

make myself acquainted with my district, and with the teachers, and their methods of teaching and organizing. By adopting this course I have been able to visit most of the schools in the district, to examine the District High School in the higher branches, and to conduct the examination of teachers, besides attending to many other matters in conference with Local Committees and with the Board's architect, and preparing regulations, writing reports, &c. In my district there are 46 schools in operation, and 10 in course of erection. With a few exceptions the buildings are of a suitable and substantial nature. All those now in course of erection are every way so.

FURNITURE AND APPARATUS.—In the majority of schools the desks are too cumbrous and lumbering, taking up far more room than can be spared in buildings eighteen or twenty feet wide. In some instances the teacher is absolutely without room to teach, to say nothing about class movements. In new schools this defect is being remedied, and I have recommended Local Committees to apply to the office for plans of desks, whenever these are wanted. For the most part the plans of school furniture have hitherto been supplied by local carpenters, who cannot reasonably be expected to know much about what is or what is not suitable furniture. Few schools have a good supply of black-boards and maps. Even the smallest schools should have at least three black-boards. These play so important a part in collective instruction that it would be most injudicious to stint their supply. The idea that there should be only as many black-boards as teachers is an erroneous one; it would be nearer the truth to say that there should be one for every class. I regret to say, however, that the majority of our teachers are not alive to the importance of using the black-board in all their lessons. In no instance have I seen it used in the reading lesson; hardly at all in grammar, geography, and dictation; and only occasionally in arithmetic. But I trust that this state of matters will soon be improved off the face of the district.

ORGANIZATION.—Under this head I include the arrangement of the furniture, the classification of the pupils, the distribution of the teaching power, and time-tables. In many, indeed in most, of our schools the arrangement of the furniture is to be condemned. The desks are generally disposed latitudinally, instead of longitudinally, and this of course necessitates the placing of one class behind another to the extent of the number of classes: an arrangement that is now condemned by all organizers. This error cannot, in many instances, be corrected without an alteration in the floor of the school; but, wherever practicable, I have recommended teachers to dispose their desks longitudinally. In all the schools now in course of erection this arrangement is adopted. So far as I have been able to test it, the classification is satisfactory in about a half of our schools: in the rest it ranges from indifferent to bad. In the latter, proficiency in reading alone appears to be adopted as a test for promotion, for the pupils can generally read with fair fluency, but are inexcusably ignorant in almost every other subject of instruction. For the guidance of our inexperienced teachers I wish to make, in passing, a few observations on the basis and method of classification. Pupils should be classified not according to ability to read, to cipher, or to do any single subject; but according to proficiency in at least three subjects, regard, however, being always had to the activity and strength of comprehension of the child's mind. A clever child who is a little deficient in one or two test subjects should not be kept back on account of this deficiency. His mental activity and strength will soon more than compensate for this weakness. Age, too, should be considered, as, along with it, there is usually a maturity of mental growth that will enable a child to soon outstrip his junior classmates. It is better to class such a child with those whose attainments are superior than with those whose attainments are inferior to his own. These are special cases, and must be dealt with by special rules. I would suggest, as test subjects, three of the following four: Reading, arithmetic, grammar, and geography. Proficiency in three of those, of which reading should be one, should entitle a pupil to promotion. Periodical test examinations should be held; but a child's promotion should by no means depend upon his passing any one of those examinations. These final tests are held mainly to invest promotion with as much of ceremonial as possible; but the merit of the pupil should be measured almost wholly by the work done by him during the period intervening between the ceremonial examinations. During this time the teacher should carefully note the industry and progress of the child, and upon the result recorded should depend in a large measure the child's promotion. But this does not render the final examinations unnecessary, for the more of ceremonial with which we can invest our school work the more of reverence and respect will the pupils have for the school and the teachers. The almost utter absence of ceremony in many of our schools will account for much of the ill-manners noticeable in the children. Pupils should be promoted in groups, and not singly (unless under exceptional circumstances), and too many divisions in the school should be carefully guarded against. Some conscientious but unskilful teachers of small schools, in their anxiety to provide for minute differences in individual ability, multiply their classes unnecessarily, and, by consequence, reduce their teaching power to a mere shadow. I have found eight and nine divisions in schools with an average attendance of about thirty. Where a system of collective instruction obtains the classification cannot possibly be perfect. Nothing but an approximate to equality of ability and attainment should be attempted. The question to be solved is not, Are these pupils absolutely equal in point of attainment? but, Are they so nearly equal that they can be profitably instructed together? The classification of our schools is sadly interfered with by irregular attendance. Pupils are often absent from school months together, and when they return, notwithstanding that so many "stitches have been dropped," are allowed to resume their old places. Not only is this an injustice to the more regular attendants, but it is also an injustice to the absentees themselves; for the latter are unable to undertake the work of the class, and the former are kept back by needless explanations and repetitions. Such pupils should be reclassified on their return to school: in fact, they should be treated as new pupils.

With regard to the distribution of the teaching power, it may be said that in the larger schools—schools in which assistants are employed—this is generally satisfactory, by which I mean that the junior pupils are taught by an adult teacher. Yet I should like to see more than this attempted. It is the duty of the head teacher not only to assign certain work to the schoolmistress, assistants, and pupil-teachers, but also to assist them in the performance of this work, to instruct them in method, and