

stage advocated the entire substitution of Montessori methods for the older ones, for it appears certain that the sole teacher will derive greater help and his pupils greater benefit from an occasional rather than a constant use of the method.

The problem of how best to aid the inexperienced backblocks teacher is ever with us. Not only have these teachers to be sent out with little or no training, but the problem is further complicated by the frequency with which they come and go. It is our common experience, after spending long hours in helping a new teacher, to find at our next visit that another raw recruit has to be dealt with. Not a few of these teachers doubtless become disheartened by the difficulties that beset them, and they need more frequent help and encouragement than can be given by an Inspector at his rare visits. We would suggest the appointment by the Board of one or more special instructors in country-school work, who would have the same rank as the Supervisors of Agricultural Instruction, and who would work under the direction of the Board acting on the advice of the Inspectors. We have elsewhere in this report suggested the organization of a model country school in Wanganui to enable the Board to deal still more effectively with the training of inexperienced teachers. Their academic training is well provided for by both correspondence classes and the annual winter school.

Central classes for teachers were held every Saturday at Hawera, Wanganui, Feilding, and Mangaweka. These classes are, of course, under the control of the Board, but all except one were visited by an Inspector, and the work done by the teachers at the instructors' examinations was examined and reports were submitted to the Board. As it was found that many of the teachers attending were lacking in earnestness of purpose, the method of conducting the classes was altered, and more stringent rules were drafted. It was, for example, found that teachers would strain every nerve to put in the required number of hours at the science classes, but cared little about the quality of the practical work required of them. They expected to receive certificates after attending a year's course of lessons, irrespective of the actual progress they had made. A minimum two-years science course is now required of all student teachers, and no certificate will be granted to a teacher whose class record is at all unsatisfactory. The instruction in singing appears to have produced poor results, but in drawing there was much greater success.

During the midwinter holiday week and the succeeding fortnight a winter school organized to instruct inexperienced teachers was held, and, as part of the instruction dealt with matters of school organization and method, two of the Inspectors gave a series of addresses during the day and evening sessions. We are glad to be able to assure the Department that, whatever portion of the grant for the training of teachers may have been spent on this special effort, the expenditure produced a more than adequate return.

*Subjects of Instruction.*—We have endeavoured at all times to interpret the syllabus of instruction in the most liberal way, but have found it necessary to set out pretty definitely what we conceive to be the requirements in handwork and drawing. We found teachers inclined to isolate the branches in these subjects, and so to cause their lessons to lose both interest and coherence. Throughout the year we met with similar lack of economical correlation in most of the other subjects. For example, it was most unusual to find instrumental drawing and arithmetic connected, or paper-folding and arithmetic, or, again, cardboard-modelling and arithmetic. So, too, the possibility of teaching a great deal of geography during or by means of the reading-lessons was very frequently overlooked. The connection of history with geography, of drawing with nature-study, of essay-writing with almost any of the oral lessons in history, geography, and science, appears so clearly marked as to be impossible to overlook; yet even teachers of experience passed by these aids to economy of effort.

We were glad to note some improvement in essay-writing; but the formal work (grammar) was again disappointing. The indefiniteness of the syllabus appears not to be an advantage in this subject, for we are constantly asked as to what topics should or should not be included. For example, the term "rules of syntax" is not mentioned in the syllabus; but, as questions requiring a knowledge of such rules appeared on the S6 test-cards, some teachers thought it necessary to revert to some of the older and less desirable text-books. We have set our faces against a return to the formal grammar of twenty years ago, and have advised teachers to include in their schemes no formal grammar that does not give real aid in the teaching of composition.

As regards reading and recitation we cannot record any improvement. The reading is fluent and, on the whole, well understood; but from the point of view of delivery or elocutionary effect good reading is rare. In nearly all schools natural expression is lacking, and the monotonous drone of the smaller schools is matched by the artificial class tone or class pattern of the larger schools. Faults in enunciation are commonest in the country districts, where a most slovenly and almost inarticulate style of speech ruins both the oral reading and the oral answering. There "t" becomes "d," and "p" becomes "b," while endings drop off, and every trick for avoiding vocal effort is practised. In towns the pupils' speech is more clear-cut, but there the "ā" is broadened and becomes "ah + ā," approaching "i" (long), while "i" (long) changes to "oy," and "ō" to "ah + ō." All these faults are due mainly to a wrong shaping of the lips in emitting the sound. For example, "cake" is pronounced "cah-ake," which will presently further degenerate to "cike." In sounding the "ā" the pupil opens his lips too widely and sounds "ah" before closing the mouth slightly to sound "ā." From the same cause "home" becomes "hah + ōme." Such faults are easily overcome, provided the environment favours correct speaking. One term at a good secondary school has been known to correct faults in speech that have persisted throughout the pupil's primary course. The teachers themselves are not all blameless in this matter; one not infrequently hears among them very slovenly and inaccurate enunciation. We would suggest that more prominence might be given to tests in enunciation at the teachers' certificate examination. Might not the ordinary reading-test be dispensed with and tests in accuracy of speech substituted?

Arithmetic was, on the whole, of very fair quality; but we had a good deal of fault to find with the method of setting out the work in the higher classes. The statements frequently lacked clearness;