

contributes a fair proportion of the marks allotted. We do not lay much stress at this examination on getting the meaning of single words; we aim at inducing the pupils to put in their own words the thought underlying the phrase or sentence. For example, a boy was asked to tell the meaning of the following sentence that occurs in "The Skater and the Wolves": "Every nerve and muscle in my frame was stretched to the utmost tension." He replied in language terse and forcible, if not elegant, "I was going for all I was worth." There was no doubt that this lad had the whole scene in his mind's eye.

We have heard fewer complaints of late from outsiders as to the writing of the primary-school children, and, though we had little sympathy with the recurrent cry against our schools in this matter, it is satisfactory to state that at no time has the writing in the schools as a whole been better than it is. Spelling, which is bracketed with writing in the Department's schedules, receives a full share of attention, and is generally good.

The teaching of composition is, in the main, satisfactory. The greater attention that has been given to the cultivation of oral expression in the lower classes, and the earlier stage at which practice in writing simple narratives has now become general, have resulted in the acquisition of a freer and readier style of essay-writing among the pupils of the higher classes.

Arithmetic continues to be well taught in most of our schools. We have again to call attention to the need for a more careful setting-out of the steps of the reasoning in the solution of problems. It is not enough to arrive at the right answer; every pupil should so set out his work that an examiner will follow the steps of his reasoning with ease. The training that this implies is a strong safeguard in the matter of accuracy, and is at the same time a fine mental discipline.

The favourable comment we made last year on the treatment of the B course of geography must be repeated this year; and we are pleased to report that under present conditions there is little ground for the reproach that pupils were leaving the primary schools with no knowledge of the important places of this and other lands. The picture-cards issued from time to time with the *School Journal* have been most valuable as aids to oral instruction in geography. The trouble has been to have them easily available for use. On our recommendation many of the teachers have used old drawing-books as scrap-albums for preserving the cards, as much of the page of the drawing-book being cut out as will show the letterpress on the back of each card. In the A course some very fine work is being done, though among the less resourceful teachers there are still many evidences that their treatment is so bookish as to deprive the lessons of much of the charm and interest that should belong to them as a part of nature-study.

In the new regulations for teachers' certificates we are pleased to see history and civics included as one of the compulsory subjects. It was full time for its inclusion, as young teachers of late years have been entering the service who knew nothing of history beyond the few scraps they had retained from lessons read during their primary-school course, most of them during their time at the secondary schools and in their preparation for certificates leaving history as an examination subject severely alone. The action of the Department in this matter will conduce to the more systematic treatment of history in the primary schools.

With regard to singing, we are of opinion that, apart from the special singing-lesson, much more might be made of this exercise as a means of frequent recreation during working-hours. The field for the choice of school songs is a wide one, and some of our teachers choose wisely; it is a pity that the choice should ever be otherwise. The school song is a permanent possession, and should therefore be worthy to be retained in the memory.

During the year thirty classes have been recognized in elementary agriculture. The interest in school-gardening is well maintained, and many of the teachers are entitled to praise for the enthusiasm they have shown and the hard work they have expended in making the gardens not only beautiful, but also useful as a field for developing the observational faculties of the children. Handwork in various forms is taken up in the lower classes, and the lessons in cookery and woodwork continue to be given in the higher classes of the large schools with very marked success.

We wish to express our appreciation of the excellent service rendered by many of the teachers in the supervision and direction of the children's sports and games. Inter-school cricket contests, football and hockey matches, running, swimming, and shooting competitions all denote much preparation at hours that lie outside the school time-table. The community owes a debt of gratitude to the teachers for the time so ungrudgingly given to exercises that directly and ostensibly make for physical development, and that indirectly, though less obtrusively, tend to the upbuilding of intellectual vigour and moral worth.

We have, &c.,

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The Chairman, Education Board, South Canterbury.