

*Writing.*—In spite of all that is said in the newspapers from time to time we are of opinion that the great majority of our pupils while in school write well. The primary-school training takes the pupils as far as it can reasonably be expected to do, although perhaps more effort might be made to secure faster penwork than is now common. Teachers can easily insist that all written exercises in the senior classes shall be done as fast as legibility permits. But when our pupils are in the midst of other conditions and in an environment that is not helpful they may fail to do justice to their earlier training. We think that in a good many schools more practice might be given in the formation of capital letters and in the writing of figures.

*Composition.*—We are often greatly pleased by the exercises handed in to us as a test of the thought-expression of the scholars. In those schools where this subject is weak we usually find that the teachers rely almost entirely on the method of setting to the pupils a weekly exercise, which is corrected more or less perfunctorily, the writers seldom understanding why the corrections have been made. In S5 and S6 the majority of our pupils are able to write letters clearly expressive of their thoughts, and set forth in orthodox form. We should like to see more attention paid to punctuation and to the use of connectives, especially in S3 and S4.

*Arithmetic.*—This subject continues to be well taught in most schools. In some cases, however, we find little or no connection between the mental arithmetic of a lesson and the longer exercises taken afterwards. In S5 there seems to be some unexpected weakness, which may disappear if more consistent and regular practice in the principles required is given in conjunction with easy examples.

*Geography.*—We have always held that geography when properly treated by the resourceful and well-informed teacher may be made the most fascinating of all school studies. Here the teacher has splendid scope for training the faculties of memory and of imagination, for cultivating habits of observation and of reasoning, and for encouraging his pupils in the use of vivid descriptive language in their oral and written exercises. Happily we have a fair proportion of teachers that treat the geography lessons in the right spirit, and as a general rule we have had grounds for commending both teachers and pupils for what has been done in this subject.

*History and Civics.*—There can be no doubt that history is found by most teachers to be a difficult subject to teach. A few teachers still consider that if their pupils read so many pages of history the requirements of the syllabus are fully met. But generally we find that, while this practice may help the reading, it is simply a waste of time so far as history-teaching is concerned. Yet if teachers train their scholars, especially in the two highest classes, to use a text-book so that the thread of some important biography or of some great movement can be followed, and the main facts neatly summarized, then the use of a text-book is entirely commendable. During the year it became manifest that a large number of our teachers, roused by existing world-conditions, had set themselves resolutely to get the best out of the lessons taught. Of course, such teachers soon became much more at ease in their teaching of history than ever before. The programmes drawn up are often disconnected, and the treatment of the lessons tends to be scrappy. Frequently unimportant facts are so dwelt upon as to obscure the greater issues.

*Drawing.*—The requirements of the present syllabus have given a great uplift to the teaching of this important subject. The child is now provided with a means of self-expression that aids greatly in this complete mental development. Our younger teachers are mostly skilled in the use of chalk and colour; and the drawing-lesson is part of the teaching of geography, of nature-study, of science, of the illustration of passages read, and of arithmetic. Even more freehand might with advantage be attempted, especially in sole-teacher schools, amongst the infant and the junior classes. In geometrical drawing the exercises are of little worth unless characterized by accuracy and neatness. Scale drawing is worthy of more attention than it receives in some of our schools.

*Handwork.*—In several cases we found that teachers had not grasped the fact that the syllabus requires that handwork of some kind must be taken by every class in every school. Further, the handwork must be closely linked with the drawing of the school. Sometimes in Standard VI pupils were presented who had not practised any of the forms of handwork prescribed for this class. In many of our schools, small as well as large, some very fine handwork was shown, and had undoubtedly proved of highly educative value in the training of the children. In a large number of our country schools valuable work has been carried on in the school-gardens, conducted according to the practical scheme drawn up by the Board's agricultural instructor, Mr. J. Moodie.

*Nature-study and Elementary Science.*—We would strongly recommend that teachers should read carefully what the syllabus has to say in the paragraphs dealing with this subject. Some very hazy ideas are prevalent concerning its scope. While teachers must recognize that nature-study, as its name implies, cannot be taught from books, still they may be compelled to consult text-books before they themselves know what to observe or how to direct the observational powers of their pupils. In most cases we find the teachers wisely suit their subject-matter to the needs of their district. The science taught is chiefly that required in connection with gardening or agriculture.

*Needlework and Home Science.*—During the year the claims of Red Cross work made a strong appeal to the patriotism of our children, and in most of our schools the boys as well as the girls learned to make articles that would add to the comfort of our men who are on active service. Never before has so much knitting been carried on, never before has "fancy-work" been so much neglected. The schools that failed to seize such an opportunity for teaching patriotism and unselfishness are conspicuously few. Many of our teachers are to be commended for their wise treatment of home science in connection with their sewing-lessons. In not a few schools the girls are being trained in principles and are learning facts that must in later years prove of great value to them in their home life.

*Physical Instruction.*—The training-camp for physical instruction held in Timaru last March proved of immense benefit to our teachers, who have in consequence been able daily to influence for good thousands of our children. Nothing else in the history of educational affairs in this district has