

Arithmetic.—The gravest faults noted during the year are the frequent neglect of well-planned mental work introductory to book-work, the lack of revision for check purposes, and insufficient use of weights, measures, and mathematical instruments. The teaching, too, often lacks definite aim, the pupils' interest is not aroused, and not seldom even mechanical accuracy is wanting. The treatment of vulgar and decimal fractions and their practical application is often faulty. It is not uncommon to find a class unable readily to multiply or divide by ten or some multiple of ten without doing the actual multiplication or division. The decimal idea is not steadily maintained, and pupils are not encouraged to use decimal methods in ordinary operations. These shortcomings notwithstanding, we believe that, at the hands of the majority of our teachers, the subject is receiving satisfactorily intelligent treatment, even though the results may not in all cases be commensurate with the comparatively large share of school-time often allotted to it.

Composition.—It gives us genuine pleasure to report that the steady improvement noticeable in the treatment of this subject in recent years is being fully maintained, and, considered generally, composition is now one of the most successfully handled subjects of the syllabus. The prominence given to free oral expression, the more active share now taken by the pupils in all school-work, the more general use of supplementary readers and the growth of school libraries, have added so much to the children's stock of words and so increased their range of knowledge that they now find little difficulty in putting their ideas into readable form. In the senior classes punctuation and paragraphing require more attention.

Geography.—This subject is more realistically treated than formerly. Though the schemes of descriptive geography often reveal a lack of continuity and directness, many of them—probably a majority—contain well-arranged and well-selected matter. Local geography is, however, generally poorly managed. Once in a while nature is actually studied out-of-doors, as it ought to be. But too rarely is sufficient use made of eyes for the study of local features. Quite a number of our schools occupy elevated positions, from which points of vantage much vital instruction could be given through observation and study of the landscape.

In conclusion, we express our gratitude to teachers, members of School Committees, and others who have shown us much consideration and courtesy in the performance of our duties.

We have, &c.,

JAS. HENDRY, }
A. L. WYLLIE, } Inspectors.

The Chairman, Southland Education Board.
