

work on Arbor Day. During the year the city and suburban schools continued the work of planting in co-operation with the Superintendent of the City Reserves. Though the area for this work is yearly becoming more restricted, we feel that both the pupils and the community are benefiting by the continuance of Arbor Day work—the former by the development in them of a personal interest in the beauty-spots of the city, and the latter by the fact that the pupils are realizing their responsibility to preserve public property.

*District High Schools.*—[See E.-6, Report on Secondary Education.]

*Teachers' Salaries.*—We are pleased to note that under the educational legislation of last year the salaries of teachers in the lower grades of the service have been materially improved. Further legislation is promised during the incoming session, and we sincerely hope that some more equitable basis of calculating salaries than average attendance or roll number will be adopted. The salaries of head teachers of schools in the middle grades should be such as to attract the services of what may be called the higher-grade assistants. For the majority of the latter the only posts giving suitable promotion are the head-teacherships of the largest schools. We think this is wrong, and should like to see a salary scheme providing that promotion to head-teacherships of the largest schools should be given only to those who had successfully conducted schools of the middle grades. If this is to be done the salaries of the latter group should be more attractive than those of first assistants.

*Schemes of Work.*—As a rule we find that the schemes of work provide ample suitable matter, and that they are in general carefully arranged, with the work well distributed over the year. We have frequently been struck by the fact that these schemes are regarded by teachers as unalterable, and have found as a result that events of current interest are overlooked by teachers. This should not be the case. From the daily papers and monthly magazines teachers should frequently be able to make suitable and interesting lessons on matters of intercolonial, national, and international importance, and such opportunities should never be neglected. It is mostly in the smaller schools that this loss of opportunity takes place, and we are of opinion that, if the daily paper were more in evidence in all schools than we fear is now the case, the above weakness would soon disappear.

*Punctuality and Regularity of Attendance.*—A few teachers in the service of the Board appear to regard as a dead-letter the regulation which requires them to be in the school at least a quarter of an hour before school commences. In future we shall bring before the Board every case of neglect of this regulation that comes under our notice. In sole-teacher schools it is especially important that the teacher should reach the school in good time in order to prepare the blackboards for the various classes—particularly with the preparatory classes, for whom it is very necessary to provide continuous and varied occupation with as little loss of time as possible. Only in the dairying districts near the city do we find systematic lateness of pupils prevalent, notably with children engaged on the milk-carts. In this district the attendance of pupils is very regular—an indication that parents are placing high value on the work of the schools and teachers.

*Classification.*—Throughout the district we find teachers rising well to their responsibility with regard to the classification of pupils, and in very few cases have we had to comment adversely on the classification of a school as a whole. We have continued to impose our own classification in a few cases where it seemed to us necessary to safeguard the teacher from undue interference by parents, but such cases are yearly becoming fewer.

*Efficiency.*—The following shows the grouping of the schools of the district with regard to their efficiency: Excellent or very good, 30 per cent.; good, 42 per cent.; satisfactory, 22 per cent.; fair to inferior, 6 per cent. These figures show material increase in the first and second groups, a decrease in the third group, and a stationary condition in the fourth group; and they are in accord with the statement in an interim report presented during the year to the effect that there had been marked improvement in the quality of the work in the largest schools of the district. In a former report we appealed to our teachers to bring the number of schools graded as "Good" up to 75 per cent.: they have reached 72 per cent. Given freedom from epidemics and inclement weather we feel that our ideals in this respect will soon be reached.

*Proficiency Certificates.*—The results of the examination for certificates of proficiency were about the same as those of the preceding year—81 per cent. of the candidates who presented themselves gaining the proficiency certificate and 9 per cent. gaining the certificate of competency. The opinion has been freely expressed that, of the candidates that sit for this examination, only about 60 per cent. should obtain the higher certificate. With this view we have not the slightest sympathy. So long as the present regulations and conditions apply it should be quite possible for from 75 to 80 per cent. of the candidates from well-taught schools to secure the proficiency certificate without undue strain on either teacher or taught.

*Methods of Teaching.*—Our remarks on the methods of teaching in last year's report apply with equal force this year. On the whole the methods are educative, and are applied in such a way as to develop interest and initiative. Where teachers have come with the day's work prepared little fault has been found in the methods of treatment. But not all come prepared, and in the hope that some of the latter may be led to improve in this respect we give the treatment of a lesson on "The Founding of Otago and Canterbury" in two schools inspected by us. In school A the lesson was read, no map or diagram was used, and there was no reference to closely related matter or literature. As a result the lesson was dry as dust, and uninteresting, if not repellent, to the class. In school B the lesson was taken before a map of the world, which was freely used. When the expression "The Mayflower" was reached, a few words of explanation were given regarding the Pilgrim Fathers of U.S.A.; a couple of verses of the poem, by Mrs. Hemans were recited, and pupils directed to read the rest at their leisure; the names of the John Wycliffe and Philip Laing were placed on the blackboard; reference was made to the monuments to Dr. Burns and the Scottish poet in the Octagon, Dunedin, and to the monument