

vertically when turning the soil over? Why should some seeds be planted more deeply than others? Why does the removal of maturing blooms lengthen the flowering-time of certain plants? Intelligent answers to these and many other simple questions, which will readily suggest themselves to those having practical knowledge of the subject, are not always forthcoming. Many of the opportunities for connecting the lessons in gardening with oral and written speech seem hardly to be made the most of, as shown by the inability of pupils to describe in fitting language the operations which they themselves, either in whole or in part, have carried on. If pupils were accustomed to more frequent exercises of the kind, not only would their power of verbal expression be strengthened, and hence their ability to write composition be increased, but actual knowledge of the work done would become much more accurate and thorough.

**USE OF THE BLACKBOARD.**—In connection with the comprehension of the reading-lessons, as, indeed, in most other subjects of instruction, we would call attention to the importance of the blackboard, the use of which is not always as general as could be wished. We do not refer so much to the writing of notes as to the rapid jotting-down of headings (in the case of comprehension single words will suffice) which may serve at the close of the lesson for a ready and comprehensive revision of work. When this is done, not only is the work more likely to be thoroughly impressed, but the danger of overlooking matters of special interest and importance is very largely lessened.

**ANNUAL CLASS LISTS.**—A considerable number of the class lists forwarded at the close of the year were found to be incomplete, and had to be returned for correction, while in a few cases class lists were not forthcoming until after the holidays. These irregularities gave rise to a great deal of troublesome and unnecessary work, and, as the information supplied by the class lists appears on several of the annual returns required by the Department, caused considerable delay in the preparation and completion of these documents. There seems little or no reason why such irregularities should occur, seeing that both syllabus regulations and those appearing on Form 19 are clear and explicit, and it is to be hoped that teachers in future, by making themselves better acquainted with the terms of regulations, will be able to forward their class lists "complete and duly in order."

**DISCIPLINE, ETC.**—In a large number of the schools of this district the relations between teachers and pupils are notably pleasant. Indications of harsh treatment or needless severity very seldom come under our notice. In many quarters a healthy spirit of responsibility and self-reliance has been successfully aroused, and the moral effect of such training as members of a law-abiding community is a potent force in the formation of character. To this good end several healthy influences contribute, among which may be enumerated—(1) the growing practice of training the pupils in self-government through the medium of monitors elected by their school-fellows; (2) the increased attention which is now devoted to instruction in the duties of citizenship; (3) the more rational conception of the value and scope of thorough inspection, as distinguished from the apprehension, and at times the overpressure associated with preparation for the "pass" of the now obsolete type of examination. The behaviour of pupils throughout the district is most commendable, and gives evidence of the good discipline that prevails. In nearly every school natural attitudes and readiness of obedience are found, while at public functions the children display exemplary conduct. The efforts made by teachers in training in habits of cleanliness, punctuality, truthfulness, and self-control must have a strong influence on the characters of our future citizens.

The cadet movement has always received whole-hearted support, and rightly so, for we believe that its lessons of responsibility, self-reliance, and self-control have been no mean factors in giving our lads a wider outlook and a finer interpretation of their duty to their country, to their neighbours, and to themselves. Several of our schools have now "scout" patrols, and if those in charge of these are as zealous as our cadet officers there can be no doubt that the new movement, with its fine ideals, should be welcomed as a power for good and a further means for physical training and character-building.

The harmonious relations existing between parents and teachers in the majority of cases are most gratifying, and it is encouraging to find communities showing appreciation of the work of teachers by raising funds for improving and beautifying school-surroundings, for equipping and extending libraries, and for providing outings for educational purposes. There are, however, some districts where residents have failed to realize their duty with regard to the school, where little or no effort is made to see that the teacher is comfortably lodged, or is living amidst congenial surroundings, and where the minimum amount of assistance is given to the teacher in discharging the duties of a position which is always one of responsibility and frequently one of extreme difficulty, the result being that when a vacancy occurs highly qualified candidates are not attracted. If parents in such districts were prepared to make some sacrifices to secure reasonable comfort to the teacher there is no doubt that a better type of applicant would be forthcoming, to the manifest benefit of all concerned.

Before closing this report, in which we have spoken freely of certain imperfections of aim and method noted during our round of visits to the schools, we wish to express our appreciation of the loyalty and devotion to duty shown at all times by the great majority of our teachers. The utmost willingness to act on suggestion and to co-operate with us in our efforts to keep the service abreast of modern developments is practically universal, while the zeal and earnestness manifest, often under most trying and difficult circumstances, is beyond all praise, and augurs well for the future of education in this district.

We have, &c.,  
 THOS. RITCHIE, )  
 T. S. FOSTER, ) Inspectors.  
 E. K. MULGAN, )  
 WM. BROCK, )

The Chairman, Education Board, North Canterbury.