

and comprehension is distinctly good; but it is seldom that we meet with that correct phrasing and expression and that cultured modulation of voice which in some at least of our schools combine to render the reading-test on an examination day a real pleasure to the examiner. Insufficient pattern reading is one cause of this; but we are inclined to think that another is the tendency of some teachers to “cram” the *School Journal* at the expense of the continuous readers. As a corrective to this it is our intention this year to take reading, comprehension, and dictation tests as much from the continuous readers as from the *Journal*. The criticism on the reading applies in a measure to recitation; but this subject on the whole shows improvement, more thoughtful correlation with the other subjects of the syllabus being in stronger evidence than formerly. Teachers, however, must take note of the fact that if completed schemes of work are to be ready at the commencement of the school year it is necessary that the selection of pieces for recitation be made then, and not left for the teacher’s inspiration at a later period. We would again emphasize the importance of the selections being of real literary merit. The *Globe* and the *Laurate Poetry-books* provide excellent material from which suitable selections may be made. Taking into consideration the limitations in regard to ideas and vocabulary of the average child of thirteen or fourteen years, we are very satisfied with the composition. Under an older system of teaching freedom and scope of expression were too often sacrificed to formal rules and directions, with a stilted and an artificial style of composition as the natural result. We are inclined to the belief that we are now erring a little on the other side, and that the essay-writing in general would benefit from a little more specific direction as to order and arrangement of subject-matter. The efficiency marks for spelling and writing range from satisfactory to very good. Written arithmetic is good so far as the correctness of the answers is concerned, but the setting-out of the work in many instances leaves a great deal to be desired, and in too many schools we have had to draw attention to the lack of method shown by pupils in this respect. The number work in the preparatory classes shows improvement, more attention being given to memorizing ordinary operations. A common mistake, however, is the use of mere names, instead of the objects themselves, in what should be operations in the concrete. At the last Board meeting a special instructor in drawing was appointed, and as a result we confidently look forward to some very desirable improvement in the teaching of this subject. Singing, we have no hesitation in saying, would also benefit from the appointment of a special instructor. The ordinary requirements of the certificate do not appear to be sufficient to qualify the young teacher to deal adequately with the subject. The Chief Instructor in Agriculture in a special report shows that good work is being done; but he points out that it is impossible to do real justice to the subject with the limited staff at present available.

Medical Inspection and Physical Instruction.—The report of the Medical Inspector shows that, while very gratifying results have already been attained, there is ample scope for increased development of this essential branch of education. Stress is laid on the need for increased staff in order to cope more effectively with the work. (See E.—6, Report on Secondary Education.)

We have, &c.,

F. H. BAKEWELL,	} Inspectors.
F. G. A. STUCKEY,	
D. A. STURROCK,	
A. N. BURNS,	
N. H. S. LAW,	

The Director of Education, Wellington.

NELSON.

SIR,—

Nelson, 31st March, 1919.

We have the honour to submit our annual report on the schools of the Nelson Education District for the year 1918.

At the close of the year 137 schools were open for instruction. This number includes the nine side schools of the previous year. As twelve new schools were either opened or were reopened during the year, while three ceased working, there was an actual increase of nine schools over the number recorded for 1917. In all cases the new schools were very small and were provided to meet the requirements of settlement in remote or isolated parts of the district. 127 public schools were inspected throughout the year. Owing to the closing of all schools on account of the influenza epidemic it was impossible to carry out the inspection of the remainder, which under ordinary circumstances would have been visited towards the close of the school year. For the same reason two of the thirteen private schools were not inspected, the total number inspected for the year thus being 138, nearly the whole of this number being visited on two occasions.

Private Schools.—The roll number of the private and special schools examined was 876, the number present at the annual examination being 834. At these schools there were sixty-five pupils in S6, and forty-five proficiency, nine competency, and two endorsed competency certificates were granted. Our estimate of the efficiency of the instruction at the private schools was as follows: Two schools were classed as good; four, satisfactory to good; four, satisfactory; and one, fair to satisfactory.