

## Time-Table Difficulties in Ungraded Schools.

BY MISS MABEL FOLKINS.

When a teacher begins a term's work, one of her first thoughts is likely to be, "How am I to find time to teach all the required subjects." There is the problem of teaching eighteen or twenty subjects to half or nearly half as many classes. Many of these subjects may be taught incidentally or in connection with some other lesson, but even then we have an alarming number of subjects, each clamoring for a definite place upon the time-table.

We all have heard much and done much in grouping subjects and classes, and this can often be done with much advantage, especially for drill and review work. But there must be much individual work. In some subjects it seems to be absolutely necessary to explain or prepare and plan work for each one in the class. Also, some pupils require much more attention than others. Many children are willing to work while things go smoothly, but, at the first difficulty, become discouraged or careless, and must be helped out of their difficulties by the teacher. So many calls upon the teacher's time is all the more reason she should economize where possible.

In making out a time-table I have found it advantageous to drop three or four subjects for a time and concentrate attention upon the remainder of the curriculum. The children will begin the "laid over" subjects with greater zest because of the change, and the teacher will be much more likely to think of explanations and illustrations for four or five subjects than for twice that number. One economizer of time is substitution. Probably a lesson in explanation of a rule in arithmetic has been given, and if the next lesson were left until its proper place upon the time-table, much of the former work must needs be gone over again, and, consequently, much time lost. If, however, another arithmetic lesson is substituted for the subject next on the time-table, the arithmetic may be omitted altogether on the following day.

In plant study our plan is to examine a plant one day, usually before the close of the afternoon's session, and the next morning, with the previous lesson fresh in our minds, and with additional facts relating to the plant, which the children have gained outside of school, we go over the study of the plant again. A description is then written, examined, corrections made, if necessary, and this re-written in note books. This has taken a portion of one afternoon session, and probably a large part of the next morning's session, so some of the regular work for that day must be omitted. But I find that this plan gives much better results than if the work had been gone over in three or four shorter lessons given at stated periods.

Oral composition: The story of the reading lesson is to be told. This usually leads to many questions and corrections of answers, and there are two many subjects

to give this a stated place on the time-table. A good plan is to substitute one or more compositions for reading lessons.

Another time-saving device, and also an excellent review, is that of getting an older pupil to explain a problem for some one in the next lower grade. Children will often solve problems for others which they *think* they cannot do if the question is given at first to them. They dislike very much to be conquered by work given to a lower grade. After help is given in this way, I have heard pupils say: "Well, I have done questions like that before, but I never understood the work until now." In trying to make it plain to others, they get a much better understanding of it themselves. Some older pupils will also consider it a mark of confidence if called upon occasionally to hear a recitation. Besides saving time, this will sometimes have a beneficial effect upon the deportment of the pupil in charge of the class. Slate work can sometimes be examined by a pupil who has handed in a correct exercise, or has had his work corrected by the teacher. The examiner will see the necessity of neat and legible work.

Another difficulty which reveals itself more plainly as the term advances is that of maintaining equal proficiency in all the branches. For various reasons the pupils will make much more rapid progress in some subjects than in others; and usually as these subjects are the ones which they like best, or which their parents consider most important, this trouble is more serious than that would at first appear. If the children do not get a reading lesson every day, some parents think they are learning nothing, even though they are already more advanced in that than in the other subjects. But where possible, I would either omit altogether, or give fewer or shorter lessons in those subjects in which the children are more advanced, and spend the added time where most needed.

One of the most important problems for the teacher is that of keeping younger children profitably employed while not in class. In fine summer weather they may spend some time out of doors, and, if their curiosity has been previously aroused by a few questions, they may learn much for themselves in their play. Most children enjoy paper folding, and will soon become very proficient in it. The drawing exercises in the first and second primers afford useful exercises. Both these exercises, however, require some supervision, else the work is done carelessly, and more harm than good results. Committing to memory short memory gems will often prove interesting. I have found this a profitable exercise for older classes as well. Give five or ten minutes, or longer, and then see how many have committed the passage to memory.

Another exigency which the teacher must provide for is, that some pupils will do seat work much more rapidly than others, and, consequently, have some spare time. If some provision is not made, this time will be worse than wasted. What would otherwise be home work may often be fitted in here, or if the children are allowed at these times to have access to a few books or magazines, much useful reading may be done, and this plan may also prove an incentive to rapid work.