

We are particularly well pleased to be able to report that the Education Board and the Taranaki Branch of the Educational Institute have arranged a library scheme, whereby the Board undertakes the circulation of the volumes amongst the teachers. The leading educational magazines and papers will also be available, and there is every prospect that in future the teachers of the district will be supplied with those publications that deal with the latest phases of educational development. It is hoped that during 1924 the observation school at Moturoa and the model country school at Stratford may be profitably used by many teachers.

Largely owing to the efforts of our two organizing teachers, surprisingly good work is done in most of our remote schools, and the teachers are mostly enthusiastic, keen, and thoroughly in earnest. Our time in such schools is largely taken up in teaching, and in exemplifying such methods as seem necessary.

PUPIL-TEACHERS AND PROBATIONERS.—We have continued the practice of gathering at a centre once a year all pupil-teachers and probationers. These are required to teach before their fellow-trainees, who are then asked to criticize and offer suggestions for the improvement of the lesson. We have no hesitation in stating that the skill and ability shown in the handling of the classes, the methods adopted, and the criticisms offered would in many instances do credit to experienced teachers. It is pleasing to record that side by side with the practical training the education of the young teachers has been successfully carried on by the headmasters. The results for the teachers' examinations for 1923 afford ample proof of this statement, for in these examinations the proportion of our young people that qualified for the D certificate was larger than in any previous year.

MODERN TEACHING.—It is our pleasure to record that modern methods have been adopted by many of our teachers. The methods now used, in our infant-rooms especially, have made for much more rapid progress of pupils, and have already done much to lower the percentage of retardates throughout the whole school. Many of our teachers adopted, either partially or wholly, the Dalton system, with modifications, with results that varied considerably, but gave convincing proof that its adoption by inexperienced teachers cannot be recommended. In all our best schools much greater attention is now paid to the progress of the individual. There are still cases where large classes hinder teachers from departing much from the rigid control of the past, but, even with these classes, experiments in freedom have been carried on, usually with much success. In not a few of our schools there is amongst the scholars delightful exchange of opinion, free discussion of the best ways of tackling problems of dealing with passages in reading and verses for recitation, of the facts of geography and history, and of thought-statement in composition. In these cases the teacher is the guide and the director and the final "court of appeal." In some cases, though, we have noticed a tendency to unnecessary discursiveness and to unprofitable use of time by talkative pupils.

THE SYLLABUS.—All teachers, and especially such as are inexperienced, are recommended to read the syllabus frequently and carefully. The appendices therein will be found full of hints that cannot fail to be of very great assistance in any difficulty that may arise.

SPEECH-TRAINING.—We would reiterate our opinion that special attention to speech-training is required in order to preserve the purity of our English speech. We are convinced that oral expression and speech-training should be looked upon as the most important part of the school-work, and every opportunity should be taken to secure natural and correct speech. Almost every subject of the curriculum lends itself to discussion, in which the pupils should be required to express their views freely and fully, and not, as often happens, in short stilted sentences. It is pleasing to record that during the past year, in the large majority of our schools, a decided improvement was noticeable in oral response and in speech-training generally. We would advise all teachers to read carefully the suggestions issued by the Department in Appendix A of the Syllabus of Instruction.

SCHEME OF WORK AND WORK-BOOKS.—There are still many teachers who fail to submit suitable programmes of work, and fail also to secure proper sequence and gradation therein. But in most schools a vast improvement in the compilation of the keeping of the schemes and work-books has been noticed. With the assistance furnished in the syllabus there can be little excuse for such neglect, and in future much more stress will be laid on the proper presentation of schemes and the attention given to work-books. We find that in far too many instances teachers cause themselves unnecessary drudgery—and if work-books are not made out in the proper spirit they are verily a drudgery—by needless daily or weekly repetitions. We have advised that in the general schemes there should be shown the general treatment of new ideas in lessons, together with the revisional treatment of lessons in any subject, and then the "treatment" part of the work-book may refer to these general entries as occasion requires. It is in the "treatment" of lessons that we find the work-book notes most defective.

SUBJECTS OF INSTRUCTION.—*Reading and Recitation.*—These subjects are now being well taught in by far the greater number of our schools. Comprehension of reading-matter has received increased attention—to such an extent that most of the pupils in the upper standards now read not only fluently but intelligently. There is need for closer attention to secure clear articulation and correct enunciation in order that the speech of our children may not be allowed to degenerate. The poems selected for recitation are improving in quality. Our literature abounds with gems of poetry: there is, then, no excuse for compelling school-children to memorize any poetry except that which will be "a joy for ever."

Writing.—We regret to state that this subject is not receiving the attention that its importance warrants. In point of fact, the writing in even some of our largest schools is far from satisfactory—in the upper standards especially. The neglect of careful supervision of *all* written exercises, the common practice of introducing small hand in the lower classes, and the infrequency of formal lessons, are all contributory to the careless writing so frequently seen on our visits. In too many schools careless penholding and wrong bodily positions mar the beauty of the writing produced. And that is true of both teachers and pupils.

Spelling.—A more rational system of teaching spelling is now being employed, and little fault can be found with the work presented during the year. The improvement is, we believe, largely due to the abandonment of the method of teaching from lists of unrelated words, and the return to the sane method of treating each new word in relation to its context. Teachers generally are adopting