

when in a recent pupil-teacher examination the notes of a lesson were asked for it was lamentable to see how few took advantage of the question to show that they taught on modern lines.

In composition and recitation marked improvement is going on. We have recommended in many schools that composition should begin in Standard II. Wherever this has been done good results have followed, and Standard II. classes take great interest in the work. In the upper classes sentences are not only formed more grammatically correct, but the children are able to express their thoughts in their own natural and simple language, and they have less difficulty in producing the prescribed quantity without resorting to padding. In many instances, too, they think out well connected and intelligent narratives. As more importance is now attached to composition than to formal grammar, we may hope for still further progress in the style and character of the composition.

In cases where the head teachers of an infant school, or in infant departments in large schools, are competent teachers of singing, and possess also aptness for teaching observation lessons suited to the capacity of the classes, then it is found that true kindergarten work is done, and the life of the school is healthy and bright. In the Mount Cook Infant School and in the Thorndon infant department the best kindergarten work is done, and we have great pleasure in especially commending the newly-introduced basket-work, action songs, and varied occupation of the Thorndon infant department. A good infant school is the best ground for a pupil-teacher on probation to learn the first principles of teaching, and such use has been made of our best schools for years past. We should like to see further developments in the Masterton infant department, with a view of making it a training ground for country probationers.

We still find many of the classes provided with only one reading-book, and this is insufficient narrative for a year's work. The book loses its interest, and in the lower classes it is known by heart. Teachers can avoid this in the lower classes by the use of reading sheets, or by daily printing on the blackboard a new passage for class-reading. But more class-books are desirable. A School Committee cannot do better public service than by providing sets of the many excellent geographical, historical, or scientific readers for class use in their schools. A set will last several years, and, if only one set for one class were purchased every year much good would be done. In cases where the parents could afford to do so, the children should possess other sets. We think due attention is paid to the teaching of expressive reading, but want of extended practice leads to hesitancy or higgling.

The teaching of singing has received a new impetus from the opening of classes for the instruction of teachers by Mr R. Parker on Wednesdays and Saturdays. The institution of the choral union of teachers has also proved a success, and a large choral festival, by the assembled school children of Wellington, was held this year in the Opera House. There is a notion in the minds of some that singing from notes is now being taught for the first time. As a matter of fact, whilst we know that improvement in this respect goes on from year to year, the tonic-sol-fa notation, with good class singing, has been taught in most of our schools for many years past, and by some of the headmasters with great success. It is noticeable that the preparation in the several schools of specific songs for the choral festival introduced, for the first time, an element of uniformity in the work done. Another important gain by the undertaking is the marvellous cheapness at which copies of the music are supplied to the pupils.

In accordance with instructions from the Board, contributions of parcels of suitable books have been made to sixty school libraries during the past two years. There are now 12,000 volumes in the school libraries of this district. About 4,000 children make use of these libraries. In many schools suitable cupboards have been erected; and great interest is generally taken in the upkeep of the stock of books.

The drawing instruction continues very satisfactory. In the first-grade examination the numbers passed were as follows (showing a small increase on last year's results, with improved work in geometrical and model drawing) Freehand, 711, geometry, 1,233, scale, 613, model, 336.

A class of pupils, sixty-two scholarship-holders from the city schools, holding full certificates, attends the Technical School once a week for instruction in second-grade work.

We are of opinion that as time goes on the need of further technical instruction for the upper classes of large schools will be felt, and that instruction in woodwork or carpentry for boys, and in cookery for girls, will form the coping-stone of our educational curriculum, but this instruction must be given by specialists.

Arrangements have been made whereby the same Government military officers continue to give the physical-drill instruction in the city schools, and exceedingly good work is being done. M. de Mey's instruction of the girls, and additional instruction of the boys in the city schools, and his periodical visits to the country, have been carried out as usual. The whole work is largely supplemented by the teaching staff, and drill, with more or less smartness and precision, is taught throughout the district.

Of all the subjects taught, arithmetic, as at present constituted, makes the largest demands upon the time available for schoolwork. But we think it quite possible to reconstitute our school arithmetic course, with greater gain to the development of the reasoning faculties, by discharging rules of no practical utility, by omitting weights and measures not in actual common colonial use, by teaching simple decimals and fractions in Standard IV., and by applying in Standards V and VI. a knowledge of decimals and fractions to the more ready solving of ordinary problems. The immense gain which could be effected in arithmetical expertness we think can hardly be over-estimated, and we shall hope to see this fully demonstrated as time goes on.

We have, &c.,

ROBERT LEE,
T. R. FLEMING, } Inspectors.

The Chairman, Education Board, Wellington.