

arrangements were made. The ordinary visit to these schools was postponed until later in the year, and candidates for certificates were examined on the occasion of such visits.

A second year's experience of the working of central examinations as conducted in this district confirms the impression that such examinations have grown in popular favour, and have proved a valuable source of stimulus both to teachers and pupils. The former readily avail themselves of the opportunity afforded for comparing methods of teaching and the style and quality of the work done by pupils of the various schools. In the country centres, too, the examinations are conducted under most favourable conditions with regard to accommodation and to the absence of distractions inseparable from the inspection of small schools when the Inspector is taking oral work with the young children while the senior pupils are engaged in written work in the same room. The teachers come to the centre prepared with all information available regarding the work of the candidates during the current year, and the records submitted receive careful consideration.

A warning note may here be sounded with regard to the treatment of some of the additional subjects. Cases have come under our notice where lessons in these subjects have been discontinued in the interval between the ordinary visit of inspection and the date of the central examination for certificates. Careful inquiry will be made and, if necessary, special tests applied to insure the continuity of treatment indicated in the school time-table. We would also desire to correct a misconception which exists in the minds of some teachers—viz., that the estimate formed of the school almost entirely depends on the performance of the Standard VI pupils in the examinations for certificates. We are fully conscious that a successful appearance by pupils of Standard VI may possibly coexist with marked weakness in other classes, especially if the candidates for certificates have received more than their fair share of attention, to the detriment of the general management of the school.

SCHOLARSHIPS.—The Board's Junior Scholarships were this year distributed on a new basis of allocation, the schools being divided into three groups—viz., (a) those having three or more teachers, exclusive of pupil-teachers; (b) those with two teachers; and (c) sole-charge schools. The usual number of entries were received from the two higher groups, and the work submitted, to judge from the marks awarded, was of normal quality. For the scholarships offered to the third group nine candidates entered, of whom three absented themselves from examination, and of the six who sat for examination none qualified. Towards the close of the year the Board of Governors of the Technical College offered ten industrial scholarships, five for boys and five for girls. These scholarships, each of the value of £10, are tenable for one year, carry with them free tuition, and are open to all children under fifteen years of age living in the North Canterbury Education District, the only restriction being that the income of the parent of any scholarship-holder must not exceed £175 per annum. For these ten scholarships there were only twenty-seven entries (fourteen boys and thirteen girls), of whom ten came from a single school. It is not easy to account for the small number of candidates, in view of the large enrolment of Standard VI pupils in the higher-grade schools within reach of the technical college. Making every allowance for the fact that the scholarships were announced as tenable for only one year, and for the restricting influence of the sumptuary clause, we find it difficult to realize that pupils were fully alive to the benefits offered, and as these become better known we shall be surprised if the number of entries does not show a substantial increase.

With respect to some of the subjects of instruction, we beg to offer the following remarks :—

ENGLISH.—It has been proved by experience that the demands of the arithmetic syllabus can be met by devoting less time to this subject than was considered necessary a few years back. In the consequent rearrangement of the time-tables it has been found practicable in most of our schools to give the subjects included in the "English" group an additional measure of attention. The scope of reading has been considerably widened by the increased use of supplementary Readers, while the formation of the reading habit has been fostered by the facilities afforded by school and class libraries. It is pleasing to note that the educational value of school libraries is becoming more and more appreciated in the schools of this district. Some improvement is noticeable in the knowledge of the subject-matter and in comprehension of the language of the reading-books; but in many cases this important feature of the reading-lesson requires more skilful treatment before it can be regarded as satisfactory. In schools where reading has been successfully taught recitation also, as a rule, is deserving of commendation. On the other hand, where the recitation is of a less pleasing quality, weakness in comprehension is too often associated with a halting delivery and dependence on the assistance of a prompter. Considering the limited programme prescribed as a year's course in recitation an approximately accurate knowledge of the passages prepared may fairly be expected, and we are naturally surprised when the result falls short of our expectations. Some of the poetical passages in the reading-books that have done duty in this district for so many years are devoid of human interest, and are unattractive to child nature, and the practice of drawing on the wealth of beautiful poems not included in the class-books is deserving of wider adoption.

In a substantial number of our schools the more liberal treatment of reading has been accompanied by a corresponding improvement in composition. Occasionally the specimens of compositions submitted continue to be of too scrappy a character; but, generally speaking, an improvement is noticeable, more particularly in the employment of a wider vocabulary and in the more extended scope of what may be called "general knowledge," an improvement to which the useful and attractive lessons supplied by the *School Journal* have largely contributed. The valuable training afforded by oral composition, a subject skilfully treated in several schools, is worthy of wider recognition, and we feel assured that a more general employment of this form of verbal expression would be attended by beneficial results. We frequently find that the regulation limiting the use of technical terms in grammar has been erroneously regarded as the prohibition of the use of any technical terms whatever in the teaching of English, even in cases where the employment of such easy intelligible terms would avoid the use of cumbersome circumlocution, and would tend to clearness of thought and simplicity of expression.