

in evidence. The number of uncertificated teachers is 172, or 46·2 per cent. The attention such a condition requires, together with the issue of specimen term tests and the close individual observation of the work of all teachers rendered necessary by the grading system, makes imperative a full staff of Inspectors, so that in addition to the testing and general direction of the work of schools abundant time can be given to demonstration and the training of inexperienced teachers.

The junior teachers and probationers represent a very satisfactory feature of the larger schools. The reports of the head teachers are without exception satisfactory, and the commendable advance made by these trainees was recorded at the meeting held in four centres, at which lessons were given and discussed. An unusual feature at the end of the year was the presence, among the applicants for positions, of six boys.

School Buildings and Grounds.—The gradual improvement in the school buildings has been continued during the year. Included in the buildings are some of more durable material than wood, and close attention has been given to lighting, ventilation, and other necessary features of a good modern school. In a number of cases a partially open-air system is adopted with good results. The difficulty with many old wooden buildings is to arrive at a decision at what period they reach the stage when repairs and painting are not worth while in view of the greater comfort, convenience, and sanitary efficiency of a new up-to-date school. The buildings of the district receive regular attention, and few are in any great degree unserviceable, although a number fall short of the modern requirements. The planting of shrubs and maintenance of garden-plots occupies a wide place in the activities of the schools.

Certificate, S6.—Owing to the outbreak of the influenza epidemic the usual tests for Sixth Standard certificates by means of central examinations had to be abandoned and reliance placed to a great extent on school records and information supplied by the head teachers. The Inspectors desire to recognize the judgment and sense of responsibility exercised by the teachers in making their recommendations for these certificates. Estimated on the number of pupils of this class on the school roll in the latter part of the year, the percentage of certificates awarded was—proficiency, 74; competency, 10.

Efficiency.—The standard of efficiency throughout the district has been well maintained during the past year, and it is seldom that we have to report with regard to remissions or slackness on the part of the teacher. Inferior work can generally be ascribed to lack of training or experience. Of the 154 schools visited, three were recorded as excellent, twenty-one as very good, forty-six as good, sixty-one as satisfactory or very satisfactory, and twenty-three as fair or very fair. No school was reported as very weak.

Course of Instruction.—A few notes are given regarding points in the selection and preparation of the course of instruction.

English.—The reading, so far as it relates to practice in reading aloud, receives intelligent treatment. In modulation, especially inflexion, there has been considerable improvement, and the comprehension of the matter is based on good methods of study preliminary to the class reading. The spelling also follows such previous study, and is in consequence a good feature of the schools. More practice in silent reading under the direction of the teacher is required so as to train the pupil to obtain the greatest benefit from private reading.

Composition.—The average efforts of the pupils in composition achieved very creditable results, showing clear thought and commendable powers of expression. In many cases the diction and general arrangement of ideas showed careful and intelligent teaching and considerable ability on the part of the pupils. All teachers do not understand, however, that the highest appreciation of composition exercises cannot be granted unless there appears intelligent selection and application of words and regular attention to sequence of thought, with a proper use of the paragraph. The technical exercises accompanying those in the art of composition receive generally full attention. The study of the elements of the sentence, and practice in punctuation, rules of syntax, and synthetic exercises all form a regular part of the course in all schools.

Arithmetic.—There is a general regard for concrete methods and oral practice in the preliminary study of the various rules. This prepares the way for intelligent presentation of written work. The course of the preparatory classes is usually well planned, and the teaching follows the best methods.

Other Subjects.—The principle of correlation receives attention, especially in the relation of nature-study, handwork, and other subjects. While separate courses are presented, indication is given how far the methods of these branches are embodied in the instruction in other subjects. In this district elementary gardening and agriculture form a general and important feature of the work of the schools. In general the requirements of the syllabus of instruction are met with satisfactory completeness in all classes of schools.

Physical Instruction.—During the year a special instructor visited all the schools from Grade IIIa upwards and a number of the schools under two teachers. Her reports and the observation of the Inspectors record a considerable amount of regularity and efficiency in the ordinary course. Usually the course prepared was sufficient and adapted to the requirements of the individual schools. Where failure was recorded it was due to the perfunctory performance of the exercises, with a consequent indifference and lack of efficiency. The marching exercises did not reach, in many schools, the same standard as other parts of the course. In a number of schools a life-saving course and recognized classes in swimming formed an important part of the training of the pupils.

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