

where greater opportunities are afforded, it is reasonably expected that the scope of the gardening will be considerably extended and, in a greater number of schools, a definite course of instruction instituted. This comment should not obscure the fact that a high measure of success has been achieved by a large proportion of these schools.

Certificates, S6.—The award of certificates was usually based on a test by the Inspector either in the schools or at a central examination. In a few cases the assistance of the organizing teachers was obtained to supervise the examination. The total number of pupils attending in S6 during the latter part of the year was 660. The number of proficiency certificates issued was 471, or 71 per cent. Of competency certificates seventy-six, or 13 per cent., were awarded, seven of these being "endorsed."

Efficiency.—The schools began the year suffering under the disability of the curtailment of the previous school year. In a considerable number of important schools the knowledge of this furnished an incentive to strenuous effort in the direction of thorough preparation in the earlier stages of the work. The result has been a pleasing degree of general efficiency, and several schools have reached even a higher standard than usual. Of 150 schools, seventeen were recorded as very good or excellent, fifty-one as good, sixty-two as satisfactory, and twenty as fair or very fair. In view of the experience of many teachers and the numerous changes in the members of the staff of the district, the general result of the year's operations may be regarded as creditable. It indicates, among other features, that the uncertificated teachers, by earnestness, endeavour, and readiness to accept direction and suggestion, are rendering valuable service. The secret of this success is the observance of gradation in planning the work and in the thoroughness of preparation at each step. It is, on the other hand, due to the neglect of these elements in method that some teachers of experience fail to produce acceptable results.

Course of Instruction.—Reading as an oral exercise maintains a good standard. In a large number of schools the encouragement of general reading receives attention. To ensure a wider opportunity in others the Board is issuing at an early date a further supply of supplementary readers. In the study of the elements of language and in practice in expression the pupils reach a good average degree of attainment.

While in arithmetic a satisfactory general standard is reached, there is still in many schools too much dependence on memorized methods of working. The need of more practice in oral statement and mental effort, and more system in setting out written work, is exemplified in much of the work observed or examined. In the syllabus recently issued there is still further reduction in the amount of work demanded, and it is to be expected that the training of the pupils in method, facility, and accuracy will receive increased attention.

Other Subjects.—Outlines for suggested schemes of work having been issued to the schools under sole teachers, and under the direction of the organizing teachers in most cases, it is hoped that more definite and educative work will result. The drawing and handwork are in these outlines closely correlated, and the teachers are encouraged in geography and history to avoid excessive detail, while following an intelligent treatment of the subjects. Nature-study, mainly incidental in the smaller schools, and in nearly all the larger ones based on school gardening and agriculture, continues to receive general attention. In this, valuable assistance is given by the special instructors in agriculture. The teaching of singing varies largely in amount and character. It is not too much to expect that in the smallest schools the minimum programme carried out should include simple songs tastefully rendered. These should be used to relieve the ordinary school work at such times as the opening and the changing of lessons. In some small schools and in a fair proportion of larger ones notation and special voice-training receive attention. A fuller programme as part of the curriculum of a larger number of schools is demanded by the importance of the subject.

Physical Instruction.—Advance in this important aspect of training is still evident. Late in the year, at fourteen centres, the teachers were brought together for two or three days to take part in "refresher" courses and valuable results are anticipated. While it cannot be said that in all schools there are the keenness and precision that are desirable, there is improvement in this respect, and the instructors report that the general efficiency of the instruction reaches a reasonably high standard.

We have, &c.,

The Director of Education.

A. J. MORTON, } Inspectors of
W. A. BALLANTYNE, } Schools.

WANGANUI.

SIR,

Wanganui, 31st December, 1919.

We have the honour to submit our annual report for the year 1919 on the primary and district high schools in the Wanganui Education District.

Changes in the inspectorial staff rendered it difficult to maintain the continuity of the work of inspection, and it was found impossible to continue the practice of working in subdistricts. In a rapidly developing district such as ours a considerable amount of time is occupied by all the Inspectors, and especially by the Senior Inspector, in the consideration of plans of new buildings, applications for new schools, changes of sites, enlargement of schools, and the like. The extension of our organization along the newer lines, the preparation and production of the teacher's quarterly magazine, conferences with teachers, instructors, and others, the ever-increasing number of private schools—all served to restrict the time we felt should be devoted to the public primary schools. As the end of the year neared we were forced, much to our regret, to omit visiting a number of schools. During the year no time at all could be set apart for study and for discussion, both of which we believe to be most valuable safeguards to an Inspector's efficiency. An attempt was made during the latter part of the year to establish "discussion centres" that would be attended by both Inspectors and teachers; but pressure of work forced us most reluctantly to abandon the idea for the time being. We regret this limitation to our activities, and would again urge the necessity for an increased staff. We are quite sure a staff of four Inspectors could not only be fully employed, but would, with an extension of the work on broader lines, find some difficulty in covering the whole of the ground.