

the great and obvious need for the non-promotion of pupils that have failed to master the requirements of their present standard, and whose progress therefore gives but little promise of success in the next. These remarks, it must be understood, do not apply to the larger and more efficient schools, but only to those whose teachers, from want of experience or from inability to withstand local pressure, or from lack of appreciation of the far-reaching effects of their action, err in the direction indicated.

*Periodical Examinations.*—Clause 5 of the Regulations for the Inspection and Examination of Schools is very clear as to what is required in this matter, and yet it is not an uncommon experience to find the records of periodical examinations far from satisfactory. We are told that “the work has been done on slates,” and hence is not available for reference, or we find that corrections, especially in the case of composition and spelling, are made with insufficient care. In some schools the practice obtains of allowing pupils to make rough copies of the answers to questions set before writing them in the book provided for the purpose of recording examination results. This plan cannot be deemed satisfactory. Pupils should be required, when undergoing examination, to work under examination conditions, which demand that answers should be written down within the time allotted to the subject in question, which in general does not permit of the preparation of a rough draft prior to the making of a fair copy. The new syllabus regulations do not require more than two periodical examinations to be held during the course of the year, so that the work involved in testing the progress of pupils and recording results has been considerably lessened. We must insist on all teachers complying with the regulations bearing on this matter, and we trust that no further reference to it on our part will be necessary.

*Probationers.*—We would again draw attention to the terms of the regulations under which probationers are appointed, which make it quite clear that these are not to be regarded as forming part of the staff. The number of hours per week during which probationers may be employed in actual teaching is fifteen, and these should be utilized in giving the probationers varied practice so as to make the experience of the period of probation as wide as possible, and enable the probationers to form some idea of the aims of teaching and of the difficulties that beset the realization of such aims, with the best ways of overcoming them. In other words, the probationer is to be regarded as a possible and not as an actual recruit; as one who is on probation, and who, as a beginner, is especially in need of guidance and careful supervision. We have heard of cases where the services of probationers have been utilized within very narrow limits, with the result that the experience acquired has been neither sufficiently varied nor sufficiently extensive. It was partly because it was realized that the proper direction and supervision of the probationers’ duties would make considerable demands on the time of head teachers and assistants that the probationer was and is regarded as a teaching unit quite apart from the ordinary staff.

*Organization.*—This item includes the grouping of classes, the distribution of the staff, the preparation and application of schemes of work, and the direction of school activities generally. We refer, however, more particularly to that portion of the work of organization having reference to the distribution of staff. In most of the schools very commendable care has been shown in utilizing the services of the staff to the best advantage and in allotting classes to teachers so that the work involved is fairly distributed. There are, however, cases where these conditions do not obtain, and where certain teachers are asked to undertake the instruction of too many pupils. This, it is scarcely necessary to point out, is unfair both to teacher and pupils, and cannot fail to have an effect detrimental to the interests of the school. Pupils in the preparatory classes require constant supervision and individual attention, and this becomes well-nigh impossible unless the numbers are relatively small. We speak in the interests of teachers and pupils in the smaller schools, where assistants are sometimes required to undertake the training of an unduly large proportion of the total enrolment.

*Oral Teaching.*—In the larger and more efficient schools this important matter is receiving highly commendable attention, teachers realizing its pronounced utility and the need for making adequate preparation for its successful application. In many of the smaller schools, however, the so-called oral teaching is lacking in definition and point, and, moreover, is not impressed with sufficient force and thoroughness. The failure of so many pupils from country schools to do justice to Standard VI examination tests we consider may fairly be attributed to faulty oral teaching, and we are forced to conclude that the preparation necessary for effective oral teaching is frequently omitted. Efficient teaching-power implies a very definite appreciation of aim and method, which can be acquired only as the result of careful preparation and intelligent thought, for, though it is true that pupils should be taught to work independently and acquire knowledge for themselves, and that the best teacher is the one who is constantly striving to render his services unnecessary, the counsel of perfection implied in this statement cannot be realized without skilful direction of the pupils’ efforts and wise use of every available aid to teaching. The difficulties inseparable from learning are very real in the case of most children, who require help and encouragement if they are to succeed, not only in the acquisition of knowledge, but also in forming habits of systematic application, without which the results of their training must be inadequate and disappointing. Lessons in arithmetic, in composition, in reading, in history, and in other subjects cannot be successfully given without much preparation, and teachers that fail to realize this are not fully cognizant of the important duties they are called upon to discharge.

*Reading and Recitation.*—Though in the upper classes reading in most of the schools continues to improve, there are still a good number of schools where the results are far from satisfactory. The pupils, on the whole, read with some accuracy and fluency, but expressive reading is the exception and not the rule. The fault appears to lie in the teaching, which we are led to think ends in enabling pupils to pronounce the words with more or less fluency—the