

instances a species of verbal legerdemain on the part of the pupils. There is one time-honoured exercise in English that does not appeal to the average Standard VI pupil of this district, and that is word-analysis. The anatomical part he manages not ill, but he leaves the prefixes, roots, and affixes as *dissecta membra*, failing hopelessly in the physiological part, the reconstruction of the word-elements in such a way as to show that he understands their force and the force of the resultant words. Before we leave this subject we must allude, in a word, to current opinion regarding the degeneracy of spoken English. That there is some ground for complaint he that has ears to hear may hear in passing along any of our thoroughfares. It is not because the spoken language of the pupils now in school is so terribly decadent that we need to be so watchful: it is the danger lest, after a few generations, the young people of the Dominion may be swept into a flood of faulty and impure vocalization, and the pristine purity of the sounds of the English tongue be for ever lost, that has to be guarded against. We intend, with the co-operation of the teachers, to fortify the pupils' minds against this danger by the frequent practice by the pupils of a series of exercises that will be drawn up in connexion with reading, singing, recitation, and physical exercises.

To turn to arithmetic: the results obtained at the Proficiency Examinations were satisfactory. Notwithstanding this, the teaching of the subject still leaves not a little to be desired. There is, as a rule, little evidence that principles are, as they should be, developed in logical sequence from principles previously taught, and in anticipation of principles that are to follow. As might be surmised, this method of treatment does not receive adequate recognition in the schemes of work. In comparatively few schools does mental arithmetic receive systematic teaching, and in fewer still is the value of short compact methods of calculation recognized. Turning next to the group of subjects in which real elements are more important than formal—to geography, nature-study, hand-work, elementary physics, and elementary agriculture—we believe that in their methods of instruction the teachers are steadily gaining ground. There is always a danger of real instruction degenerating into formal; the latter is so much easier, speedier, and more expansive, that none but the strongest teachers are able on all occasions to confine it to its proper sphere. A teacher can in a breath tell his pupils that insects appear in the egg, chrysalis, pupa, and imago stages; that the sun's elevation varies from day to day; that warmth, air, and moisture are necessary to the germination of seeds; and that a substance weighed in water loses weight equal to the weight of the water displaced by it: but it takes a man of some calibre to lead the pupils to find out all such things for themselves. As to singing and drawing, we must repeat, with respect to the former, that our district is essentially unmusical, the loss in pleasure and elevation to the schools and the people being beyond assessment. To this general statement there are, of course, a few exceptions, and some effort is made in schools previously not vocal to secure passable singing in all classes. In this subject the infant departments give some promise, but the promise is unfulfilled in the upper departments. In country schools we get the best singing where Murdoch's collection of school songs is used.

Respecting drawing, Mr. Watkin, the Board's instructor, may be left to put the case: "During the latter half of the year just ended I visited a number of our schools in my capacity of drawing instructor. I have carefully noted the methods of teaching drawing, and have inspected the work of the pupils. While drawing is well taught in some schools, I find that among teachers in general there is a want of a better understanding of how best the subject may be handled. There is need of a simpler and a more definite scheme of work, with more attention to the aims and objects of the teaching of drawing. It is very evident that many teachers attempt too much in teaching drawing, with the inevitable result of a lack of thoroughness of work; this is especially so as regards brushwork and design, where the work could be vastly improved by doing simpler exercises in a more thorough manner. The neglect of freehand drawing by some teachers is, I feel certain, a grave mistake. Freehand is the foundation of all art training, and without it brushwork and design are impossible. Freehand drawing, which is meant to include drawing from simple objects, affords the pupils the best means of training the eye to the appreciation of form—a matter which, by the way, seems in general to receive but scant attention. There is a mistaken notion abroad that the drawing-copy should be totally abolished, and that all drawing should be taught from the actual object. It has been the practice of all the great schools of art in all ages to begin by teaching the pupil at first how to copy the drawings of others, so as to master the means by which imitation is effected, and then to apply these modes of imitation to the representation of the real object. Drawing from the real object is a process of interpretation, and can no more precede the imitative process of drawing from a copy than can vulgar fractions be taught before simple addition. Much of the so-called nature-drawing is positively harmful, tending only to careless observation and slipshod work. In brushwork and design there is room for much improvement, which can obtain only when the teacher gains a better conception of some of the simple, fundamental, and common-sense principles which govern decorative art. Model drawing—apparently on account of its great difficulty—seems to be very little taught in our schools. There is no question as to its usefulness, but the teacher must know his subject to teach it successfully. Instrumental drawing is not receiving the attention it merits as a training in habits of neatness and accuracy. Here, too, it would be better if less were attempted, and that more thoroughly done. I feel that as soon as teachers have a better notion as to how drawing should be taught there is bound to be improvement all through. I would here like to express my appreciation of the courtesy shown me by the teachers of the various schools I have visited, and of their great willingness to avail themselves of any assistance I may have been able to afford them in the teaching of a subject which I have so much at heart."

With respect to the application of the major principles by which the schools are governed, as well as with respect to the principles themselves—the principles, namely, of school organization, school discipline, and school environment—our testimony would be that the teachers deserve almost unqualified commendation. Our requirements have been exacting, but there has been a brave response. Head teachers have undertaken continuous class-teaching in order that there might be experienced assistance available in large infant departments; they have prepared thoughtful and ample schemes of work,