

than a waste of time. The pupils' agriculture and science notebooks show in most cases neat writing and careful drawing. Even our best teachers fail to get independent research on the part of their pupils, though there are isolated instances of this being attempted. An innovation which promises good results is the examining of the science in district high schools' secondary departments by the Board's agriculture instructors, and the passing-on of such to the visiting Inspector before the latter makes his final report in September or October. The fact that these instructors direct the work rather than take it themselves puts them in the position of candid critics. These instructors also file a report on the teaching of agriculture in each primary school visited; a rather more detailed report would be very valuable, while the setting of a short written test in science to Standards V and VI pupils by the instructor would do much to raise the standard of teaching in this subject.

Physical Drill.—The physical instructors have done good work, and by their visits to schools have imbued the teachers with their own enthusiasm. Few teachers, if any, fail to realize the importance of this work; but classes for refresher courses of instruction would be of much benefit to many country teachers, who naturally in this subject need reanimating. In most schools organized games form a part of the school routine. Commendation is also due to those teachers who after school hours and on Saturdays give their time to the supervision of school activities.

Singing.—This is a somewhat disappointing subject. In some schools singing is to the pupils the most pleasant subject of the curriculum, but in a large majority of schools the ability to sing a few songs, often very badly, is considered to be an adequate result of a year's work. Teachers should realize that most children sing, and enjoy the exercise, and there is nothing to prevent pupils from Standard III upwards learning simple part-songs. It is still a cause for regret that the singing of songs does not enter more frequently into the daily work as a relaxation and a mental tonic.

NATIVE PUPILS.—There is a goodly percentage of Native pupils in some of our schools in this district, and we note with pleasure an improvement in their work. It is often difficult to determine, except possibly in composition and grammar, which is the work of the Native and which that of the white pupil. The cleanliness, too, of the Natives calls for commendation, a result which is due, we understand, largely to the visits of the district nurses.

NEATNESS OF PUPILS' WORK.—In the larger and better-staffed schools the written work is usually methodically arranged and neatly written. In many of the smaller country schools, however, the reverse is often the case. It is apparent that a number of teachers fail to appreciate the necessity of training their pupils in habits of neatness and orderliness. In arithmetic particularly, loose and careless setting-out of sums is usually accompanied by gross inaccuracy. The neatness or otherwise of the pupils' work varies directly as the teacher. If he insists upon a high standard of neatness and carefulness at all times he gets it, just as his less exacting brother gets what he will take. Inspectors are faced with some difficulty in trying to raise the quality of the work in this direction, because those teachers who regard writing and figuring merely as a means to an end are hard to convince on the point of neatness. In our opinion this part of school-work supplies one of the most direct means of character-building, and any teacher who neglects it is to some extent failing in his duty to the community and to the State.

HEALTH AND TEMPERANCE.—These subjects are adequately provided for in all the schools. In those that are well staffed a course of work is drawn up and definite lessons are given, while in the smaller schools opportunities are taken by the teacher during suitable lessons of giving incidental talks on these subjects.

THE SERVICE.—In this report we have considered it necessary to criticize adversely the methods adopted by some teachers, and to point out the weaknesses apparent in the teaching of some subjects, and this with the object of raising the standard of efficiency in our schools. We acknowledge the good work done, and we recognize fully the sincere conscientiousness and earnestness of one and all to advance the cause of education.

TARANAKI.

ATTENDANCE.—The regularity of attendance for the year has been good. The percentage for the year indicates that the majority of parents are fully alive to the advantages accruing from daily attendance at school. It ought to be mentioned, however, that the Truant Officer for the district has paid frequent visits to schools where there are found pupils whose parents are somewhat apathetic so far as the educational welfare of their children is concerned.

THE TEACHING STAFF.—In this district there are 348 teachers, excluding pupil-teachers and probationers. Of these, 227 are fully certificated. Most of our uncertificated teachers improve their status year by year, and the Board has made a practice of advertising all positions held by teachers who have not made progress during the year. To enable certificated teachers to qualify fully, Saturday classes in science and drawing were held throughout the year, and a most successful summer school was held during January, 1924. So thorough was the treatment at this school that we are led to think that intensive work of this kind is much more valuable than the training received when the course is spread out over a large part of the year.

During the year the Women Teachers' Association, in conjunction with the Board's officers, arranged a special series of meetings for instruction in infant-room methods by Miss Baster, of Christchurch Training College, and Miss Edwards, of the Kelburn School, Wellington. In this course was included a number of addresses by the Senior Inspector, the headmaster of the Moturoa Observation School, and the Chief Agricultural Instructor. The whole course proved a fine stimulus to all concerned.