

regulations requiring teachers before sitting for an examination to supply satisfactory evidence that they have carried out a course of practical work in certain science subjects, a great hardship is imposed on those in outlying districts, unless some adequate arrangements are made to enable them to take a practical course at some centre. To meet the difficulty it is intended this year to carry out a three-weeks course of instruction in practical science at the New Plymouth centre.

The usual course of practical lessons for pupil-teachers conducted by the Inspectors was held at New Plymouth, Inglewood, and Stratford centres. By the permission of the Board the uncertificated teachers were on this occasion allowed to attend in order that they might get an insight into the most up-to-date methods of treating certain subjects of the school curriculum. Many of these teachers welcomed the opportunity, and expressed their appreciation of the provision made by the Board for their benefit. It is intended to offer this year similar facilities.

School Manual Classes.—[See E.-5, Report on Manual and Technical Instruction.]

General Efficiency.—Each of the schools has been visited by us twice during the year, and it is pleasing to record that with very few exceptions the teachers have discharged their duties in a conscientious and efficient manner. The teaching as a rule has been on educative and modern lines, and the defects that were noted were due more to a lack of experience and training than to a want of zeal and earnestness. We should like, however, to make a few suggestions regarding the treatment of some of the subjects. The general English subjects continue to show a slight improvement. We have very little fault to find with the reading as far as fluency and expression are concerned, but a little more attention might be devoted to the purity of the vowel sounds. This defect is more noticeable in the ordinary speech of the pupils. While we think that the not-uncommon criticism levelled against our primary schools, that there is a tendency amongst the pupils, and even the teachers, to drift into a so-called colonial dialect, is not altogether justified, yet we feel that there are a few cases of common errors in the use of the standard English vowel sounds that call for attention, such as the following: (1) "Ay" in "may" sounded somewhat like "i" in "my"; (2) "I" in "time" like "oi" in "toime"; (3) the "ow" in "cow" like "eow" in "keow." There are also creeping into some of our schools such vulgar affectations as "faive" for "five," and "ite" for "eight," of the vowel sounds by talking with the tongue against the teeth.

Considerable improvement has been achieved in connexion with the recitation, especially when taken in conjunction with actions. In a few schools we found the children not word perfect, this weakness being largely due, we think, to the practice that some teachers have fallen into of prompting the children, who get into the habit of relying on the teacher for this assistance. Spelling taken from the text-book is a comparatively strong subject, but tested by the general spelling in essays and other written work is frequently below the average. This in some cases is probably due to the lack of careful supervision in correction. We should like to see a considerable advance made in scale, design, and instrumental drawing. Drawing from natural and fashioned objects should receive fuller attention in the higher standards. The objects for representation should not be selected in a haphazard manner, but should be graded with due regard to the power of the pupils. The scheme of work should clearly show the principle of selection of the objects chosen, and also the manner in which the drawings are to be developed. Teachers should guard against labelling as drawing crude diagrams in nature-study which should be relegated to notebooks.

Reference Books: The following books which have lately come under our notice will be found helpful to teachers: "Aids to the Writing of English Composition," by Fred. W. Bewsher; "The A.L. Paper Folding and Designing" (Arnold and Sons); "Object and Nature Drawing," by A. Hoten (McDougall's).

In a great number of schools we were not satisfied either with the quality or the quantity of the needlework done. Closer supervision should be exercised over this work. With regard to the special sewing instructor, the teacher must recognize that the instructor is not conversant with the requirements, and should give guidance and direction when necessary.

Rural Classes, Stratford.—[See E.-5, Report on Manual and Technical Instruction.]

Efficiency.—It is gratifying to note that this year there are thirty-nine schools that have received "good" or a higher mark for efficiency, order, discipline, and tone, as against eighteen for 1911 and twenty for 1912.

Catholic Schools.—The following is a summary of examination results for each of the Catholic schools examined and inspected by us. [Not printed. The table shows seven convent schools examined. Roll, 516; present, 506; certificates of proficiency issued, 22; certificates of competency issued, 11.]

We are, &c.,

W. A. BALLANTYNE, B.A } Inspectors.
R. G. WHETTER, M.A., }

The Chairman, Taranaki Education Board.

WANGANUI.

SIR,—

Education Office, Wanganui, 31st March, 1914.

We have the honour to present our report for the year ended 31st December, 1913.

Before dealing with the subjects of instruction we desire to make some remarks on several other phases of educational work. First may come the topic that is at the present moment most eagerly canvassed by teachers—the latest issue of the syllabus. It has been on the stocks for two years, and is the outcome of much educational toil, trouble, and turmoil. It embodies, on the whole, the current demands for progress and reform. An examination of its contents makes it