

of importance is all that is required to be taught in Standards V. and VI.; but if this is to be all we are to aim at, farewell to intelligent teaching. The unnatural severance of the physical features of a country from its political geography also tends to make the teaching unprofitable.

In the great majority of schools history is no worse taught than it was before it was ranked as a class subject, but there are some in which the teaching is deteriorating. A great and common mistake here is neglect of chronology. It is expected that the dates of the Sovereigns will be known, and that great events can be referred to the reign in which they occurred. This is the very smallest modicum of chronology that could be required; yet it is often wholly unknown, and rarely known with readiness and confidence. We think that every teacher who is to make the history lessons of any value to his pupils must teach this at least and teach it thoroughly. Much conscientious labour is now largely thrown away from neglect of this. It would also be well if the nature of historical events were more carefully explained and questioned on. It is not a very unusual thing to find, for example, a good deal of information as to how Free-trade became law, without any adequate knowledge of what Free-trade means. History is one of the subjects in which wide comprehensive questions can be given—questions the answers to which will tax and train the pupil's powers of expression. We should like to find it more generally handled, so as to impart a good training in the art of expression, and pave the way for more formal instruction in composition and essay writing. If these ends are to be attained teachers must prepare the lessons carefully.

With respect to object lessons and science we have nothing to add to what we said in our last report. The experience of another year has deepened our conviction that science would be much more effectively taught if the pupils had in their hands a suitable text book of the subject, and we hope that when the syllabus of instruction comes to be revised this course will be allowed, if not recommended.

The results of the year show that the great majority of the teachers discharge their duties with commendable diligence and attention. There are few who spare labour and application to satisfy the parents and the public; and, though in so large a service there is and must be a large amount of ill-directed and unskilful teaching, there is in the Board's service a large and increasing number of teachers who show great skill and ability in their professional work. Where skill is lacking attention and perseverance generally make fair amends for the defect. There might very well exist greater zeal to improve methods and to apply them better, but we cannot expect greater honesty and fidelity in the discharge of their onerous and important duties than most teachers show.

The order, behaviour, and manners of the pupils are still, as a rule, quite satisfactory. We would, however, like to see class movements conducted more quietly. When the lessons are finished there should be no outburst of talking or noisy preparation to leave the room. The daily government should foster habits of self-restraint, and make the pupils feel such behaviour unbecoming and unfavourable to study and discipline.

The attention of the scholars is seldom so satisfactory as their order and behaviour. Good attention is one of the things which honesty and fidelity cannot always command, and many meritorious teachers fail to secure it. The failure is naturally most conspicuous in the larger schools, and we think the headmasters of these might easily do more than they now do to improve the attention and tone of their classes. The steps that may be taken to promote this end can hardly be discussed here, but it may be doubted if headmasters fully realise their responsibilities in this matter, or urge its importance on their assistants with sufficient frequency and emphasis. In securing good attention downright earnestness and unflinching watchfulness are among the chief conditions on which success depends. When these are present success is rarely wanting.

The school records are nearly always correctly kept. All cases of serious neglect have been specially reported for the Board's information. Considerable variety obtains in the methods of marking the daily-attendance register, but we do not object to any so long as presence and absence are recorded by distinct marks, so that the total of those present can be found by adding the marks. Where absences alone are marked the number of attendances is found by subtracting from the roll number, a method that leads to frequent errors and violates the instructions for marking the roll.

Most teachers have now passed the department's examination in singing, but there is still a considerable number of schools in which the subject is not taught at all. Even where it is taught with considerable success it seldom forms a sufficiently prominent part of every day's work, enlivening the tedium of long confinement and lending variety to the day's occupations. In a few of the smaller schools the pupils sing when entering and leaving the schoolroom. When well done this has a most charming effect. In a number of large schools and in some small ones the subject is taught with great enthusiasm and success.

We have, &c.,

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