

We beg to call the attention of teachers to the remarks on "Handwriting" on page 9 of the February *Education Gazette*.

Two schools teach Latin alone, and three French, while the other four teach both languages, though one is optional. In these subjects the scholars generally make progress varying from satisfactory to good. The "direct method" of teaching in its entirety is not, however, generally adopted. Two languages are required for some professional courses, but with the other subjects of the curriculum a course with two languages is far too heavy for most of the scholars.

We take the liberty of quoting the Matriculation result of one department, one that has been noted for good work in this part of the programme for a number of years. Of eleven pupils presented, ten obtained a full pass, and the eleventh obtained a partial pass, failing in one subject only. While we have been quoting examination results, we do not wish it to be assumed that the work of these secondary departments is to be judged on these results alone. The pupils in these classes are receiving a training in culture and knowledge which examinations alone cannot reveal. These classes also afford an opportunity to many country children of receiving further education which would otherwise be denied them, and on this account alone they deserve to be encouraged.

The order, discipline, and tone generally vary from very good to excellent, and in one department alone can it be said to be only fair. In four of the schools the general work is very good, and in four others it varies from very fair to good. In one school only has the progress been less than satisfactory.

LIBRARY AND PICTURES.—Now that a large number of schools are making more use of continuous readers than formerly, it is imperative that every school should have a good library containing books suitable for every class. In the larger schools each standard should have its own library, from which the pupils should be able, under the direction of the teacher, to take books for silent reading. The subsidies now given by the Department and the Board should encourage Committees to see that the school library is kept up to date in this respect.

Too few schools in the district have taken advantage of the Board's generous subsidy for pictures, and there are still too many schoolrooms whose walls present a drab and uninviting appearance. Good pictures not only brighten the surroundings of the children, but they are a valuable aid to the teacher, and they also afford a good training in the æsthetic sense.

SELF-GOVERNMENT.—We are pleased to see that the number of teachers who recognize the importance of self-government in the school is steadily on the increase. By allotting to the pupils some share in the government of the school, teachers are able to give concreteness to their teaching in civics, and thus make their lessons more effective. By a method of this kind children can more easily be led to form habits of service and responsibility through devotion to their school and to the community.

As our report contains a number, if not "counsels of perfection," of suggestions designed to assist the teachers, it may appear that we have taken more notice of defects than of virtues, but we do not wish it to be assumed that the teachers of Otago have been failing in their duty. The Otago Board is fortunate in having in its service a body of teachers whose devotion to the welfare of the children, both in and out of school, is worthy of all praise, and whose efficient work in their schools is successfully upholding the fine educational spirit which exists in the district.

SOUTHLAND.

The work of inspection has been carried on this year under normal conditions. The August examinations passed off as a matter of history. As a result of the change from January, it has been found much easier to have things ready for the commencement of the school year. All schools from Grade I upwards, except one, were visited once; of the whole number (176), 155 were paid two visits.

STYLE OF EXAMINATION.—Last year we mentioned that it was then too early for us to have formed definite conclusions as to the working of the new system of inspection. On the one hand we are still making investigations as to what should be the minimum to which we may reduce formal examination without endangering general efficiency. On the other hand we find that the opportunities we now have for dealing with teaching method and so on are having a beneficial effect upon school-management as a whole. As regards testing, we feel that it is desirable to touch, even if very briefly, upon as great a number of subjects as possible with any one teacher. A teacher who has worked steadily may feel a want if the results of his efforts are not noticed; one who may have been dilatory will need a spur. We have therefore, more or less frequently, while, in general, allowing the lessons to be taken in the manner prepared by the teacher, used some of our time for the general survey which seems to us to be necessary. Our notifications have, except in a few cases, been confined to our October schools—*i.e.*, those examined from October onward.

PROFICIENCY EXAMINATION.—This year we made our first trial of synchronous examinations in geography and history. We hope next year to be able to give our conclusions in detail. In the largest schools we examined in such subjects as reading and composition at a time previous to the "main" day. This was a saving to Inspectors, teachers, and pupils. Commenting on the quality of the work, we find that the work shown in pupils' drawing-books is generally better done than that given as a test. Science is somewhat inadequate. We are glad to note that the traditional percentage chase is apparently less keen than formerly.

TEACHERS' CLASSES.—We intend this year to try and find time for more frequent visits to Saturday and night classes. We feel that we are too much out of touch with the students and their work. Some of the instructors find difficulty in securing the interest of the students, concerning some of whom there are adverse reports as to careless work and irregular attendance. Adequate steps were taken to deal with such offenders. We note with pleasure that our Gore classes, conducted by