

*School Libraries.*—In the great majority of schools (large and small) libraries are recognized as a most necessary and important part of general equipment, and in practically all the large schools and many of the smaller ones class libraries are deemed essential. One of the most serious defects, however, in the majority of libraries is that they contain practically no history, science, or poetry. It is regrettable, when the more mentally alert are able to read over so many books during the course of the year, that none of these are either history or historical stories, geography, science, or poetry. The appetite undoubtedly exists—the feast alone is wanting. The problem is twofold—partly the lack of enthusiasm for these subjects by teachers, but primarily the difficulty of obtaining in sufficient quantity books adapted to the capacity of the pupils and yet written by experts and stylists.

*Outside Helpers.*—In a few schools a highly commendable system has been adopted of enlisting outside help from those enthusiastic in the cause of education. Thus men and women of action and of wide experience of travel or administration in other lands come and chat with pupils; others sing, or help with the sewing or swimming. In places, too, the officers of the agricultural and pastoral associations and Farmers' Unions are taking a more direct interest in the agricultural education of our schools. These activities might, with great advantage to all concerned, be greatly extended. If members of local bodies, prominent citizens, or those who have travelled in other lands could be induced from time to time to visit the schools and address the children, much interesting information and thought-compelling experience could be placed before pupils, and a more or less real connection established between the class-room and the living world outside.

*Child-labour.*—We would again draw attention to the great injustice and injury that is being done to large numbers of children in country districts as a result of excessive demands on their assistance both before and after school-hours: these remarks apply more particularly to children living in districts where dairying is the prevailing industry. Teachers complain again and again, and with good reason, that their pupils do not and cannot make reasonable progress owing to the long hours they are compelled to work before leaving home in the mornings and after their return at the close of the school day. Our legislation rigidly prohibits the employment in a factory of a child under fourteen years of age, and yet there is nothing in the statute-book to prevent a farmer or labourer from making his children do half a day's work before they come to school and another quarter-day's work after they return home. The result of all this is very severely felt in many districts where normal progress is practically impossible.

*Determination of S6 Certificates.*—In nearly all cases these certificates are determined towards the close of the year, either as the result of an examination conducted by an Inspector or, where this is impossible, by synchronous examinations supervised by teachers, the papers of which are forwarded to the office and marked by the Inspectors. This year (1918), however, owing to the epidemic and consequent closing of the schools, it was found impossible to hold any examinations, so the certificates were determined very largely on the teachers' recommendations and the results of the pupils' efforts as shown in examination records. In all cases where circumstances permitted the head teacher or class teacher, or both, were consulted prior to the award; but in many cases it was found impossible to carry out this plan, so that it became necessary to accept the teachers' estimate of the pupils' qualifications without any personal consultation. In some cases we deemed it advisable to defer consideration of the teachers' recommendations until an Inspector had an opportunity of again visiting the schools. In general the scheme worked well, and teachers showed commendable restraint in recommending pupils; in all the larger schools this was most noticeable. There are, however, a large number of teachers whose experience and training are not such as to enable them to form a correct estimate of what is required, and others who find it difficult at times to resist local pressure or the promptings of personal feeling; so that, although the method adopted this year has in general succeeded, it would be unwise to abandon to any great extent the normal method of determining the award of these certificates on the result of the Inspector's examination.

*Classification of Pupils.*—We are glad to be able to record that, in general, the classification of pupils was faithfully and carefully determined, it being quite an exception to find a school in which promotions had been made under either unduly lenient or unduly stringent conditions.

*Physical Training.*—Most of the schools throughout the district are making progress with this most necessary work, and in some the instruction given and the results achieved are a credit to all concerned. It is becoming increasingly apparent, however, that in a large number of cases constant "refresher courses," or frequent visits by the physical instructors, are needed if interest in the work is to survive and application of details to maintain its efficiency.

*Reading and Recitation.*—In most schools reading is fluent but lacks expression. The tendency to spend too much time over the text in analysing the meaning of words and unfamiliar phrases, instead of dealing with the general sense of the passage or extract or chapter, is still in evidence. Many pupils do not read a sufficient number of books during the year, being satisfied with the class reader and *School Journal*. In regard to recitation, the selections are generally well known, but are seldom repeated with feeling and expression. We note with satisfaction that good judgment, for the most part, is shown in selecting the passages to be learnt.

*Composition.*—This subject is still in need of constant attention. Many schools have achieved marked success in its teaching, others still show lamentable weakness. More actual teaching of the subject is necessary, as is also a greater appreciation of the extent to which other subjects can be made to contribute towards helping pupils to acquire facility and skill in written verbal expression.

*Arithmetic.*—Too much time appears to be spent over concrete operations in number work in the lower classes, and too little attention given to memorizing the result of operations. In other words, the necessity for a thorough knowledge of what are commonly known as "tables"