

succeeded one whose classification had been faulty: but in each of such schools the Inspector's action has affected the status of only a few of the pupils.

CENTRAL EXAMINATIONS.—In the more remote parts of the district candidates for certificates were examined in their own schools at the time of the notified visit of the Inspectors, held as late as possible in the school year. Most of the candidates, however, were examined as heretofore at convenient centres, of which this year a slight readjustment was made to suit the changed conditions of some of the schools. A special examination was also held early in March, and individual candidates, including several recent arrivals in the Dominion, desirous of entering the public service were dealt with as occasions arose.

ORGANIZATION.—The importance of an equitable distribution of responsibility among the individual members of the staffs of our schools is fully recognized by your Inspectors, and modifications of the proposed organization have been frequently made at our suggestion. In the larger schools our second, or notified, visit of inspection is paid in the winter or early spring. Later in the year, owing to the influx of new pupils, readjustment of the staff is at times necessary, and additional visits were paid to a considerable number of schools to see how this had been effected. In several instances temporary inconvenience was more or less acutely felt because the average attendance of the pupils had grown to be higher than that of the grade in which the school was classified. In most cases of this nature the pressure has been relieved by the appointment of an additional teacher after the Christmas vacation. As a rule, the headmasters display active sympathy with their assistants in dealing with the congestion at times experienced in the junior classes, but the erroneous idea that any person can teach infants, irrespective of the size of the class, has had to be combated occasionally in an unexpected quarter.

The following notes will serve to indicate in some measure our estimate of the quality of the work done in the various subjects of the syllabus:—

WRITING.—Under the English group of subjects are included reading, recitation, composition, writing, and spelling. Of these, writing and spelling are most even in point of merit—that is, taking the average of the schools visited. Depending, as it does, on accurate observation and habitually faithful reproduction, writing is an index not less to the efficiency of the instruction than to the value of the supervision and discipline of the school. There are still some schools, however, in which the teachers fail to realize the importance of attention to detail, and of unremitting care in supervising and directing individual effort in all the writing, on slate or paper, incidental to the school curriculum. The copy-book lesson will be of little use unless the principles therein taught are carried out in daily practice, for where shirking and carelessness are permitted, even in matters of detail, the moral fibre must become weakened.

SPELLING.—Spelling in a large number of our schools is distinctly good. This subject in the lower classes is often well taught by the systematic use of word-building, in which connection an intelligent use of the more common roots might more generally obtain among the senior pupils. Occasionally, however, it is found that, while formal lessons on word-building find a place on the programme, they are not based on a general phonic system, or on appreciation of the meanings of words, and are not applied in the ordinary spelling-lessons with the best educational results. Some of the younger teachers, with mistaken zeal, devote the bulk of their attention to the less common and more difficult words in the text-book, to the neglect of the simpler words of everyday speech.

READING.—In a goodly proportion of schools reading shows commendable fluency, and it is satisfactory to be able to record an improvement in the intelligent comprehension of the subject-matter and phraseology of the lessons read, associated in an increasing number of our schools with a corresponding improvement in expression. The importance of the more mechanical qualities of clearness and distinctness of utterance might be more generally recognized. Careful training in the use of the vocal organs—lips, teeth, &c.—is needed to secure clear and distinct articulation and enunciation. Correct phrasing, proper emphasis, and voice modulation are more difficult of attainment, for these are qualities that depend on the intelligent appreciation of the passage read. It is pleasing to note the widening range of reading of the child of to-day, and the stimulus thus given to his intellectual tastes and desires. To this end the *School Journal*, by providing fresh reading-matter on current topics of interest, has contributed in a very appreciable degree.

RECITATION.—With some notable exceptions, the quality of the recitation delivered on the occasion of our visits fails to command appreciative comment. In some instances we have noted that the required number of lines has been memorized, but little or no enthusiasm appears to have been evoked, and the choice of subject often leaves much to be desired. Learning poetry by heart should never be looked upon as a task, but as an emotional and intellectual pleasure. Too often, however, the subject fails to arouse the interest, to develop the imagination, or to mould the taste for good literature. The weakness is due to a lack of an intelligent comprehension of the scope and beauty of the passages set for recitation, and this can be remedied only by graphic teaching, such as would lead the pupils to see the inner meaning and spirit of the poems dealt with. Where interest is aroused the work undertaken can be done in the minimum of time, and with the minimum of conscious effort. Above all, care should be taken that the effect of the poem on the mind be not destroyed by too early a detailed and intensive study of the matter and form. But while submitting this criticism, we fully recognize that the claims of the more important subjects of the syllabus narrowly limits the amount of time available for instruction in recitation.

COMPOSITION.—In the majority of our schools the composition exercise, the best rough-and-ready test of his progress, shows that the pupil has acquired very fair power of expressing his own thoughts in his own words, and that his composition exercise is not now, as it frequently