

most detrimental to school progress, and frequently are acts of positive injustice to the pupils themselves. We are of opinion that the want of success in the examinations for Standard VI certificates of many candidates from country schools is largely due to hasty or ill-judged promotions through the standards. The whole question is of so much importance to the welfare and progress of the individual and the school that it may become necessary to withdraw the privilege of determining promotions from those teachers whose schools give evidence of faulty classification.

*School Libraries.*—It is gratifying to note that the number of schools in which the library is regarded as a necessary adjunct is steadily increasing. Teachers are gradually recognizing that book-shelves filled with well-chosen volumes are most potent factors in education, and not only assist pupils in the acquisition of useful knowledge, but tend to develop and foster a spirit of independent inquiry and active research. Some of the smaller schools, however, are still without libraries, with manifest detriment to the school community. It should not be beyond the resources of schools in the lowest grades to supply this deficiency, in view of the numerous cheap and altogether excellent publications now available, and we hope that Committees as well as teachers will make the necessary effort, so that gradually every school may possess a suitable supply of more or less light reading-matter and books of reference. A library, however, if it is to be successful, must be constantly growing; the school community with a healthy reading spirit quickly exhausts a book-supply if additions to this are not frequent, and with exhaustion comes waning interest which cannot fail to retard, if not to destroy, the growth of the “reading habit.”

*Standard VI Schedules.*—We have to draw attention to the trouble and inconvenience arising from want of compliance on the part of an appreciable number of teachers with the printed instructions appearing on the schedules provided for the names of candidates sitting for Standard VI certificates of proficiency or competency. The instructions we refer to read as follows: “To be made out in duplicate, one copy to contain the full report of the head teacher’s estimates, the other to leave columns (5) to (10) inclusive for the use of the Inspector.” Certificates are awarded partly on the progress of the pupil during the year, as indicated by the head teacher’s marks, and partly on the results of the examination held by the Inspector. It is highly essential, moreover, that some indication be given for the guidance of the Inspector of the progress made in those subjects in which tests are not usually set at the examination; we refer to the “supplementary subjects” detailed in column (6) of the schedules. From a large number of schools the schedules gave very imperfect information; and from some, none whatever in columns (5) to (10). It is unnecessary to point out the difficulties under which Inspectors labour in determining certificates when the information which the schedules should supply is not forthcoming, and how unfair to the candidates themselves is this omission. We trust that no further need will arise for reverting to this important matter.

*Standard VI Certificates.*—It is to be regretted that among pupils, teachers, and parents the competency pass has come to be regarded as almost equivalent to a failure. It is difficult to understand why this false view is so generally accepted, for the competency certificate denotes a good average level of efficiency in the work of Standard VI. The proficiency certificate must be taken as denoting an extra-high level of efficiency in that work, and as certifying that the recipient of such a certificate is capable of profiting by a course of secondary education. A higher level of attainment is now being demanded for this certificate; for in the past it has, at times, apparently been issued to some who were unable to profit by secondary education, and to others who had no desire to do so, the result being an undue waste of public funds. Attention was drawn in our last report to a possible injustice to certain deserving pupils consequent on raising the standard of attainments demanded for a proficiency certificate, and restricting the junior free place privilege to holders of these or equivalent certificates. We pointed out the injustice which might follow this procedure, and suggested that the Standard VI certificate of competency should carry some of the privileges heretofore borne by the certificate of proficiency. The present position is most unfortunate. Many of those who gain competency certificates are not mentally equipped for a higher literary education, but would profit by another year or two spent in a class where the instruction was largely manual and technical in character—a class in which English, practical arithmetic, geography, history, elementary science and nature-study, cookery, woodwork, &c., were the principal subjects, with special stress on the last three. Such a class, to be called Standard VII, could be set up in connection with the technical colleges in the large centres, and with suitable primary schools in the smaller centres or country districts; and in all cases should be under the control of a well trained teacher with special qualifications for the work. Under present conditions a very large proportion of Standard VI pupils who obtain certificates of competency, unwilling to spend another year in the work of Standard VI, and unable to gain admission to the secondary or technical school as free pupils, drift into work of some kind, with the result that their school life is closed. We are of opinion that were suitable courses of free instruction available, such as those to which reference has just been made, many of these pupils would continue their education to the manifest benefit of themselves and the State.

*Head Teachers’ Responsibility.*—In a large number of schools of Grade IIIA and upwards the head teacher takes little interest in the work of the assistant. It is to be regretted that so many head teachers really act the part of assistant teachers, getting out of touch with the preparatory department, and thus failing to co-ordinate and direct the work of the whole school. A head teacher who fails to keep himself abreast of every advance in every department of primary education is a head teacher only in name. It is not an uncommon experience to find in schools a head teacher and assistant working quite independently of each other. The assistant, for instance, is allowed to draw up her own time-table without consulting the head teacher as to its suitability, is expected to determine promotions within her special group as the result of examinations in which she sets the questions and marks the answers, and is permitted to prepare