

The vast majority of the teachers are imbued with a high sense of duty. They display a pleasing willingness to adapt their methods and organization to modern requirements and, where weaknesses are indicated, to adopt the necessary remedial measures. Their untiring efforts in furthering the welfare of the young people under their charge cannot but have good results in the formation of habits of loyalty to duty, of true patriotism, and of sound character, which should form a sure foundation for the life work of the future citizens of the Dominion.

Speech-training.

In this subject the first essential is that the teacher should set a good example. In the second place, the teacher's influence should succeed in establishing in his class a pleasure in listening to good models, a keen ear for correctness, and an earnest desire to speak well. Without these the good effects of work done in school are not carried beyond the doors. This speech-consciousness having been established, a natural consequence will be that the participation by the teacher in school games will tend to check slovenly speech, which may thus in time disappear. Inspectors report favourably upon the progress made in formal speech-training exercises, and remark that good results are more noticeable among the younger pupils. This is only natural, and it may confidently be expected that as these pupils progress through the school they will show continued improvement. Oral expression exhibits, on the whole, only slight improvement, the progress made in many infant departments not being continued in the upper classes. There appears to be too great a tendency to get pupils to write rather than to speak. In everyday life, for which education ought to prepare, clear and correct oral expression is demanded infinitely more often than written expression. Progress in nearly every subject is still hampered by the inability or unwillingness of pupils to discuss the subject with the teacher.

Oral Reading—Recitation.

The Inspectors credit oral reading with some improvement during the year. They are, however, of the opinion that in too many classes undue attention is given to silent reading. To this may be traced one of the outstanding weaknesses that appear when pupils read aloud—namely, the tardy recognition of the less familiar words. Unless silent reading is properly supervised and tested it is possible for some of the time devoted to it to be unprofitably employed. Fine expression in the oral reading seems to have been neglected during recent years; seldom do the Inspectors find in any department of the school the expressive intelligent reading that was so often met with in the larger schools ten or fifteen years ago.

The Inspectors note with appreciation the commendable interest displayed by teachers and pupils in school libraries, and feel certain that valuable work is being done in encouraging reading for pleasure or information. Pupils nowadays explore a wider field of literature in search of poems which appeal to their taste. There is a deeper interest in poetry, and in many of the schools daily studies of poetical and prose selections are skilfully conducted and appreciation of good literature is being developed. The success of these laudable efforts is becoming noticeable in the oral expression of the pupils, but more often in the written expression. Following upon the growth of interest in literature, there is a pleasing advance in recitation, towards a better understanding of diction and rhythm. It is noted that in those schools where children are encouraged to attempt verse-making themselves they are more prone to commit to memory a wide range of poems. In an increasing number of schools dramatic work is attempted, and is being recognized as one of the finest methods of training for correct, pleasant, and natural speech. Play-acting not only appeals to a deeply rooted instinct in children, but it also supplies them with a strong motive for developing speech of high quality.

Handwork.

The teachers generally now recognize in handwork a subject that has definite methods and a culture of its own. There has been during the year ample evidence of intenser study of the various branches of the subject with a view to the introduction of forms which lend themselves to education on lines not only practical, but also aesthetic. The work along well-defined courses with the conventional materials supplied to all schools has been varied by the use of waste materials within immediate reach, such as timber, leather, motor-tubes, flax, raupo, match-boxes, manuka, rushes, sugar-sacks, &c. The practical value of many of the articles thus made gives scope for the creative instincts of the child and provides a valuable incentive to effort; initiative is developed and sound economic habits fostered. In many cases decorative designs, appropriate and artistic, form a pleasing feature of the finished articles. In connection with such subjects as history, geography, nature-study, reading, and stories the children are called upon to give concrete expression to new ideas. Light woodwork, introduced as an experiment in a small number of country schools out of reach of manual-training centres, has been taken up with enthusiasm and has proved a great success.

Health and Temperance.

The good work of the Medical and Dental Branches has added practical interest to the treatment of these subjects, and a marked influence is being exerted upon the pupils in the matter of the formation of sound health habits. Credit is due more particularly to teachers of the preparatory classes who during morning inspection and talks have impressed upon their charges the simple rules of health. We may well take pride in the high standard of cleanly habits of the young people of the Dominion. A glance round the pupils of our schools convinces one that they are, in the matter of