

other words, the structure of his written work will be predetermined by his previously acquired oral habit and practice." Grammar, especially in the smaller schools, was not well taught, the reasons for correction being in many cases wonderful and varied.

On the whole *arithmetic* is carefully and methodically taught, though the teaching of number in some infant classes calls for improvement, and greater attention should be paid to the memorizing of tables—an old-fashioned but helpful exercise. Daily practice in adding mentally lines of simple numbers will do much to teach addition effectively. Mental arithmetic in many schools in parts of the district has still to come into its own, both as a mental training and as an aid to formal arithmetic.

Geography in a fair number of schools is well taught, and attempts made to trace cause and effect, and to show how man utilizes the forces and things of nature in order to live properly. However, there are teachers who do not handle their geography lessons intelligently. There is still too much note work—too much learning from the book. Very rarely in such cases are seen any attempts to devise and use simple apparatus for experimental purposes; very seldom is a class or the school taken into the playground to be shown nature's forces at work in the miniature river-beds, in streams from tiny hill-slopes, in the formation of gorge and plain and lake. It would be well for all to ponder over Dr. Charles Mercier's declaration: "Nothing worth achieving was ever achieved without taking trouble, and if schoolmasters will not take trouble there will be no education."

History and civics vary in quality: in some schools there is effective teaching, but in too many the results are of little value. The lack of success is largely due to the fact that very many of the teachers have little knowledge of the subject beyond what is found in the school text-book. There is need for wider reading so that the teachers may be able to teach the subject on broader lines. The practice of presenting a book instead of a carefully-thought-out scheme cannot be commended, and in future will not be accepted. The encouragement of the reading on the part of the pupils of such books as "Hereward the Wake," "The Last of the Barons," "The White Company," & ., would add interest and create a healthy attitude towards the subject. In quite a large number of schools an intelligent introduction to civics has been given, and care taken to point out the privileges that are enjoyed under the British flag. But still more stress might be laid upon the fact that these privileges entail the discharges of duties and the shouldering of responsibilities. It is very necessary that the feet of our pupils should be guided to the openings of the roads to good citizenship, as strong and insidious forces are at work in certain quarters which may lead sooner or later to disruption of society and of the general happiness of our people.

Although in nature-study very many schools are doing fine work, fresh interest might be aroused if teachers, especially those in country districts, encouraged their pupils to correspond with those in other parts of the district with regard to interesting observations. Such a practice would be one way of correlating nature-study and composition, and would lead to closer communing with nature, and would also be of real moral æsthetic value.

In the primary schools a pleasing feature is a steady improvement in the general appearance of the school-gardens. This is largely due to the earnest enthusiasm and wise direction of the agricultural instructors. Teachers are becoming more interested as they recognize the lasting benefits that will ensue from the courses followed. In two schools at least very fine training in dairy science has been given.

In domestic science there is marked improvement, especially in connection with the scientific aspect of the work. Much credit is due to the supervisor and the instructresses for the energy and enthusiasm with which they have carried out their duties. Praise is also due to those in charge of the woodwork classes. As far as could be judged from hurried visits, the methods are good and the results highly satisfactory. In schools from which the pupils are unable to reach woodwork and cookery classes, carton work and plasticine-modelling are well handled, but in a large number they are simply taught because the syllabus requires such teaching, and naturally the results in these schools are but indifferent. The delay in receiving the supplies of apparatus and material has affected the quality of the handwork in many of the schools.

A very considerable amount of good drawing is presented, the colour work reaching a high standard. In these as in other subjects teachers should show a properly graded scheme, and should present a list of objects to be drawn illustrating suitable gradations in the treatment of the subject.

In many schools the sewing taught is really valuable as a means of training hand and eye, while the future needs of the girls are kept well in view. It is hoped during the coming year that the instrumental drawing of the senior girls will be correlated to some extent with their sewing.

Singing is practised in a good many schools, but is taught in very few. The rendering of a few songs or rounds, and these often repeated from year to year, seem to be all that is attempted. This falls far short of what might be expected. If the teachers would endeavour to cultivate a love of music they would be doing much towards enabling the leisure hours of adults to be spent enjoyably under the refining influence of harmonious sounds.

Physical exercises are regularly carried out in nearly every school. The visits of the Departmental physical instructors have proved corrective and stimulating, and are a means of maintaining a good standard of efficiency in the work. A "refresher course" for teachers has now become most necessary.

During the year the Department saw fit to make provision for organizing-teachers. The success of the experiment lies largely with the teachers appointed. If they are energetic, enthusiastic, and sympathetic there is no doubt as to the success of the step. The position affords much room for initiative, and it is to be hoped that considerable freedom will be allowed, so that the work may be taken on lines that seem most suitable to the district.

During December the new syllabus was issued, and it seems to be generally agreed that its contents are of a most helpful character, but it must always be kept in mind that a good syllabus is not all that is necessary. In this connection we may be allowed to quote from remarks made by Inspector Barry, of Victoria, on rural schools: "The teacher is the central figure in the success of the school, and to her efforts will come either success or failure. As the whole of the programme must be taught, the teacher must read widely, as a thorough acquaintance with all the subjects taught is absolutely necessary. Country children are generally shy and require encouragement, there-