

interrelation of physical and economic geography, there are still many schools in which the two forms are taught as if the one had no bearing on the other. The chief source of weakness in the teaching of the subject is that there has been too much adherence to text-book information, and too little inquiry into the reasons why certain conditions, physical or political, exist; and how they affect "man and his markets." There is still room for better preparation of lessons; for more readiness in devising simple and easy experiments to illustrate the facts of physical and mathematical geography; and for quick and ready use of diagrams and sketch-maps in all forms of geographical teaching. Ideas and facts may be gained from the text-books, but graphic illustration and experiment should characterize the teaching. Such conditions do exist in a large number of our schools, and in these the teaching of geography is not only interesting but highly effective.

History and Civics.—The work is still unsatisfactory in a large number of schools. Schemes often show no general plan, while in many cases reliance is placed entirely upon a succession of isolated lessons with no connected lines of thought. Too often there is no definite aim, and consequently the results are disappointing. Civics should be taught in connection with the history, and the scheme as drawn up should show how this is to be carried out. A considerable amount of teaching energy might be conserved if the pupils had a suitable text-book, which after the lesson had been given could be used for memorizing facts and recapitulation of subject-matter. History subjects as themes for composition might be used much more extensively.

Handwork.—In view of the growing importance attached to handwork, interest in the subject is gradually increasing. Although nearly all the schools in the district have made an attempt to teach some form of handwork, the results in a great many cases are disappointing. This seems to be largely due to lack of continuity; for subjects are often taken up in one class and dropped in the next. In all schools plasticine and paper-folding should be taken in the junior classes as forming the best media for developing sense of form and colour, whilst in the larger schools other branches might be added. In S3 and S4 cardboard and carton work should be taken as a fitting introduction to more advanced cardboard-work and woodwork. In the upper classes cookery, woodwork, dressmaking, advanced needlework, swimming and life-saving have been taken up; but interest centres principally round the woodwork and domestic-science classes. Although a fairly satisfactory number of schools have been reached, there are still a great many country children who have no opportunity of attending such classes. To meet successfully the demand additional cookery and woodwork centres are necessary. In all districts where baths are available instruction is given in swimming and life-saving, and every credit is due to those teachers who have devoted so much time and trouble to the work.

Agriculture.—In some parts of the district agriculture has been taken up with enthusiasm, and the instructors have every reason to be satisfied with the success which has attended their efforts. There are, however, too many teachers who are carrying on the subject in a half-hearted manner. This is to be regretted, as there is no subject that has greater possibilities. In country districts the work of the school should bear a direct relationship to the life of the community, and hence the teaching of agriculture ought to be regarded not as a "fad" but as a necessity. The instructors are energetic and enthusiastic, and we hope that they will receive every support from the teachers so that agriculture may "come into its own" as an essential subject in our rural school courses.

Nature-study.—In the better types of schools nature-study is a very pleasing subject. It is training the children to observe correctly, fostering a love of nature, and strengthening the reasoning-powers. Round this lesson should revolve much of the work of the lower classes, and by careful correlation and co-ordination its great possibilities made use of. All programmes presented for the standard classes should exhibit a connective and logically conceived course of study. Scraps of lessons or mere details of information have little educational value. Lessons that are too formal and technical fail to interest. For success the teacher must arouse the child's sympathetic interest in the plant and animal life of his surroundings, and in his environment generally.

Teachers.—We again wish to bear testimony to the efficient and loyal service rendered by the teachers of the district. We would especially wish to pay a well-deserved tribute to those who have faithfully discharged their duties in remote and isolated localities. Their responsibility is great, and too often they receive little assistance and encouragement, yet in spite of all difficulties they are conscientiously doing their duty by the backblocks child, and we trust that their spirit of self-sacrifice will meet with a fitting reward when claims for promotion are under consideration. Our teachers as a body have "high ideals and standards by which they regulate their professional conduct," and most of them "can inspire their pupils with proper ideals of life and conduct." It would be a pity if it were otherwise, for these surely are "the responsibilities for which a teacher must give account to the State." As Bagley puts it, "Every teacher who comes in contact with the plastic material that we designate as childhood and youth can add a touch to that creative process—can influence definitely, tangibly, unerringly, the type of manhood and womanhood that is to dominate the succeeding generation."

Board's Staff.—In bringing our report to a close we wish to thank the Board and its officials for the unvarying courtesy shown to us during the year.

We have, &c..

WM. BROCK,	}	Inspectors.
JAS. GIBSON GOW,		
CHAS. D. HARDIE,		
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