

*Recitation.*—This subject continues to improve. We note increasing signs that our children are being led more and more to appreciate the music of words. Mechanical repetition is, we are glad to say, much less to the fore than it was. The selection of pieces for study is also more in keeping with the age and general capabilities of the pupils.

*Singing.*—General singing tone is improving. As regards method, there should be, in some of the larger schools, a better graded system of exercises in such elements as sight tests, ear tests, breathing, and so on. We note with feelings of regret a more or less general want of appreciation of the value of recreational singing. We should not require to have to point out to a number of our teachers that what is said on page 16 of the syllabus regarding the use of singing to enliven the day requires to be carried out. Such suggestions as these are not put into the syllabus without good and sufficient reason. The laxity here appears even in a few of our larger schools.

*Writing.*—In form we think that the general standard has been more than maintained, but there is a great deal of room for systematic training in speed and fluency by means of suitable exercises.

*Spelling.*—Teachers are giving more thought to the teaching of this subject as against the practice of merely requiring pupils to learn. We are not quite satisfied in our own minds as to the working-out of the principles relating to what words should appear in any list. It may be that the standard of difficulty needs adjustment with a view to bringing in a better relation between a list and a child's vocabulary.

*Composition.*—The standard in this subject is being well maintained—in fact, we notice an improvement in paragraphing and general arrangement. Some of the subjects set for essays by teachers are found to be unsuitable, in that they are beyond the grasp of the average pupil. In composition, as in some other subjects, we think that the imitative powers of children are not sufficiently appreciated. Were it so we should find a more extensive use of model constructions.

*Drawing and Handwork.*—Last year we commented upon the tendency shown by teachers to sacrifice these subjects to the detriment of child-development. This year we are pleased to see the correct viewpoint being more fully appreciated. Many teachers express diffidence about the teaching of drawing and handwork because they themselves feel that their artistic attainments and constructive ability are limited. They also consider that the work done by the pupils is so far short of what is desirable that there is little hope for the average pupil to become proficient. We think this view is entirely wrong. The child's effort, no matter how crude, should be accepted. It is then within the capacity of any teacher to take the pupil's effort and show him how to improve upon it. Teachers can keep ahead of their pupils, and the practice of continual acceptance by the teacher and improvement by the pupil will soon raise the general standard. If pupils cannot draw, it is only in an odd instance that the fault lies with the pupil himself. Regarding correlation, we are taking steps to ensure that all drawing and handwork are an impression of idea in relation to the other subjects of the curriculum and are not taught in isolation. Needlework is a well-taught subject.

*Arithmetic.*—Our ideas upon this subject were set out somewhat fully in our reports upon the Progressive Arithmetics. With arithmetic, perhaps more than with any other subject, is a text-book necessary as a guide to teacher and pupils. It is essential that that text-book fulfil the requirements, as teachers, as a matter of convenience, tend to view it as their standard. They assume that, as a result of the collective opinion of Inspectors and others, we shall in the future have a revision of the present books or another set more suitable to what we feel to be the requirements of the syllabus. Our observations show that scope is generally in need of adjustment, as we have indicated, the consequence being that pupils are often set to do work that has no connection with everyday life whatever. At the same time, we find that arithmetic is, apart from scope, one of the best-taught subjects of the curriculum. Against this is the fact that in nearly all schools the subject has an hour a day. For scope, we feel that teachers are not to blame. This is a matter of syllabus interpretation and is largely guided by text-books. We find that pupils in actual working could in some cases be neater, especially in their working-column. The tendency in this column is towards figuring that is too small, which leads to inaccuracy. Pupils have also not all realized that the figuring should be as neat in the working-column as in any other part of the sum. To these two points we have directed the attention of teachers. On the whole, however, we have no reason to be dissatisfied with the way our teachers are carrying out their obligations towards arithmetic.

*GEOGRAPHY, NATURE-STUDY, SCIENCE.*—We have little to add to what we said last year. In agriculture and geography especially we are not yet satisfied with the amount and kind of practical work.

*HISTORY AND CIVICS.*—We are glad to note that a text-book is to be in the hands of every pupil. The teaching of history has shown a slight improvement since last year. Teachers are beginning to realize that it is not impossible to give every primary-school pupil some idea of the conditions of life in the past. To this end we note an increasing use of pictures, story, dramatic work, and so on. An impression of past life cannot be given to the pupil by means of the old dictated summary: it can be given only by as real a reflection as possible of that past life. We are glad to see sets of historical readers in the various school libraries. These are interesting for the pupils, and are giving them an approach to the varied viewpoint which is necessary in any historical study. A sign of the times is the attempt at the visualization of time in the shape of time-charts which have appeared upon school walls and in pupils' books. These charts are as yet perhaps crude, but we accept them gladly as a basis for whatever improvements experience may suggest.

Lessons in temperance are included in all health schemes, and have received our attention as we have visited the schools.