

must be small; for the visitor will require to see work successfully accomplished under conditions similar to, or approaching in difficulty to, his own. A full-time school of Grade II appears to be the most suitable; but the salary is not sufficient to attract the right type of teacher, in view especially of the more or less isolated positions of these schools; and success depends, of course, almost entirely on the efficiency of the teacher in charge. A number of these schools should be established throughout the district, carrying more liberal salaries than those provided by scale, and inexperienced and inefficient teachers of apparent ability should be encouraged or compelled to visit them.

*Accommodation for Country Teachers.*—The difficulty in securing teachers for country appointments is considerably increased at times by want of boarding and accommodation facilities. Some are unable to obtain accommodation near the schools, and others that board within reasonable distance lack privacy and comfort for themselves and their families. The need for teachers' dwellings in connection with country schools is in many cases very real, and additional dwellings should be erected as soon as circumstances permit. The question of accommodation is a constant source of anxiety, especially in the case of women teachers, and at times becomes so aggravated that it is difficult to believe that the people most concerned—parents and settlers—fully realize their responsibility in the matter. We recall several instances of teachers, unable to obtain suitable accommodation, applying for transfer, which in some cases it was found necessary to effect. We recognize that to board and accommodate a teacher may be at times inconvenient, and that the majority of settlers prefer to be without a stranger; but it must be remembered that it is often difficult to provide a teacher at all for this type of school even when boarding-conditions are favourable, so that it is not unreasonable to expect the community to make some little sacrifice to assist the Board in discharging its arduous and important duties in this respect. These remarks, of course, apply only to certain localities where the community does not seem to realize that if it were to do its duty and, if necessary, to put itself out a little to accommodate teachers better, these would be more content to live in such localities, and the children's education would be better promoted.

*Relieving Teachers.*—The present method of sending teachers to relieve those who are absent from duty is not altogether satisfactory. In this district such relief is in constant demand, and the authorities are obliged to draw either on unattached teachers in their own service or on applicants from other sources, often with unsatisfactory results. If provision could be made for an efficient permanent relieving staff whose duties for, say, one or two years would be confined to actual relief-work, and who during that period would not be eligible to apply for regular vacancies, the progress of the classes or schools concerned would be very appreciably increased. If the relieving teacher is to be a success he must be above the normal in efficiency; for if he is to carry forward the work entrusted to him he must rapidly appreciate the position, quickly and accurately gauge the characteristics and progress of each class-unit, and at times must adapt his teaching to aims and methods with which he may not previously have been familiar. It is seldom that a teacher returns to his class or school satisfied with what has been done during his absence; we ourselves are of opinion that in many cases there is good reason to believe that during the absence of the permanent teacher all was not well. We willingly acknowledge that in most cases the relieving teacher does his best, but conditions are frequently against him and he fails to "make good." For this reason we urge the introduction of some such plan as the above.

*Examination for Standard VI Certificates.*—The examination for these certificates takes place in nearly all cases at the end of the school year, the subjects of examination being confined to English and arithmetic. Inspectors may include other subjects, but, for reasons that were hitherto deemed sufficient, they have limited the December examination to the subjects named, the other subjects being tested during their visits to the schools throughout the year. There are, we regret to say, good grounds for believing that in many schools some or all of the other subjects—those carrying merit marks—i.e., geography, history, drawing, and elementary science—receive but little attention, and in certain cases are absolutely neglected after the Inspector's test, a test which frequently takes place many months before the end of the year. This is quite contrary to the spirit and intention of the syllabus, and grossly unfair to both child and State. Instruction in these subjects forms an essential part of an efficient education, and any neglect interferes with the just balance of knowledge, equipment, and training which a well-devised syllabus endeavours to provide. We realize that such omission after the Inspector's visit frequently arises from a desire to afford candidates opportunity for concentrating on the subjects examined at the annual test in December; but we would point out that no amount of anxiety for the welfare of the candidate can be successfully urged in extenuation of omission to comply with essential syllabus regulations. We are most unwilling to set written papers in the subjects carrying merit marks; but this may become necessary if teachers fail to realize their responsibilities in this important matter. These strictures do not, of course, apply to all schools, many of which continue to work with zeal and energy on full programmes throughout the entire year; but they do apply, we regret to add, to no inconsiderable number.

*Promotion of Backward Pupils.*—We have frequently been asked whether it is in the interests of the individual or of the school to promote pupils who have been in a class for two or three years and who, judged by normal tests, are not sufficiently advanced to warrant promotion to higher standards. We cannot apply to these pupils the term "defective" as it is generally understood, for they are not deficient in many of the essentials that make for integrity, power of application, and common-sense, but are only incapable of absorbing and assimilating knowledge through the ordinary school channels as rapidly as their fellows. This characteristic may be inborn, or may be the result of neglect—physical, mental, or moral—or of lack of opportunity; whatever be the cause it is a serious obstacle to progress, a source of great embarrassment to the teacher. In view of all the circumstances, however, and speaking as a result of considerable experience, we are of opinion that in general no child should be kept in the preparatory classes for more than three years, or in any one of the standard