

most feeble attempt at expressing themselves in well-chosen English when called upon to answer simple questions in connection with other subjects of the curriculum. The syllabus stresses the importance of correct spoken language, and though the time at the teacher's disposal is a mere fraction of the twenty-four hours per day, he should adopt every possible means to counteract the influences of home and street. In letter-writing there is still room for improvement, the writing of business letters being rarely creditable, and indicating that more practice of this kind is necessary. While, too, of recent years the study of formal grammar has received less attention, sufficient knowledge ought to be possessed by the pupil to enable him to give intelligent reasons for the correction of faulty English. A working acquaintance with those grammatical rules which are essential to the study of language from its practical side is absolutely necessary, and in quite a number of schools the work done in this connection is capable of much improvement.

*Spelling.*—The tests in this subject gave generally satisfactory results, but the composition exercises, especially in private schools, did not give so favourable an impression. It would seem that there are still some teachers who pin their faith to the memorizing of long lists of isolated words, and fail to recognize the importance of working on well defined and recognized principles. The written exercises sometimes give the impression that the incidence of the teaching is less on the working vocabulary of the pupil than on more difficult words of less frequent occurrence. As a matter of fact, the value of the daily dictation exercise, no matter how short it may be, is not sufficiently recognized.

*Writing.*—Copybooks, with few exceptions, range from satisfactory to good, but in written exercises there is too often a failure to maintain the same standard, great deterioration being frequently noticed when a reasonable rate is insisted upon. The teacher's aim should be to enable children to write legibly, neatly, and in the upper classes with fair rapidity. This can only be obtained by continuous attention to the position of the body, the proper management of the pen, suitable blackboard instruction, with thorough and systematic supervision of detail, and sufficient exercise for the development of freedom of movement. Careless and untidy work and poor letter-shapes in manuscript books and written exercises on slate or paper are a serious reflection on the discipline of a school.

*Arithmetic.*—The results on the whole may be classed as satisfactory. With respect to the application of principles and correctness of method we have little room for complaint, but the attention paid to oral work is too often insufficient to ensure that quickness and accuracy which is so essential to success. Mental arithmetic in a number of schools fails to find adequate recognition as an indispensable part of the teaching, and many operations are performed on slate or paper which might reasonably be done mentally. Indeed, failure to cope successfully with the tests given is often due to neglect of mental work. In most of the schools the arithmetic work is set out with commendable neatness; instances of jumbled masses of figures, decipherable only by the aid of the teacher and pupil, are comparatively rare. Neat presentment and correct methods, however, are of little value without accuracy of calculation.

*History.*—As is perhaps inevitable, great differences exist in the quality of the teaching so far as history is concerned. Among young teachers there is sometimes a tendency to over-elaborate details. They forget that where multitudinous facts are presented not only is the child's memory likely to fail, but what should be broadly outlined, and thus thrown into strong relief, often becomes uninteresting and nebulous. In the choice of subjects, too, logical continuity should be preserved, and no method of treatment can be considered satisfactory which does not train the child to connect cause and effect, and one historic fact with others. Many of our better schools are doing excellent work in this connection, well-graded and logically continuous schemes being drawn up for all classes, but in some there is little interest taken in the subject either by teacher or by pupils. More use, too, might be made of school libraries, which should contain books of biographical and historical interest, the children's choice of reading-matter being under wise and sympathetic guidance.

*Geography.*—It is gratifying to note an earnest and continuous attempt on the part of the teachers to treat this subject on a rational basis, and in our better schools the programmes of work show that the headmasters realize that the subject offers fair opportunities for correlation. It is a matter for regret, however, that the keeping of weather-charts is not universal, and that where they are kept the records are not sufficiently continuous to be of any real value. Spasmodic efforts are not only useless in themselves, but positively harmful by tending to the formation of improper and unscientific habits. The more frequent use of sketch-maps in the teaching of geography is also to be recommended.

*Drawing.*—The past year has seen a marked change in the drawing. Although the claims of the newer phases had been advocated for years, and adopted in a fair number of the better schools, the bulk of our teachers clung religiously to the older ideas. They were afraid to give up the ways of their youth, but the new syllabus forced the position. We have been very pleased with the excellent response which has been made in the direction of meeting the new demands in drawing. In this connection we desire to acknowledge the assistance given by Mr. Herdman-Smith, Director of the School of Art, who on being approached willingly arranged courses for teachers, and gave them not only very valuable help but also much helpful inspiration. Making every allowance for the fact that this has been a transitional year, new ideas not having been quite assimilated, we were very pleased with the work presented at our annual visit to the various schools, and especially delighted with the general attitude towards the subject, pupils being thoroughly interested and deriving great enjoyment from the work.

*Singing.*—There are still some "musicless" schools in the district. In no schools are other important subjects ignored, as is the case with singing, and yet those teachers who can find time for a song at the end of occasional lessons know that by so doing the cheerfulness of the whole school is increased. Singing is a compulsory subject, and every teacher should be able to teach a few simple songs to liven up the school-work.