A marked improvement is noticeable in Standards II and V, though the work of the latter class is not yet fully satisfactory. The scope of the training prescribed in the syllabus for the Preparatory children is now better understood by teachers, and schemes of work for the different classes are better graded ; but there is still too great a tendency to neglect P. I (the infant class) by allowing them simply to follow the lead of the next higher section, and to promote too readily into and out of Standard I before the child has acquired a thorough knowledge of the necessary addition and subtraction tables, the teaching of which should precede those of multiplication and division.

From a scrutiny of our inspection notes on the work of small schools in grades 0, 1, and 2, we see that in them the chief weakness lies, more especially in Standards II and I and Preparatory, showing that through the lack of skill and experience in the teachers a weak foundation for after-training is being laid.

Standard VI showed but slight improvement, and is this year the weakest class. The exceptionally weak Fifth of last year, and, again, too hasty promotion, induced by the desire to compete for proficiency certificates, may indirectly conduce towards the poor results. The tests issued by the Department were used for this class, most of the pupils being examined in November or December. A continuation of the issue of these cards is highly desirable for convenience in examination, and for the purpose of maintaining a more uniformly high level of attainment throughout the Dominion.

Of those who sat for proficiency certificates, 125, or 27 per cent. of the whole number, failed to qualify in arithmetic. Considering that the pass required only 40 per cent. of the possible marks, necessarily a low standard as this subject is essential for the proficiency certificate, we do not consider, then, that the large number of passes indicates a complete mastery of the subject, and are somewhat disappointed to find that in this competition for the "blue ribbon" of primary-school work, the pupils came up comparatively ill trained.

It was some satisfaction to find that in all other classes the work was much better. The complicated system of English tables of weights and measures, apart from the lack of a universal faculty for computation, necessarily endows the study of this subject with special difficulty, so that it is questionable whether without bestowing an undue proportion of time to this one subject much better results should be expected than we have secured in Standards II, III, and IV.

Head teachers have taken advantage of the dual classification—English and arithmetic—to adapt the work to the abilities of their pupils. We find from the teachers annual examinations that 297 children were placed in a lower class for arithmetic than for English, and twenty-eight in a higher.

Drawing.—In ninety-three schools we considered that this subject was efficiently treated, and in twenty it was especially commended. There are still some of the different sections of the work, such as model-drawing, which are distinctly weak, and, while the most common failing, even when otherwise excellent work is shown, is the omission or partial neglect of one branch, a skilful teacher may ease the difficulty of maintaining so many varieties of work by ingeniously correlating the different parts into a sequence. For example, drawing from object or nature may, through memory drawing and pattern or imitated design, lead easily and naturally up to original design, the same object or objects being retained throughout as the basis.

We noticed this year a growing tendency to allow the ruler to intrude upon other domains than those of drawing with the aid of instruments. Its use in freehand copies (Standard I) is obviously an abuse; and, again, in drawing the straight lines of a model (Standard VI) where the mere definition of the subject as given in the syllabus—freehand drawing from simple models—should be a sufficient indication of the method to be adopted.

Instrumental drawing, such as drawing to scale, plane geometry, solid geometry, and design with instruments, is not systematically kept up, and consequently Standard VI pupils are at a disadvantage in such a competition as that for the Junior National Scholarship, unless previous standard work is thoroughly revised, or special attention is directed to this section.

Acting on a suggestion made in last year's report, the Board authorized the equipment of each of our larger schools with a set of drawing-models. These have been neatly made in wood, and supplied to thirty of the schools which hitherto were without any apparatus of the kind. We expect in future to find these freely utilized, as they should prove especially useful in Sixth Standard model-drawing.

The instruction in singing shows much variety of treatment in different schools, seventy-four being considered as doing satisfactory work. In the smaller schools where circumstances require all the pupils to be combined the efforts of the teacher are usually concentrated on preparing a few suitable songs. In many of the larger schools, however, and more especially where the teacher has a musical bent, the theory is very capably dealt with, and the pupils receive a very useful training in the subject.

Physical Instruction is receiving satisfactory attention in all schools. Many teachers have adopted exercises from the Manual issued by the Education Department, which contains admirable sets of well-graded exercises. It is advisable, except under unfavourable weather-conditions, that these exercises should be practised in the open air. The illustrations at the end of the Manual are worthy of close study. Breathing-exercises form part of the daily routine in all schools. Both in these and in the physical exercises it is generally conceded that the best training is derived from short sets of exercises, frequently and regularly practised. Military drill continues to be efficiently taught in all the larger schools, while healthy games are widely fostered.

Geography continues to be one of the least satisfactory subjects, and remains a stumbling-block to many pupils. We have in previous reports expressed our opinion on the requirements in this subject, and we again find our former opinions confirmed.

In Standards V and VI the weakness is most marked. Much of the work demands not only careful observation on the part of the pupils, but also a considerable degree of reasoning-power in drawing inferences from easily observed phenomena. It is in the latter demand that failure was most evident. The scope of the work seems too wide for the child to acquire sufficient skill in drawing correct inferences