

improvement in the development, attitudes, or deportment of the pupils that may be definitely assigned to the course of physical training introduced. Until teachers recognize that the best results from physical instruction can be produced only by continual watchfulness on their part to keep the pupils well braced up through all the school-work, we shall still find such deformities as round shoulders, flat chests, and spinal curvature prevalent among the pupils. It is no unusual experience to find a teacher put the pupils through a table of exercises in good style, and then allow them to adopt loose and faulty attitudes when they return to their desks, thus counteracting to a considerable extent any good that the physical work may have effected. Week-end courses in physical instruction for pupil-teachers and probationers have been carried on with fair regularity during the year.

*Schemes of Work.*—Programmes of work continue to be thoughtfully compiled, and in most instances the various branches of a subject are judiciously spread over the whole year. Teachers were compelled by international conditions to realize that there must be a certain amount of elasticity in their schemes, and this has had a beneficial effect, especially on the treatment of geography and history, and in a minor degree on composition.

*Term Examinations.*—Closely connected with the schemes of work are the periodical examinations by the head teachers. In most cases we have found these efficiently carried out, but in too many cases we have had to comment adversely on the want of care exercised by the teacher in connection with this work, which suggested perfunctoriness or lack of appreciation of the purposes of examination. This has been evidenced by the high values too often assigned to indifferent, careless, and untidy work—a clear proof that the teacher has not the right conception of his duty as an examiner. Occasionally we have found assistants resenting the severity of the head teacher's marking, but after investigating the circumstances we have not been convinced that such resentment was justified. Our experience has invariably led us to the belief that the papers could have borne more rigid valuation. As an instance of this, it may be noted that in the annual class lists furnished by head teachers it has been quite common to find a head teacher reporting that every candidate presented by him for the certificate of proficiency had done satisfactorily in these additional subjects, while in our examination of the same class quite a number were weak in one or more of these subjects—a clear proof that the teacher's examination was not as thorough as it should have been, or that his standard of efficiency was too low.

*Manual Instruction.*—Manual instruction in various forms is carried on in all schools in this district, and in an increasing number of schools the tendency to regard it as an isolated branch of school-work is gradually disappearing. In the preparatory division paper-folding, paper-weaving, modelling, and stick-laying are the subjects mainly selected; in the junior division carton-work and modelling in plasticine or cardboard are chosen; in the senior classes of the city, suburban, and larger rural schools the boys take woodwork and the girls cookery and hygiene. In all these forms of handwork, drawing with pencil, chalk, or brush is made use of to help in the co-ordination of hand and eye. If it is admitted that the purpose of mental training is to give (1) the habit of close observation, (2) discrimination of likenesses and differences, (3) power of correct inference, and (4) the command of language which is necessary to correct formulation, or the power to call up a clear mental image, the manual training in our schools is working steadily in this direction, though the power of verbal expression is not progressing so freely as we could desire. By means of daily talks about natural phenomena and objects that come under the notice of the pupils, especially in the preparatory and junior divisions, and by means of the garden-work carried on by the senior classes, children receive a training in habits of observation, inference, and expression that will be helpful to them in after-life, while the "knowledge" which is sometimes spoken of as mental training comes incidentally. During the year the pupils of S4 in the city and suburban schools attended the swimming classes at the municipal baths, with the result that during the course 681 boys and girls were taught to swim. Instruction in swimming has also been given in several country schools, but it is surprising that more rural schools have not taken up this important and necessary subject.

*District High Schools.*—[See E.-6, Report on Secondary Education.]

*Certificates of Proficiency.*—Towards the end of the year 1,501 candidates from the public schools presented themselves at the examinations for the certificate of proficiency. Of these, 1,200 were awarded this certificate, and 137 the certificate of competency in S6. To pupils from private schools 102 certificates of proficiency and nine certificates of competency (S6) were issued. The values assigned to the various subjects as set forth in a recent departmental circular are practically those that have been adopted in this district for several years past, while certificates have not been issued unless the candidates have been examined by an Inspector. The high percentage of successful candidates we attribute to the fact that the pupils had been well prepared in English and arithmetic, and so were enabled to face the departmental tests with such comparative ease that the necessity for awarding merit marks did not arise. So far as this district is concerned such marks are practically useless.

*Notes on Subjects.*—So far as reading is concerned, we note an increasing tendency to encourage pupils to make free use of the school libraries, both for the purpose of increasing the general knowledge of pupils and for training them to use the libraries as a means of reference, though the scope for the latter object is still too limited. The treatment of silent reading cannot yet be regarded as satisfactory, and we do not find it used so freely as it should be for the development of free oral expression. In the senior classes pupils acquit themselves very satisfactorily in facing new matter, but we are not satisfied that the good work done in phonics in the preparatory and junior departments is continued so far as it should be in the senior classes. If it were we should find better articulation and enunciation, and greater purity of vowel-sound, than is now to be found in several of our schools.

Spelling is well taught, and free use is made of word-building in all classes. It is quite a common experience to find pupils able to use words from the reading-books in well-built sentences of their own construction.