

the teacher ascertains who can answer; the result is that the stolid pupils who dislike mental exertion are practically freed from it. Lastly, the questions put are too fragmentary, and can be answered by any one with the least modicum of knowledge. While it is well for a teacher occasionally to test by examination the progress of his pupils and to arouse their emulation by systematic mark-giving, it is plain that in a good many cases the plan is adopted on too extravagant a scale. The time occupied in giving marks in different subjects daily and in too frequent examination could be better spent in good honest teaching. It should be remembered, too, that emulation badly managed easily produces envy, malice, and hatred. In some instances the teacher has no conception of the elementary principles of school method—*e.g.*, pupils nominally in the same class are working in different parts of the arithmetic-book; dictation is given at haphazard without any preparation, and, of course, with a large daily crop of errors to be dealt with; pupils are allowed to practise writing without any instruction as to form and height of letters; a new reading-lesson is taken without instruction as to the pronunciation and use of new words; and composition exercises are set on new themes without any previous attempt at bringing together or arranging the material. In regard to improving the methods of teaching, such assistance as the Inspector can give on the occasion of his visits is quite inadequate to meet the needs of the case. Teachers who would benefit by such a course might be released for two weeks in the year and required to attend a school in which approved methods are employed. Unfortunately we have no sole-teacher school within easy distance of a centre which could be used as a model. In the case of assistant teachers it is easier to find a suitable school where they can attend to observe methods. We would therefore, as a partial solution of a very serious problem, urge that a model sole-teacher school be established near Invercargill. We are of opinion, too, that the employment of an organizing teacher of ability, who could spend a whole week at each school visited, would effect an improvement in the weaker schools.

Fortunately the majority of the country schools whose S6 pupils are examined for proficiency certificates at their own schools had been visited in October or early in November before the outbreak of the epidemic. The few remaining country schools were visited early in 1919. In the case of proficiency candidates that would ordinarily have been examined at centres, certificates were, wherever possible, awarded without examination, the award being based on the school records and the Inspector's preliminary examination after consultation with the head teacher. Those that failed to gain a proficiency certificate in this way were examined early in February of 1919, when a small additional number passed. The method of awarding certificates without examination, necessary under the circumstances this year, does not commend itself to us. The following is the table of results:—

—	Presented.	Examined.	Proficiency.	Competency.	Endorsed Competency.	Failed.
Public schools ..	831	831	577 (69·4%)	139 (16·7%)	9	115 (13·8%)
Private schools ..	76	75	33 (44·0%)	19 (25·3%)	1	23 (30·7%)
All schools ..	907	906	610 (67·3%)	158 (17·4%)	10	138 (15·2%)

The corresponding percentages for 1917 were,—

	Proficiency.	Competency.	Failed.
Public schools	65·4	17·6	17·0
Private schools	47·5	22·5	27·5
All schools	64·5	17·8	17·5

With regard to the results of the teaching of the various subjects we have a few comments to make of fairly general application. There is no doubt that in a good many schools too much time is devoted to arithmetic, and, further, that the value of mental arithmetic is not sufficiently recognized. Composition still suffers from a misuse of capitals, absence of punctuation, and neglect of paragraphing. In some cases the spelling in the essay is in marked contrast to the spelling in the dictation test. Writing in the lower division is often good, while that of S3 and S4 in the same school is inferior. In some schools the pupils' knowledge of civics consists of information memorized from notes. Colour drawing in the preparatory and junior divisions is improving in quantity and quality. Cardboard-work has been put on a satisfactory basis, thanks to the efficient teaching in that subject given at the Saturday classes. Many teachers who are honestly dissatisfied at the annual examination with the results of their work as assessed by the Inspector would do well to examine carefully their plan of work. If, for example, in S5 half of the year is taken up in teaching vulgar fractions, the rest of the course in arithmetic must necessarily receive scant attention; not only so, but the bad effect will persist through the following year. In this particular case the text-books are sometimes blamed; and certainly some text-books exhibit great disproportion as regards the space allotted to the different parts of the course. The wise teacher easily surmounts this difficulty by using the book judiciously. Since examinations have to be begun in June it is evident that in schools examined early in the year a good part of the year's work is not tested. There is good reason to believe that in some cases that portion is more or less neglected. At our first visits of inspection early in the year we have tested the knowledge of history and geography acquired by pupils of S5 and S6 during their two years in S3 and S4. We may say frankly that the results of our investigation have disappointed us. In other subjects, too, such as manual instruction, nature-study, and hygiene, we are somewhat afraid that there is a slackening-off after the Inspector's visit, partly because such work is more troublesome to the untrained teacher than English and arithmetic, and (in S6) partly because additional time is thus afforded for preparing pupils in English and