geometrical drawing are exceedingly poor; to a great extent, in the higher standards, they are almost worthless.

SINGING.—It is to be hoped that the class in this subject, attended by both certificated and un-certificated teachers, may have diffused some helpful ideas as to the aims of the singing lesson, the choice of songs, the methods of teaching the subject, and the necessity for the preservation and cultivation of the child-voice. With regard to the last topic, we regret to note that some of the harshest and most unmusical singing we have heard has been heard in some of our largest and best-officered schools.

PHYSICAL INSTRUCTION.—This important subject receives, on the whole, sufficient, if not quite systematic, attention. It would be well to co-ordinate it with the teaching of health by calling attention during the performance of the exercises to the aims to which they are directed. The deep-breathing exercises should never be omitted.

GEOGRAPHY.—For deficiencies in this subject the annual schemes are mostly to blame. A wholesale revision of these, therefore, and a careful consideration of the best ways and means of teaching the subject are incumbent on all earnest teachers. In regard to Geography B, it may be pointed out that a mere reading of the text-book is insufficient. The syllabus stipulates for "the use of the text-book," which is something totally different from mere reading.

HISTORY.—A good deal of honest work is being done in this subject, though there is a tendency, in a few schools, to carelessness in treatment. The results, on the whole, are not quite commensurate with the efforts made to achieve them. We believe that if the relation of the various courses to each other were fully considered, and these various courses treated as parts of one rational course for the whole school, striking improvement would follow. There is need for the increased employment of educational devices in the teaching of this subject.

MORAL INSTRUCTION AND HYGIENE.—The remarks made under "Geography" as to the schemes of work are particularly applicable to these subjects. The magic words "Incidentally treated" meet us too often during the year. In future, we should deem it wise on the part of the teacher to jot down, however briefly, the subjects of lessons incidentally treated. Under this heading it is proper to record the very favourable impression made upon us by the behaviour of the children on our annual visits, and to record a noticeable improvement in their manners and courtesy, both in and out of school.

NATURE-STUDY.—Slow but sure progress is being made in this subject. We have to hint to some of the teachers of our larger schools that a love of, and an interest in, natural objects can be inculcated in senior pupils, and that even in towns there are means of doing so. In no case whatever, we think, should this phase of education be quite neglected.

SCIENCE.—The majority of the schools which took up the subject of elementary physical measurements did really good work. The temptation of former years to attempt too much work, and that of too difficult a kind, was resisted successfully, to the undoubted benefit of the classes. The classes in elementary agriculture now number thirty-three, and there is a hope of further increase. Steps have been taken to add to the efficiency of these classes by a circular of instructions addressed to teachers, and by furnishing them with the supplies which last year's experience showed to be necessary.

HANDWORK.—A large extension of the woodwork classes to other centres besides Invercargill is under consideration. We shall be glad to hear that it has been deemed practicable to carry out this extension, so thoroughly convinced are we of the value of this branch of school-work.

In conclusion, let us say that the Board has every reason to be satisfied, generally speaking, with the body of teachers in its service, who, often under serious disadvantages arising from local circumstances, or their own lack of technical knowledge or skill, are working earnestly to advance the interests of education in the district. In spite of the defects which we have, from a sense of duty, felt ourselves obliged to point out in the course of this report, we acknowledge cheerfully and gladly that the educational results of the teachers' labours during the past year are in a high degree deserving of credit and encouragement.

We have, &c.,

JAMES HENDRY, }
A. L. WYLLIE, } Inspectors.

The Chairman, Education Board, Southland.