

Otago District.

Geography.—We found generally that the pupils had acquired a good knowledge of facts, but in many cases there was little evidence of any mental reaction on the information supplied by the teacher, pupils showing poor ability to discuss important topics. An outstanding weakness was the lack of first-hand information in a subject which is of high value as a means of training in observation and in reasoning.

History.—We are pleased to note improvement in the instruction in history. The practice of interesting the pupils in the early stages by means of stories of fine achievement, the introduction of New Zealand and, in some cases, local history, the preparation and use of the time-chart, are commendable features in the treatment of this subject. The historical material supplied at the Dunedin Exhibition has been very thoroughly used by the teachers.

Canterbury District.

History and Civics.—The teaching of civics should for the most part be informal and indirect, and we are pleased to note that in many of our upper classes the heavy formal programmes are disappearing, such topics as banking, free-trade, and protection being reserved for more mature years. Ideas of good citizenship should develop from the history lesson. A sense of duty and responsibility should be gained from school games and organizations, and from a proper attitude towards authority in general, rather than from stiff formal talks by the teacher. While there is still a tendency on the part of some teachers to load the lessons with unnecessary details, the programmes of work are, generally speaking, of a suitable nature. We have frequently directed the attention of teachers to the value of simple narrative as a means of presenting historical facts.

Geography.—In no other school subject is there so much diversity of attainment as in geography. In some schools, indeed, where the subject has been intelligently treated and thoroughly taught, the pupils' attainments leave little to be desired. In others, again, while much effort has been expended, it has been ill-directed and wasteful, with the result that the pupils carry away with them but little real geographical knowledge. On the whole, the useful generalizations of physical geography are carefully taught, but many fail to apply them systematically when dealing with different regions. The commercial and industrial aspects of geography receive a good deal of attention; but in some cases the relations between trade products and industry on the one hand and physical conditions on the other are not sufficiently established.

Wellington District.

History.—This subject is better taught than formerly, and more time is devoted to it. Many teachers have arranged a supply of good reading-material from which pupils gain information for themselves. Time-charts have been made in most schools, and serve a useful purpose, but greater use should be made of pictures. We find also that too much time is spent in the earlier periods of English history, and we meet the ancient Britons and Julius Caesar so frequently that we should be glad to be introduced for a change to the Maori voyagers, Tasman and Cook, the early settlers, and men who have made New Zealand.

Geography.—Except in a few cases where emphasis is still laid on mere names, geography is receiving more rational treatment, and it is pleasing to note the interest shown.

DRAWING AND HANDWORK.

Wellington District.

In many cases drawing does not receive the attention it deserves. As a means of expression it should be more closely related to the other subjects in the curriculum. The progress from class to class is not so great as might be expected, and there is no organized scheme running through the school. Teachers who have grasped the right principles in teaching the subject present very successful work, while those who still labour in the old formal way have little to show. The quick sketch in light lines is a better medium for cultivating perception and manual dexterity than the production of a laboured and "finished" drawing.

The value of handwork as a means of teaching, and not as an end, is still largely unrecognized, and much time is wasted under this heading in the fabrication of useless articles. Thus plasticine is frequently used in an aimless way by children merely to keep them busy, when they would be more profitably employed in, say, reading.

Canterbury District.

Drawing.—During the year a considerable amount of really good work came under our notice, but it seems to us that too heavy a price was paid for the results obtained. In general, the children were afforded no choice of subjects, and the instruction followed traditional lines. The great body of teachers have caught little inspiration from the illuminating articles which have appeared in the *Education Gazette* during the past two years. Their conservatism has resulted in unnecessarily laboured efforts on the part of the children and in very restricted programmes. Rapidity of execution and originality of treatment are not common. There has been, however, an improvement in technique.

Handwork.—The woodwork and cookery classes continue to be popular with the children, many of whom exhibit considerable skill in the technique of these two subjects. It is doubtful, however, whether the woodwork programmes of the various centres or the carton-work programmes of the majority of our schools study sufficiently the real interests of the child. There is too much emphasis