

type, the majority of pupils will wholly fail to grasp the principles involved. It may be necessary to give in rapid succession ten, twenty, or even thirty examples of the one type, simple, yet of increasing difficulty. But this much-to-be-desired rapidity will be impossible unless the pupils are thoroughly grounded in fundamentals—the addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division of abstract numbers. We are of opinion that the time has come when we should definitely decide whether to adopt the method of complementary addition throughout the Dominion. The present system is chaotic, and leads to confusion and vexation where pupils taught the one method are admitted to schools favouring the other. The advantages of the complementary method admit of no denial; yet, such is the force of inveterate habit, that probably nothing but a departmental edict will produce uniformity.

*Drawing.*—A marked improvement in drawing from nature is apparent in many schools. A few teachers, however, seem unable to adapt themselves to the new order, and continue to draw from copies to too great an extent. In drawing from the model many teachers fail—especially in the junior part of the school—to draw the object in more than one position. Almost any object can be drawn in six or eight clearly defined positions. To neglect this is not merely to fail to train the pupils' powers of observation to their full extent, but also to place upon the teacher the quite unnecessary burden of finding suitable objects or models. In far too many schools there is an altogether lamentable lack of models. Every school could easily possess (and at little or no cost) a collection of simple objects of various shapes, sizes, and colours. Pots and pans, jugs, bottles, cups, plates, buckets, cans, bags, flags, big fruits, &c., could easily be obtained second-hand, and would give, singly and in combination, an almost inexhaustible supply of drawing tests. As in writing, so in drawing, there is too often a quite unnecessary waste of the pupil's time. Half a hour is spent on a copy that could be done as well in five minutes. This applies almost wholly to drawing done in chalk. Towards the close of the year Mr. Harry Wallace, whose efforts were so highly appreciated in the past, returned to the Board's service, and was located in the Waikato district for several months, where he held weekly classes for teachers, and visited neighbouring schools. The progress made and the enthusiasm shown by those who attended the classes are most gratifying, and we look forward with confidence to a gradual improvement in the subject as a result of the instructor's efforts. During the present year it is proposed to hold similar classes in other districts, thus bringing to the aid of inexperienced teachers expert advice within the class-room itself.

*Geography.*—We have but little to add to what has already been written under this heading. In our more efficient schools the subject has been well arranged and taught, due prominence being given to correlation and to the importance of utilizing local conditions in framing schemes of instruction. In many of the country schools, however, the same imperfections noted in previous reports are still in evidence—*e.g.*, too much reliance on the text-book, too little reference to school surroundings, too little oral teaching, too little attention to the human side of the subject, and too little genuine effort to link up the various phases presented in such a way as to include the whole subject in a well-arranged comprehensive scheme. Though we find it necessary again to draw attention to these matters, we are glad to note that in general the treatment of the subject is appreciably improving, so that the number of schools to which our strictures apply is steadily decreasing. In "Our Empire Overseas" (Blackie and Sons) and "The British Empire Beyond the Seas" (Bell and Sons) teachers will find much assistance in their efforts to do justice to this important subject.

*History and Civics.*—The new syllabus has very rightly brought this subject into greater prominence, and it now remains for our teachers to see that it is taught with the care and skill which its value and importance demand. The commonest faults noted are (1) the scrappiness of the information imparted under each of the assigned topics, and (2) the absence of progress between the work of Standard IV and Standard VI. For example, one frequently finds in the schemes of work that the "Norman Conquest," say, is dealt with in Standards III and IV, and also in Standards V and VI, but that pupils in the upper classes have no wider knowledge of this great turning-point in English history, and all that it implies, than those in Standard IV. Often too many topics are chosen, and not enough is taught about each to make it interesting and worth remembering. Further, time is often wasted in teaching about battles, about the private affairs of rulers and other unimportant matters, while little effort is made to trace the development of the great movements which have made our Empire what it is. The moral lessons to be derived from history are also commonly neglected. In the matter of civics in the small schools, one rarely finds a class which can tell much about the local Municipal or County Council, the Hospital Board, the School Committee, and other similar matters of local or general interest.

*Singing.*—Singing comes quite naturally to most children, and should find a prominent place on the time-table of all schools; indeed, it is not saying too much to assert that a school in which singing is not taught must be a relatively cheerless and uncongenial place for both pupil and teacher. It must be borne in mind, moreover, that the recreative aspect of singing is more important than the technical side; thus it follows that all should participate in the singing-lessons. And yet we sometimes find that a number of pupils are excluded from these lessons because they are unable to sing as well as their companions. This we consider a grave mistake on the part of those in authority, and an injustice to the pupils concerned, who are thus deprived of the recreation which singing undoubtedly brings into the life of the school community. Furthermore, singing should form a part of the daily programme, and ought not to be reserved for a weekly lesson; it should be regarded as a pleasant stimulating break in the daily curriculum, as a means of renewing mental and physical vigour on which other subjects make more strenuous demands. There are other obvious reasons, omitted from these remarks, why singing should be regarded as a subject calling for constant attention. Our object in referring to the matter is to emphasize the importance of making provision for frequent intervals for singing, in which the entire enrolment may be afforded opportunities for taking part.