

the teaching of history in our schools there is any amount of room for improvement, even in the too short time that can be allotted to this most important subject. As a rule history-teaching does not begin early enough. The Third Standard is the class in which history as a syllabus subject usually begins, but in the earlier standards by means of pictures about which stories can be told by the teacher and retold by the children, and by the use of easy reading-matter dealing in an interesting manner either with people or leading events, the young children should become acquainted with some of the heroes of our race. For the pupils in the upper standards it is desirable to have a text-book giving a connected view of the main outlines of history, one which can be read and studied by the children themselves, and one which encourages them to do exercises for themselves. Even such a text-book alone is not satisfactory; oral lessons should also be given and the pupils encouraged to read stories about people living in the period dealt with. In many of our school libraries such books can be found, and while some teachers encourage the children to read these books, such a procedure is not common enough. After all, in our primary schools little real history can be taught, but if the teacher has succeeded in creating interest, and at the same time has recognized in his treatment of the subject that the study of history is one of the most vital of all studies for inspiration to conduct, he will have done well.

*Geography.*—The reports on the commercial geography taught in our schools are generally satisfactory, and in many cases very good, but the reports on the methods of teaching physical geography are not so satisfactory. In the upper classes more experimental work should replace the learning by heart from a text-book, which is too common in our schools, and in all classes greater use should be made of field excursions and outdoor presentation. Moreover, physical and commercial geography are not two subjects; their interdependence is too often not sufficiently noted.

*Nature-study.*—In many schools excellent lessons are given on nature-study in the lower classes, and only in a few schools have these lessons degenerated into a mere accumulation of facts, instead of affording a real training in observation, reasoning, and oral expression.

*Drawing.*—In the course of their pupil-teacher and college training a large number of our young teachers have gained facility in blackboard sketching, and we find that when such teachers are employed in our infant departments the interest of young pupils is generally stimulated because the teacher is able to illustrate the various lessons by rapid sketches in colour. In connection with the drawing of "fashioned objects" we must again draw the attention of teachers to the list of objects given in the Department's regulations. A few head teachers keep on hand or encourage pupils to bring for the occasion a good selection of the fashioned objects there recommended, but in too many classes the drawing-lesson is still introduced by a search, more or less successful, for a suitable object. As a result, pupils are often set to draw an object that presents too great difficulty, and the time of the less proficient pupils is largely wasted.

*Junior Teachers.*—We note with pleasure that the Government has recently raised the salaries of pupil-teachers (now called junior teachers) and probationers. At the same time the minimum educational status for those who wish to enter as "junior teachers" has been raised. We fear that this raising of the standard will prevent many boys from entering the profession, more especially boys from remote country districts who have not been able to attend a secondary school, and therefore cannot, at entry, have obtained an intermediate certificate. The exacting of the proposed minimum of attainment will cause little inconvenience in the case of girls, since, in Otago at least, the number of qualified girls who apply has always been largely in excess of the number of "junior teachers" required; but in past years we have been compelled to appoint as pupil-teachers a number of boys who, while they had usually done S7 work for some time in their local school, had yet no certificate higher than that of proficiency in S6; and we are pleased to note that these appointments have generally been fully justified.

*Singing.*—As a rule school songs are well sung; indeed, it is a pleasure to listen to the clear enunciation and correct expression that mark the part singing in our best schools. We wish, however, that more of our teachers realized the value of school singing as an aid in clear enunciation, in improving the quality of the vowel-sounds, and in the cultivation of patriotism by means of suitable correlation of song, history, geography, &c. Graduated ear tests are well used by some teachers; but a few simple "ear tests" might well be made part of every singing-lesson. Such practice rapidly improves even the boy who persistently "sings out of tune." We wish once more to emphasize the importance of using song as a relief in ordinary school-work. In too many schools singing is still a set subject occupying half an hour perhaps on a Friday afternoon. In the infant departments of our large schools work is always suitably varied by singing, but too many of the teachers of our upper classes and too many sole teachers fail to appreciate the great value of song as a relief to the school-work. We regret to note that in a considerable number of our sole-teacher schools singing is not taught. This very serious defect is generally due to the fact that the teacher "cannot sing." We would urge on the teacher who has "no singing-voice" that this defect is almost counterbalanced if he is able to play simple music on piano or organ.

*Uncertificated Teachers.*—While the proportion of uncertificated teachers employed in Otago is much smaller than the proportion in some other districts, the number employed in Otago schools (15 per cent., nearly all sole teachers) is still too high. We look forward to the time when all our teachers in sole charge will be certificated, and in this connection we note with pleasure that a much-needed increase has lately been granted in the salaries of teachers in Grades 0, 1, and 2. The short courses of lessons for uncertificated teachers formerly arranged by the Board have been discontinued. Much more effective arrangements are now made, by means of which uncertificated teachers may carry on continuous work, and have their work criticized and their progress accelerated during the whole of the year. Arrangements have been made for the teaching of uncertificated teachers by correspondence, a grant in aid of the fees being made by the Board