

is apt to be overlooked. In the upper classes we notice a tendency on the part of the teacher to spend too much time on preliminary explanation. Instead of endeavouring to anticipate all forms of difficulty, it would be much better to deal with these as they arise, giving the pupil opportunity to surmount unaided as many of them as possible. Mental arithmetic is often unduly slow—*i.e.*, the time allowed for the performance of simple mental operations is frequently too long. Pupils should be taught to perform mental operations with rapidity, and this can be done only by training them to think quickly—*i.e.*, by gradually and judiciously shortening the time allowed for the operation.

Geography.—In many of the small schools this subject gives most discouraging results. It appears to be poorly taught and most imperfectly impressed. A definite amount of work should be covered each week, and pupils should be shown how to make intelligent use of the text-book. Attempts are sometimes made to teach geography by requiring pupils to copy into exercise-books notes written by the teacher on the blackboard, and afterwards commit these to memory without any special or marked reference to the atlas. It is hardly necessary to add that such a method is neither educative in conception nor promising in character, and cannot be followed by satisfactory results.

History and Civics.—Here, again, what is needed is intelligent use of suitable text-books by pupils, supplemented and reinforced by vivid personal instruction by teachers. These remarks apply more particularly to the upper classes; in the lower classes oral instruction should play a much larger part, and much of the teaching should be in the form of story dealing with the lives of the great and notable men and women of the race. History and civics in the smaller schools cannot be regarded as satisfactory.

Drawing and Handwork.—Considerable progress is being made in drawing, the most interesting feature at present being the number of styles in which the pupils choose to record their impressions. The old outline-drawing from a copy has given place to outline from nature itself; and now this latter seems to be yielding place to drawing in light and shade or in appropriate colour, with exact outline suppressed. In many schools initial attempts have been made to sketch the object in its natural environment. Modelling, unfortunately, does not seem to make the same progress as drawing, partly because it is abandoned at too early a stage, and partly because the supply of modelling-material is unduly limited; in many cases neither pupil nor teacher appears to see what achievement is really possible. This is a pity where other facilities are lacking. Modelling in cardboard is making very satisfactory progress by those teachers who have grasped its significance. As in plasticine-modelling, the work has been retarded by deficiency in the supply of material, in quality as well as in quantity.

Nature-study and Science.—Nature-study, we regret to say, is not well taught in quite a number of schools, there being little attempt to make use of local conditions or school surroundings, and the subject being treated as purely of class-room significance. Much of the work in elementary agriculture is disappointing, and only in a minority of the schools is there a really well-kept garden. Considerable improvement is possible in some of the work done under the name of "elementary science," where it would seem that the service as a whole has not made the progress that might reasonably be expected.

We have, &c.,

E. K. MULGAN,	N. T. LAMBOURNE,	} Inspectors.
CHAS. W. GARRARD,	J. W. McILRATH,	
JAMES T. G. COX,	N. R. MCKENZIE,	
G. H. PLUMMER,	M. McLEOD.	
MAURICE PRIESTLEY,	GEO. PITCAITLEY,	

The Director of Education, Wellington.

TARANAKI.

New Plymouth, 22nd February, 1919.

SIR,—

We have the honour to submit the annual report on the public primary schools of the Taranaki Education District and on the private schools inspected.

During the year 158 public schools were in operation. This number was reduced at the end of the year to 154. Of the former number, eighty-five were under the charge of sole teachers. The private schools inspected numbered fifteen, with a total roll of 1,111.

The following is a summary for the whole district of the numbers in the public schools: S7—Number on roll 21, present at annual examination 21; S6—701, 685; S5—904, 886; S4—1,030, 996; S3—1,188, 1,155; S2—1,257, 1,222; S1—1,249, 1,209; preparatory classes—3,695, 3,529; grand total—10,045, 9,703.

Inspection.—The work of inspection was carried out with the usual degree of completeness, except that a number of schools were omitted from the annual visits owing to the early closing of the schools in November. An assistant Inspector was engaged for eight months of the year.

Conditions.—The percentage of the average attendance for the year, based on the average roll number, was 88.4. The reduction on that of the previous year was caused by the prevalence of sickness during the latter part of the year.

The difficulty experienced previously in providing trained teachers with even moderate attainments for the position of sole teacher of the smaller schools, and of junior assistants, has continued