incidence in either case; the function of the Arbitration Court in adjusting disputes between employers and employees—are topics of this kind that might well be treated pretty fully in most schools. A more detailed and precise indication of a good course of instruction in this important subject might well be included in the revised syllabus that is expected to be issued soon. The fact that it does not count for gaining certificates of proficiency makes it of little account.

In nature-study a good deal of satisfactory and educative work is being done, though much of it is marred by faults of method, especially by the too ready communication of explanations that pupils should gather and indicate or formulate as the result of their own observation and reflection. Difficult subjects—the functions of green leaves, for example—are often dealt with prematurely, and without using simple experiments to clearly disclose the operations to be observed and explained. It is quite possible in any school to arrange simple experiments to show that green leaves give off a gas of some kind—it can even be seen on the leaves of green plants growing in a pool of still water after the sun has been shining on them for some time—yet that this is the case is by no means always demonstrated before the entire operation is told in detail and explained. Similar remarks may be made about the presence of starch in leaves during the daytime, its absence after some hours of darkness, and the steady loss of water from leaves fully exposed to the air—facts which can be demonstrated in any school without difficulty. In all such cases the facts or operations must be seen or demonstrated before any explanation of them is considered or offered. It is only thus that the explanation comes as a true satisfaction to the mind, and it is at the same time more intelligible and more impressive. Animal-life and familiar animal forms are in general much more satisfactorily handled, and specimens and blackboard drawings are often used in combination in their treatment. It is a mistake to take up the study of even the more obvious living processes of plants at too early a stage. It should never be attempted in the primer classes, and is hardly in place below Standard II. From Standard I upwards, pupils should be trained to take notes of all nature-study lessons, and also to make drawings or sketches in illustration of the subjects treated. This is too often neglected. A special exercise-book is needed for the purpose. Teachers interested in the study of plant-life, whether in agricultural classes or in nature-study ones, will find much help in a little book published by Messrs. Blackie and Son at 8d., and entitled "Seasonal Botany"; but it is mainly for fairly advanced work that its many simple experiments would be of use.

In the larger schools, lessons in elementary science are successfully handled. Commonly the experiments are demonstrated before a class, the pupils acting only as interested observers. This method of instruction is in most schools the only practicable one, and it seems to me to be quite unduly depreciated nowadays. Easy lessons in simple chemistry are usually taken in addition to a very elementary course of physics. The composition of the air, its relations to the processes of breathing and burning, and to the nutrition of plants through their green leaves, should be mastered in every school. Heller's "Elementary Experimental Science"—a book used in one or two of our more influential schools—hardly touches on these topics, and needs to be supplemented by a series of lessons on them. In country and village schools above Grade III, elementary agriculture is generally taken up. None of the Inspectors touch on this important subject, and I have not come much into contact with schools of this class. Though to a certain extent the leading theoretical principles are fairly taught, I am of opinion that the teaching, broadly regarded, is disappointing, and that the considerable expense the Board has incurred in recent years to improve this department of educational effort has not as yet reaped an adequate reward. Clearly arranged notes of the teaching, and especially of the practical and experimental work on which it should be based, are not, so far as I am aware, very commonly kept by pupils. A definite course of work that could be overtaken without strain in the average country school, divided into sections for consecutive years (as far as such division is practicable), is still a desideratum, and an effort should be made to provide it. As changes of teachers are rather frequent in such schools, a common definite course of work is all the more needful. At the same time, I feel that the farming public expect the public schools to do more in this direction than can be reasonably looked for. They fail to recognize the limitations of the pupils' general knowledge.

It has been suggested to me by Mr. Grierson that were the capitation grant allowed for the teaching of elementary agriculture paid directly to the head teacher, or to the Chairman of Committee of a country school, local contributions and services, and enthusiasm for the work, would be more readily forthcoming; and I think this is true. Many teachers, I have reason to believe, have been greatly discouraged by difficulties and prolonged delays in getting supplies of needful appliances for the practical and experimental work, while one or two teachers have for this reason given up applying for recognition of their classes. The present divided direction of this work is certainly unsatisfactory.

School gardens worthy of the name are but rarely seen—I mean gardens used for the study of the culture and manuring of cultivated plants. Indeed, there are not by any means as many ornamental gardens, either in country or in town schools, as one might expect to see. The holidays often involve an awkward break in the attention to these, and in the later half of the year weeds assert an unwelcome predominance. Teachers are, however, getting to realize that education may be greatly helped by such aids as school gardens afford.

The spread of blackberries and gorse in school glebes has become, in a number of districts, a serious evil, with which it is difficult to cope. Teachers when pressed to clear the land can often justly say that the present situation was not created by them, but is a legacy from their predecessors. The Board would do well to devise some effective way of clearing these lands, otherwise they must prove useless for the purposes for which glebes were provided. Mr. Stewart paid special heed to this matter.

The Inspectors in their reports to me do not touch on the subject of health. I have given some attention to it during the year, and fear that the instruction is in general disappointing in scope and thoroughness, and consequently in practical utility. In some smaller schools no programme of work had been thought out at the time of my visits. In some of the larger schools things are much better,