

and crayons would be deemed sufficient. On the whole very satisfactory colour-work was done, especially in those schools that made use of brown or tinted paper. In several schools a high mark of excellence was reached. Care should be taken that the medium is of the best quality; chalks will do for bold free-arm work, but their use in fine drawings must necessarily prove unsatisfactory. A warning appears to be needed to the effect that the more laborious work with instruments must not be allowed to be pushed into the background by the more immediately interesting work in colour; each must receive due attention, and the two may judiciously be combined. Teachers are reminded also that the old idea that an Inspector desires to see a book of carefully prepared exercises, furbished up for the purpose, has long since been cast to the winds. When the books are called for one expects to see the extent of the pupils' practice, to note the degree of progress, and to ascertain the teacher's method.

*Nature-study and Elementary Science.*—Teachers take full advantage of the freedom given in the drawing-up of programmes in nature-study, but there is still a tendency to make the scheme too narrow. The result is that the powers of observation are not trained as they should be, and thus the main object of placing the subject on the syllabus is defeated. The school that has shown the best results in this subject is the one that is working from a programme which at first sight appears to be overburdened; another good school has its scheme based on the seasons, and carries out in one month more work than some schools would appear to accomplish in a year. Where schools are large enough science is taken in the upper classes, and is generally satisfactorily done.

*Geography.*—The work in this subject must be classed as quite unsatisfactory in the majority of schools. The elementary work taken in the lower classes was usually fairly well done, but the pupils of Standard V and Standard VI were, as a general rule, quite unequal to the tests set. The number of children absolutely ignorant of the conditions affecting the climate of their own district, or of the causes of the change of seasons, was, to say the least of it, somewhat surprising; and it was equally astonishing to find how few could insert places of everyday interest in an outline map of the region around the North Sea. When one finds it to be a common belief that a glacier is a river which has been turned into ice, who is to blame?

*History and Civics.*—Unfortunately it cannot be said that the improvement in history and civics noted in my report for 1913 has been maintained. The work is still far too fragmentary and lacking in thoroughness. Due attention to the recommendations given in the new syllabus as to chronological sequence and the concentric method of treatment should result in better work. The value of correlating history with composition would appear to have been overlooked. In dealing with civics pupils are more at home, but the future "good citizen" should know something not only of the privileges and responsibilities that will be his, but also of the causes that have been at work in their development.

*Moral Instruction and Health.*—Proper attention is given to these subjects, and the treatment is along the lines indicated in the new regulations.

*Physical Exercises.*—In all schools physical exercises are taken daily. The programmes of work as given in the Department's small manual were those adopted in the earlier part of the year, but after the instruction given at the winter classes a few of the simpler exercises of the new manual were introduced by the majority of the teachers. The Cobden detachment of Junior Cadets, the only one still in commission, continues to do good work.

*Singing.*—In a number of schools some attempt was made to adopt programmes based on the requirements of the new syllabus, with varying results. Generally there is a fair degree of improvement to be recorded, but there are still a few schools where the singing is very poorly taught. It is hoped that, as a result of the instruction given at Saturday classes, a greater advance in this work will be noted during the present year.

*Needlework.*—In nearly every case the needlework presented for inspection was of good quality, and generally there was an attempt to carry out the requirements of the new regulations. There was a surprising difference of opinion as to the amount of work that should be done in the course of the year, and, judging from the small quantity of sewing exhibited by some schools, it would appear that the lessons proceed mechanically by slow and painful steps. On the other hand, several schools presented a considerable quantity of advanced work, showing that deserving pupils are allowed a considerable degree of freedom, and, as a consequence, take a very real pride in their handiwork.

*Handwork.*—[See E.-5, Report on Manual and Technical Instruction.]

*School Buildings and Grounds.*—Generally speaking, the school buildings and their surroundings are kept in fairly satisfactory order, but there is practically nothing to report as to improvements in school-grounds. Several of the buildings are very old, and are showing signs of getting beyond the possibility of renovation. Amongst these are the schools situated in localities that were once flourishing mining centres. In these cases we have constantly declining roll numbers, but the same large buildings to keep in order. Then there are the adverse climatic conditions to contend with, which render necessary more frequent repairs and repainting than would be required in districts more favourably situated. The school desks in use throughout the district are of antiquated design. Much of the old furniture is rapidly giving way to the ravages of the borer, and I would again urge that all new desks supplied be constructed on modern lines.

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

*Teachers' Classes.*—Teachers' Saturday classes were held regularly throughout the year, the subjects taken being physical science and vocal music, and the attendance at both classes was fairly satisfactory. During the first fortnight in July a winter school for teachers was held, the attendance at which far exceeded expectations. The programme was designed to assist teachers in their daily work. Reading and elocution were taken by Miss O. Burton, of Dunedin, physical drill by Sergeant-major Le Motte, nature-study by Miss D. S. Dixon, and colour-