

balanced by a want of power to apply the compound rules when the form of the question is varied in the slightest degree. Grammar and composition show best in Standards III. and IV. In Standards V. and VI. the composition exercises presented are generally too short to admit of any plan in writing them. The maps I have seen this year have been on the whole better than before: I am convinced they would be better still if in each map one meridian and one or two parallels (not more) were selected as "construction lines." In Standard III. the positions of places are less vaguely defined. The want of definiteness and accuracy in Standards IV.—VI. is probably due to the fact that too many names are taught, as well as to the omission to link the facts of physical and political geography with one another and with the facts of every-day life as recorded in the newspapers.

CLASS SUBJECTS.—The average marks obtained by schools in groups (a) and (b) are—for drawing, 41.4; history, 39.6; geography, 51.3; elementary science, object lessons, &c., 46.1. The average percentage on class subjects is 45.1.

In all but three schools freehand drawing alone was attempted in Standards IV.—VI., and for this the Inspectors did not feel warranted in assigning the full marks (100). Accordingly, for the fifty-four schools concerned, the average maximum obtainable was about 68, so that 41.4 would represent about 61 per cent. on the drawing actually taught, making it in this sense the best of the class subjects. Many of the teachers deserve great credit for the courage and success with which they have faced a comparatively new subject. Apart from its inclusion among the subjects of the pass group, and the question of classification involved therein, I view the obligation to teach drawing to every child as an almost unmixt benefit, tending to counteract the somewhat too bookish effect of much of the rest of the syllabus, and to satisfy in some degree the demand (vague at times, but founded on a real want) for a greater amount of technical instruction. The same demand, it appears to me, would in the case of the elder girls in our larger schools be more appropriately met by the substitution for geometrical and model drawing of systematic lessons in "cutting out," &c., to supplement the lessons in needlework already given.

It cannot be said that many teachers are successful in the lessons on elementary science. The demand for technical instruction naturally becomes in country districts a demand for instruction in agricultural chemistry; and this may be thoroughly reasonable if the boys concerned are old enough to benefit by such lessons. But if the demand is to be satisfied it will certainly be necessary to train our teachers. At present, as far as my experience goes, agricultural chemistry is the least satisfactory form the science lessons can take. Whether any argument for requiring from country teachers a sound knowledge of agricultural chemistry would not hold equally well for town teachers in regard, say, to the principles of the textile manufactures, is probably another question.

ADDITIONAL SUBJECTS.—The average of the additional marks for groups (a) and (b) was 58.8. The average marks (0 to 20) for the several subjects were—Repetition, 13.7; drill, 11.8; singing, 9.2; needlework, 13.6; subject matter of reading lessons, 12.4; extra drawing, 10.

There is perhaps more variety in the quality of the infant instruction in the different schools than in anything else connected with them. While the conduct of some infant departments is excellent, in others the progress made at the early stages is extremely small. Teachers are too apt to overlook the necessity for frequent change of occupation and position, short lessons, and oft-recurring intervals of rest. As to the methods in vogue, there is rather more system in the teaching of reading (the chief subject) than in that of elementary arithmetic (which is probably next in importance). The proper use of tables is to systematize knowledge by grouping acquired facts: it is a common thing to hear children repeating in chorus table after table containing facts they have not acquired. Again, it would seem obvious that the knowledge of numbers should precede the working of sums based on those numbers: it is much more usual to find the sums given first and the principles postponed or left entirely to chance. In a note appended to this report I have ventured to sketch out roughly a suitable (though not the only possible) programme for the instruction of preparatory classes in the rudiments of the knowledge of numbers.

The art of speaking is not set down as one of the subjects of the syllabus; if it were, there would probably be more attention paid to the form of the answers given by the children even in the lowest classes, and in the upper classes answers consisting of single words or half-phrases (or of a verb where an adjective is wanted, or of either of them in place of a noun) would be less common than they are. It would hardly seem too much to ask that an answer should in general be either a complete sentence or a phrase such that with the affirmative form of the question it would make a complete sentence. Some lessons—as lessons on objects, oral composition, and the subject matter of the reading books—lend themselves to this in a peculiar degree. Imperfect questioning, simultaneous and indiscriminate answering, are, on the other hand, the indirect sources of a large amount of the slovenly answering that exists.

Of the miscellaneous topics that suggest themselves I will only allude to two that have been noticed from time to time in my reports to the Board upon particular schools—viz., the numerous instances of imperfect registers, and the frequent neglect by the local authorities of the sanitary arrangements of the school premises. In conclusion, I may say that the moral tone of the schools appears to be generally good; and I may take this opportunity of thanking teachers for receiving advice—or even unwelcome truths—in as kindly a spirit as that in which they are intended to be given.

I have, &c.,

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NOTE.—*Rough Sketch of Lessons on Numbers.*

(a.) Numbers one to nine. The use of actual objects, as cubes of wood, to show the analysis of each number by addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division. No number to be taken