

lessons, to those teachers who could not attend the classes either at Invercargill or at Gore. We trust that this very useful grant will be repeated, and that it will hereafter be available earlier in the year, so as to enable more satisfactory arrangements to be made for its expenditure.

The action of your Board with respect to uncertificated teachers had the effect of largely increasing the number of candidates for the certificate examination of January, 1912. We trust that, as a result, there will be a considerable accession to the ranks of our certificated teachers. Considering, however, the present rates of remuneration in other walks of life, we are not hopeful of obtaining anything like a full supply of certificated teachers for the more poorly-paid positions in the gift of the Board. These positions, always numerous in Southland, have been rendered more so during the current year by the issue of fresh staffing regulations.

It is possible to take too gloomy a view of the situation. Considering the age of the Dominion, the facilities for education are simply marvellous. The readiness with which sums of money, relatively huge, are voted for the purposes of education is in the highest degree creditable to us as a nation. To have brought even the rudiments of an English education within the reach of practically every child in the remote districts of our Dominion is an achievement the importance of which cannot well be estimated.

During the year a deputation from the local Teachers' Institute conferred with us on the difficulties of backblock teachers. With their views in general we are in sympathy. Until, however, we are in possession of the long-promised new edition of the syllabus we shall have to defer assistance in certain practical matters discussed with the Institute's representatives. We hail with pleasure the division of the D examination into two sections. This will make the attainments of the teacher's certificate easier, and, in great part, solve the difficulties created by the raising of the matriculation standard. The latter change, though from other points of view quite justifiable, must seriously affect the prospects of those pupil-teachers and probationers who enter our service without matriculating, as to enter the training college they must either have matriculated or obtained a partial pass for D. It would seem reasonable, considering the scarcity of matriculated students, that the latter requirement should be made somewhat less exacting than it is at present.

We view with much satisfaction the prospect of the establishment of a technical day school in Invercargill at an early date. Such an institution is entirely necessary. With its sister institutions, the Southland Boys' and Girls' High Schools, it should be most valuable in moulding the characters and developing the capabilities of our young people at a most critical period in their lives, and in fitting them thoroughly for the spheres they will occupy in the future. We wish it every success.

Short notes on the quality of the instruction in the various school subjects follow.

In addition to our remarks on reading and composition in connection with the Proficiency Examination, we have to urge on teachers the necessity for fostering a love of sound literature amongst their pupils. It is in vain that children are taught to read if in after-years they take no interest in good books, or absorb with avidity only the trashy books and magazines with which shops and stalls are now flooded. In actual teaching, increased attention to phonics in the lower classes would lead to clearer articulation and enunciation in the upper, and indirectly be of much benefit in regard to spelling.

The plea that some children cannot be taught to write well is for the most part disproved by the uniformly good quality of the writing of some of the largest classes in the district. Where writing is *taught*, all but a negligible percentage of our scholars acquire a good round, legible hand quite suitable for all ordinary purposes. While the "copperplate" style of our grandfathers has vanished, we venture to say that the average handwriting of pupils is quite equal in quality to that which prevailed in the latter half of the last century. An examination of a sufficient quantity of the excuse notes daily received by teachers will soon convince any one who doubts our assertion on this point.

In arithmetic the teaching is becoming every year more purposeful and systematic. It is still, however, less concrete than it should be, and still insufficiently correlated with such subjects as geometrical drawing and carton-work. In a good many of our smaller schools the teachers are still in bondage to the text-book. This they "go through" with their pupils from A to Z without selection, modification, or alteration of any sort. As a natural consequence, when one of their pupils is confronted with a problem he totally disregards the fundamental principles involved. Instead he places it in the orthodox pen provided by the text-book. If it conform to the type there found it is correctly solved; if not, failure is certain.

Drawing received generous treatment both as to time and attention. Owing to want of forethought, however, and to misunderstanding of the requirements of the syllabus, the results are not always commensurate with the labour expended. We have to intimate that in future, where woodwork or cookery is taken up, freehand and design-drawing only need be professed at the Proficiency Examination by candidates whose progress at the manual-training centres has been satisfactory.

There is little to add to what we have said in previous reports in regard to singing. Its value in affording relief after other school-work of more exhausting nature is understood, but apart from this its place in school life is poorly recognized. We should urge that one or two patriotic songs should always be included in the repertoire of every school, and that the work of the "infants" should be more frequently lightened by song than it is at present.

Due attention is paid to the prescribed course of physical exercises, though in a good many cases only the earlier numbers of the course are mastered. The time seems opportune for bringing our treatment of this very important branch of school-work abreast with the latest developments in other lands.