

and in a few cases a suitable course of first aid has been creditably carried out. The mode of spread of the common infectious and contagious diseases that so seriously affect school attendance, the importance of isolating the sufferers, and the use of disinfectants are especially deserving of consideration in the higher classes of all schools. Here, as in elementary agriculture, a more definite scheme of work of not too comprehensive scope would be of great benefit. I have no very robust faith in wide programmes from which teachers are to make suitable selections for the instruction of their pupils; narrower, more definite compulsory courses would in many cases lead to better instruction.

Needlework is very satisfactorily taught when sufficient time is allowed for the lessons. In the larger schools it is almost impossible to provide sufficient time, an hour a week or less being all that can be spared in the higher classes. In view of this, the work in these schools is as good as can be expected. The improper holding and use of the needle is still too much in evidence, owing mainly to the demands on the teachers for directions in fixing work. The classes are also often larger than is desirable.

In most schools singing is as well taught as can be expected for the time allowed for the lessons: it is sometimes no more than half an hour a week—a period to which I always object—and is rarely a full hour. In a good many cases it is surprising that so much should be accomplished in the short time available. As a relief and change in the routine of school-work, the singing of a snatch of a song is still less widely used than is desirable.

Drill and physical exercises are well taught in the larger schools, and in general at least satisfactorily in the others. Deep-breathing exercises of a suitable kind, taken before school opens in the morning, are in common use, and might well be in use everywhere. The cadet movement continues to be most popular, and the great ambition of the younger boys is to grow big or old enough to join the cadets. The discipline of the schools has greatly benefited by the able direction of this work by various members of the school staffs. Dumb-bell and Indian-club drill are often most creditable.

Most of the large primer departments continue to be well directed and well taught. "In these," as Mr. Garrard points out, "it is quite exceptional to find a pupil who does not like school, and the air of business-like interest and of pleasurable attention that pervades them is highly commendable. This result is largely due to the fact that lady teachers in charge of primer departments have given much time and thought to the question how best to educate young children." I may add that they have ever been ready to learn from the experience and success of the more gifted leaders in their own ranks. In the smaller schools—those with one or two teachers—the difficulties of the situation are much greater, and the work of the primers, though less satisfactory, is usually as good as can be looked for, and is sometimes highly creditable.

The order and discipline continue to be highly satisfactory in all but a very small minority of the schools. In this matter the large classes of the city and suburban schools, as well as those of the other larger centres, reflect great credit on the headmasters and assistants; and the same can be said of many of the smaller schools also. Considering the large number of inexperienced teachers who have had to be employed in recent years, it is most gratifying to find Mr. Cox, whose schools are nearly all small ones, able to write: "It is very rarely that one finds a school where the authority of the teacher is treated with anything but the greatest respect." No better testimony to their tact and good sense need be desired.

I have no desire to depreciate the value of the instruction in woodwork and cookery now given to the pupils of Standards V and VI of the larger schools, but I would again draw attention to the fact that the taking-up of this work curtails the time available for teaching the general studies laid down in the syllabus by about two hours and a half per week on the average. Work for which twenty-five hours a week were formerly available has now to be overtaken in twenty-two hours and a half, though there has been no appreciable diminution in its amount. Under the newly issued regulations for cadets fifty-two hours per year have to be devoted to drill, which means that the time required for this is being increased by a quarter of an hour each week. In this way nearly three hours a week have been cut off from the time formerly available for teaching the general course laid down in the syllabus. In view of this, I am of opinion that the question of lengthening the school hours of the upper classes in our schools calls for serious consideration. An extension of school hours is not likely to be welcomed by teachers, but the example of other educationally enlightened countries may well weigh with us in deciding the question. I am decidedly of opinion that for adequate instruction in such subjects as civics, health, elementary science and agriculture, and singing, more time is needed than can be devoted to them in the larger schools under existing conditions.

Mr. Grierson's report to me for the year discusses at considerable length the general question of school inspection and examination in the district, and I would commend his suggestions to the consideration of the Chief Inspector soon to be appointed by the Board. Regarding the keeping of registers, he writes as follows: "In no other detail of country teachers' duties does the occasion for dissatisfaction so frequently occur as in the marking and keeping of registers. It was necessary in the earlier part of the year to report on a large number of instances of gross carelessness in this direction. Some of the most important records, in some schools, had been entirely neglected. In view of the fact that we had been working under existing conditions for upwards of three years, such a state of affairs was highly discreditable to all responsible for it. In the latter part of the year a marked improvement had taken place. I wish to proffer a word of appreciation and encouragement to those teachers of my district who do not come under this condemnation. In the town schools under my supervision punctilious attention to all such matters prevailed."

Writing of "schemes of work," Mr. Grierson says, "The remarks made under section 'Registers' apply here with equal force. I might add that in many country schools there is still much room for improvement in the fulness, clearness, and arrangement of the schemes."