

will remedy the first defect. The latter requires more skill for its correction. There must be capability on the part of the teacher of a graphic presentation of the subject, and the power of fixing the attention and actively interesting the minds of his scholars. During the past year the Board adopted my suggestion to introduce Geographical and History Readers. From the use of these books I expect favourable results in the reading and the subjects of which these books specially treat. Referring again to the necessity for giving pattern examples of reading, I would strongly impress upon some teachers the necessity of first amending their own imperfections. For a teacher to read defectively means that the fault will be fixed almost ineradicably with the scholar.

WRITING.—In this subject also I have pleasure in noticing improvement, though a great deal yet remains to be done. The introduction of ruled slates, and making their use compulsory, have been productive of benefit in the lower classes and will bear good fruit in the upper. The New Zealand copy books are now generally used, and teachers express themselves satisfied with them. At my first examination of the schools I found pretty generally that the writing of Standard III. was nothing but a cramped and often illegible scrawl. The use of the ruled slates and of the copy books referred to has been productive of much benefit in this standard, and some of the writing presented was exceedingly good. By insisting on the use of double lines until Standard IV. is reached, and the initiation of that standard gradually into single-line writing, scholars leave Standard III. with a large bold style of writing, and there is room then in the progress to Standard VI. for the processes of improvement in quality and diminution in size which appear to naturally go together. These precautions are, however, insufficient of themselves to procure good writing. Blackboard demonstrations and corrections cannot safely be omitted, and the posture of the scholar and the manner of holding the pen must be attended to. In Classes P. I. and P. II., and Standard I., good slate writing is generally found, but when the scholar proceeds to the use of the pen a complete change takes place. This can only be prevented by very thorough and painstaking drill in posture, holding the pen, &c., before an attempt to write is made. When writing is begun the teacher should teach stroke by stroke and letter by letter with the aid of the blackboard. Pains-taking care at this stage would prevent much after trouble, and we should see a much greater absence of such imperfections as badly-made letters, grotesque-looking capitals, incomplete joinings, strokes not touching the lines, &c. In the upper standards the scholars should be practised occasionally in writing a dictation exercise on paper without lines.

DRAWING.—In this subject the district must suffer from the absence of the opportunities for training enjoyed by teachers in more favoured districts. Still, on the whole a good measure of success has been achieved, and the work produced bears testimony to laudable effort. I am of opinion that in the smaller schools the time which can be devoted to the subject is insufficient to produce a good standard of excellence, but if only a small minority of the scholars have a latent talent developed the result may be considered satisfactory. I have examined the drawing books in the same way as the copy and exercise books. The work is, generally speaking, quite as good as can be expected, and the books in most of the schools are neat and clean.

ARITHMETIC.—In this subject the results as a whole are not by any means disappointing. As may be expected, considerable variation exists, not only between different schools, but between different classes in same school. For the two last examinations I have given a part of the questions for the lower standards in words, and with good effect upon the notation and numeration; for there is decidedly less of that stumbling noticeable at my first examination. The introduction of slates ruled in squares for the lower classes, and exercise books ruled in the same way, has been beneficial in causing greater care in arrangement, and the figures are much better made. I have in extremely few cases had to complain of anything approaching illegibility. Standards I. to III. have, generally speaking, done excellent work. With much good work Standards IV. to VI. exhibit a considerable degree of weakness. Problems and variation in the statement of sums were the principal stumbling blocks to the lower classes. For instance, if the question were, "Subtract 27234 from 98267" the sum would be worked quite correctly; but if it were stated, "What is the difference between 98267 and 27234?" inability to grasp the meaning of the question caused failure. Again, if the question were, "If a farmer bought twenty cows for £180, how much did he pay for each?" multiplication would often be used instead of division. The principal causes of failure in this subject appear to be, for the lower classes, incorrect notation and imperfect knowledge of tables, with want of sufficient exercise in simple mental calculation; in the upper classes, the want of sufficient mental practice and too great a dependence upon test cards. Blackboard work with right methods is decidedly more valuable than the exclusive use of test cards. In Standard III. the principal difficulty experienced seemed to be the statement of a compound addition sum, the figures being often copied incorrectly and placed under a figure of a higher or lower value. The following question was seldom managed successfully: "A boy put in the savings bank 2s. 6d., 4s. 6d., 9s., and 3s. 11d., and drew out half a crown: how much was there left in the bank?" Thorough mental exercise would rob this sum of its difficulty. Practice and reduction were strong features with the Fourth Class. Bills of parcels caused failure, because it is not shown that they are merely a practical application of practice; and how indifferently they are taught in the Fourth Class is proved by the frequency with which the Fifth Class also fail to work them correctly. The misstatement of a proportion sum often given by Fifth Class scholars exhibits a misconception of facts which would, I think, be less liable to occur if less reliance were placed on the rule of three. I would strongly recommend a more common use of the method of unity, which helps to train and develop the mental faculties, a virtue that can hardly be claimed for a mechanical process. In fractions there would be less bungling if diagrammatic methods of teaching them were more generally adopted. In "Gladman's School Method" there is a very good representation of the process, and such a diagram placed upon the blackboard and carefully explained would give a grasp of the subject which no amount of lecturing will produce. If fractions, divested of technicalities, were introduced in Standard IV., the progress of that class would be materially helped. The chief evidence of how far arithmetic is a merely mechanical process is to be found in the difficulty experienced by scholars of