

of brush drawing with nature-study, the inter-relation of the physical aspect of geography with the industrial or humanistic aspect, the use of apparatus in the teaching of arithmetic—all brought to the fore in the new syllabus—most of our teachers found themselves already on the right track. Thanks to the liberality and progressive spirit of the Board there has never been any difficulty, at all events in this district, of directing the work of teaching along the most progressive lines. We feel sure, too, that the Board's library and our humble little periodical, *The Leaflet*, have done much in helping to spread the light, particularly in the remote corners of the district. We sincerely hope that it will be found possible to continue both these agencies and even to extend their usefulness.

An examination of our reports discloses the following position of the schools with respect to efficiency: Fifty-four good, 112 satisfactory, and fifty unsatisfactory. This record is on the whole a satisfactory one, for the fifty inefficient schools were almost entirely backblock schools manned by untrained, and in not a few cases, poorly educated teachers. The general efficiency of the schools is quite up to the average reached in previous years.

The results of the Standard VI Proficiency Examination were also satisfactory, and compared favourably with other parts of the Dominion. The teachers' share of the work of marking the candidates' papers was much better done than it was the previous year, and we have reason to believe that a most important effect of this work will be to enable our teachers to adopt a more uniform standard of judgment—in itself a most desirable thing and most difficult of attainment in any district.

With regard to the part played by primary-school pupils at the Junior Scholarship Examinations we have not the same cause for congratulation. Of the 139 candidates presented only fifty-one, or 37 per cent., qualified, and fifteen actually failed to gain 30 per cent. of the possible marks. This unsatisfactory result is due to either (or possibly to both) of the following causes: (1) The teachers have mistaken the standard of work required and have presented pupils in no way fit for the fight, or (2) the educational efficiency of our primary schools is not up to Junior Scholarship requirements. We think the former is the true explanation, for as regards the latter we are glad to record that when the number of candidates who gained from 500 to 800 (the maximum) marks is expressed as a percentage of the number of candidates who qualified, we find our district compares very favourably with the rest of the Dominion—we stand second. A review of the marks gained by the pupils in the separate subjects shows our weakness in drawing. We have never been satisfied with our progress in this subject, and are glad the Board has found it possible to give the primary schools a greater share of the services of the drawing instructor. Our main hope, however, is in what he is doing for our young teachers, not a few of whom have already shown in their classes the good effects of the instruction they are receiving.

While glad to report that progress educationally throughout the district has been on the whole satisfactory, we have to point out what we consider to be serious hindrances to advancement. Not the least of these is the frequent changing of teachers from school to school. Too often the Inspectors found it impossible to saddle any one with the responsibility or to blame any one in particular for inefficient work. The phrase "not long in charge," recurrent in inspection reports, covers a multitude of sins. The schools below Grade III suffer most by frequent changes. At each change there is a distinct retrogression. We have found it so in examining, and the incoming teacher scarcely ever fails to report the pupils as backward. Loss of interest, a feeling of unrest which tempts to a shirking of responsibility, dislocation of schemes of work, time lost to the pupils by changes in method of teaching—these and many others are the bad effects that follow frequent changing of teachers.

A second hindrance to progress was inefficient classification. In not a few schools over-classified pupils were found, and in several schools we discovered that the annual examination class-lists did not truly indicate the position of pupils even at the beginning of the year. Teachers were weak enough to yield to pressure or to the desire to please, and promoted pupils who the records showed had failed. The usual explanation given by the teacher was that the weak pupils "were being tried" in the higher work for the first term only. We do not hold with this practice at all. False hopes are raised both in the pupil and in the parent, and when the end of the term comes the former is discouraged by the inevitable failure. Sometimes, indeed, it was found the teacher had kept the pupil in the higher class all the year, but at the inspection visit presented him in the next lower class. There is, in our opinion, altogether too much playing fast and loose with the classification.

A third hindrance to progress in our district is common to the whole of the North Island—namely, fluctuation in school population. We dealt with this matter statistically in our 1913 report. It will suffice here to point out that, while the frequent moving of pupils from school to school will not account for all our shortcomings, still it should be remembered that there must be a vast difference between the success gained by a school having few changes in the roll and that achieved by a school where every year half the roll is made up of fresh pupils.

In common with all who have the interests of the schools at heart we have to deplore the unavoidable employment by the Board of untrained and in many cases poorly educated teachers. The fact that no less than fifty schools were classed as unsatisfactory shows what the district suffers from this cause. A few of these teachers succeed, but many take up the work with no earnest intention, and presently drift away, leaving behind them a legacy of neglected scholars. These undesirables represent a dead loss in every way. The Inspectors give them special help, conduct the school for them, write schemes and programmes, devise and send them aids, but all in vain; in less than a year they are recorded as deserters.

With respect to the subjects of instruction, we are glad to report an improvement in the quality of the composition and arithmetic in the higher classes. Mental arithmetic certainly has not yet come into its own, but formal or written arithmetic has decidedly improved, and practical methods have not been neglected. We are indeed particularly pleased with the work in practical arithmetic, and desire to place on record our appreciation of the liberality of the