

available for reference to clear away vagueness of conception, and give clear and definite impressions of subject-matter under treatment. With such material ready to hand varied and abundant subjects are furnished for oral composition, while a strong element of realism can be given to the instruction in geography and history. We would recommend to some of our teachers an occasional "spring" cleaning of cupboards and the destruction of accumulated rubbish. The neat appearance of some grounds is distinctly creditable, and shows what can be done by teachers who believe in action instead of waiting for others to move. The teacher's own garden plot in a few districts is far from a model one and it might be borne in mind that both in the schools and the grounds orderly habits, neatness and tidiness should be inculcated by example as well as by precept.

Of the quality of the instruction given in the several subjects of the syllabus the following brief estimate is submitted:—

*Reading.*—This subject continues to improve, and it is gratifying to note the increased emphasis laid on clear and distinct enunciation. There are indications that many teachers have profited from the hints embodied in the circular sent out by the Board. The scrappy and somewhat inaccurate answers to questions on the subject-matter would give rise to the belief that some teachers fail to recognize the necessity for preparation on their part. Under the new syllabus correct speech is strongly emphasized, and as carelessness in this respect is only too prevalent among pupils, teachers will require to make increasing and systematic effort to overcome the evil. No success can be hoped for if the teacher on his or her part does not avoid slang, colloquialisms, indistinctness of utterance, and nasality.

*English and Composition.*—Taking the schools as a whole it is pleasing to note that some improvement has been made in the teaching of formal English. In the test set for proficiency certificates the questions dealing with analysis and synthesis of sentences were, as a rule, better done, and though some weakness is still shown in the matter of derivation, there is no doubt that so far as a knowledge of sentence-structure is concerned an advancement continues to be made. With regard to the expression of thought on the part of the child, there are, however, a number of teachers who fail to make the best use of the opportunities afforded by the geography, history, nature-study, or science lessons. There are many instances of lack of attention to punctuation, and a monotonous repetition of uninteresting items with failure to keep to the subjects and inability to distinguish between essentials and trivialities. The incidence of attention is too much on the essay—subjects for which are, in many cases, selected haphazard and without due correlation—and too little on the reproduction in written form of the child's logical thought with regard to lessons given in other school subjects. Instances are by no means rare where a pupil, after writing a short essay with reasonable care and accuracy, blunders badly in his written English when answering the simplest questions in history, geography, or elementary science. This ought not to be, and must be taken as evidence of faulty or negligent teaching. Oral instruction is necessary, but there should be constant written expression of ideas to train the child in the highest art of written composition.

*Recitation* in some schools is excellent, but in a steadily diminishing number it continues lifeless and mechanical. In this as in other subjects the remedy lies in greater enthusiasm and a loving interest on the part of the teacher. Merely to memorize a poetical or prose extract has no substantial and abiding value. There must be a clear and complete understanding of the language used, and some appreciation of its inner spirit. To this end the choice of passages must be a wise one.

*Spelling* is on the whole well taught, but a wider range of written composition correlating with history, geography, nature-study, &c., would do much to widen its scope and enlarge the child's vocabulary. This is a matter of considerable importance, inasmuch as many children spell successfully difficult words from the reading-book, but fair ignominiously when using the simpler words necessary for the expression of their ideas and thoughts about familiar matters.

*Writing.*—In writing there is considerable range of values. In our best-taught and best-disciplined schools excellent results are obtained, and, taking the district as a whole, good work is the rule rather than the exception. There are still teachers, however, who focus their attention on neat copybooks, and forget that it is of little use to have correct position and drill for copy-book exercise and to have another and entirely different one for the regular writing, composition, dictation, &c., of the pupils. Without care and attention to detail at all times, instruction on most approved lines can be neutralized, and no sound progress made. The quality of the written work is as a rule a very good indication of the discipline maintained.

*Arithmetic.*—Although the results throughout the district were distinctly satisfactory, the claims of oral work in quite a number of schools are not sufficiently recognized. Adequate attention to this branch of the subject is a necessary preliminary to any substantial improvement not only to ensure accuracy in the written work, but also to enable the child to solve with facility the easy problems and make the necessary calculations incidental to everyday transactions. The exercises given should be carefully graduated, and the pupils encouraged to discuss and compare various methods of solution, a practice which will develop keenness on the part of the pupil and add interest to the lesson. In both written and oral exercises too much stress cannot be laid on the adoption of practical methods.

*Geography.*—In an increasing number of our schools this subject is being intelligently treated, but there are still too many instances of somewhat ineffective instruction, and failure to recognize the interdependence of the physical and commercial sides. In so far as geography is a science, methods must be adopted whereby the pupils may be led to solve for themselves problems that fall within the scope of their intelligence. A knowledge of facts is of value only when the principles that underlie them are understood, and consequently instruction should be based on experimental and observational lines. There is room for improvement also in commercial geography in the