

that the moral tone continues very satisfactory. The bulk of our teachers fully realize and endeavour to meet the responsibility that rests upon them in regard to moulding the character of the human material with which they have to deal, recognizing that on the foundation laid in their schools will depend the future citizen.

Instances of retardation are still found, and, strange to say, very often in some of the larger schools. By retarded pupils are meant not only those of deficient intelligence or those whose attendance has been irregular, but also bright pupils who through lack of an elastic system of interclass promotion are kept "marking time," more especially in the infant classes of a large school. One cannot stress too much that not only is injustice often done to such pupils by failure to promote, but a positive temptation is offered to them to develop habits of indolence and inattention. Headmasters should as far as possible keep a written record of the mental characteristics, circumstances attending home and environment, and the progress and development of all retarded pupils. Such a record would be of great value to the school and helpful to the Inspector.

The sanitary conditions of most of our schools are satisfactory, but while an increasing number are beautifully clean and neat, there is still room for improvement so far as walls and ceilings are concerned. A resourceful teacher often finds ways and means of improving the dingy and prison-like appearance of rooms. A clean school, bright walls, neat premises, and sanitary out-offices give a good impression of careful supervision and keen interest.

In reviewing the work of the year it affords us great pleasure to report that on the part of most of our teachers there is a manifest desire to secure the best possible for the children committed to their care. While we can claim that in professional standard and qualifications the teachers of certain portions of the district compare most favourably with those elsewhere, yet there are localities where the teachers under happier conditions might have become both more efficient and more "highly qualified." Unfortunately, however, in the past facilities for training and for higher education were so limited that even the most zealous found it difficult and in some cases practically impossible to push forward on the road to "higher qualifications." Many of the teachers in the more isolated parts of the district possess qualifications little higher than those required for a proficiency certificate. Accordingly we must give the greatest credit to those teachers who in spite of adverse circumstances have endeavoured to become as efficient as conditions would permit. We would hail with pleasure any widening of the training-college regulations that would enable a short course of training to be given to such teachers. Such an experiment would mean increased efficiency, the resulting advantage to the pupils and the State amply compensating for the outlay.

With the close of the war fresh problems in connection with school-work must arise, and endeavours to discover the best methods to meet the educational needs of the community must engage the attention of all thoughtful minds. The primary system, within the compass of its six standards, is, we believe, doing good work—work that will bear comparison with that of other countries. There is, however, considerable leakage before the proficiency period is reached, and even of those who qualify a very large percentage fail to take advantage of secondary education. In the future the struggle in the economic world will be extremely keen, and success can be achieved only by those who have had the benefits of a good education.

The great dearth of certificated teachers emphasizes the necessity for action in the matter of consolidation of schools. This can be successfully done only by the Department, and will not be acceptable until such time as parents are assured that the means of conveyance are thoroughly satisfactory and under the supervision of a responsible person.

We wish to express our appreciation of the splendid work being done by the great body of our teachers. The majority have fine ideals and realize the full measure of their responsibilities. Where they have failed we believe that it was not through lack of honesty of purpose. We would warn them that they must not regard success at examinations as the only test of efficiency. Their responsibilities are far greater than that, and they fail as teachers if they do not give sufficient attention to the spiritual growth of the child, and to the cultivation of the personal sense of responsibility and the power to think individually. Unless this side of the child's education be attended to it is impossible to lay a sound foundation for good citizenship.

We have, &c.,

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