

some other subjects. Thus, at two of the seven schools compared, 225 minutes per week were devoted to writing and transcription in the Fourth and Sixth Standards, or, deducting the time allowed for recreation, one-sixth of the whole school time.

While on the subject of time tables I may remark that the regulation which requires them to be suspended on the school walls is invariably observed, but in some schools it can be safely asserted that there the observance ends. When I notice that during my visits the teacher has to keep (as it were) one eye on the clock and the other on the time table which has hung on the walls, as witnessed by its date, for the greater part of the year, or longer, and when no change of lessons is made until after a careful scrutiny of that document, I am forced to conclude that the time table is there as a matter of form, and is no real indication of the manner in which the school time is actually employed. This is the less excusable since the utmost latitude is allowed to teachers in this district with regard to the drawing up of time tables. No attempt has ever been made to force a uniform stereotyped time table upon all teachers; as a rule they have been allowed to exercise their own discretion, and have rarely been called upon to make any important change, excepting in cases where some subject has appeared to me to receive either more or less than its fair proportion of the available school hours. One fifth class time table at a large school was found to have no time assigned to history. The explanation offered was that history formed a portion of the "home lessons." This is tantamount to admitting that it was not taught, in the proper sense of the term, at all. I was consequently not surprised to find that the class, consisting of twenty-three scholars, gained an average of only 11 per cent. of the possible marks. The form assumed by the time tables at the different schools varies considerably. In a few they are beautifully neat, and are enclosed in glazed frames; others are equally neatly made out, but without frames; and some (and these not all at the smallest schools) are carelessly scribbled on a small sheet of paper, sometimes pinned to the wall.

The reference made above to history and geography naturally leads to the question, "How has the removal of these subjects from the list of 'pass' subjects affected the teaching, as shown by the results?" The mean average percentage on geography as a class subject in this district is barely 50, and for history only 34 per cent., and about half the schools fall below the mean in both subjects. The percentage of passes in geography (for the classes in which it is still a pass subject) given on Table V. is 52, and this only includes those who gained 50 per cent. of the possible marks and upwards. This is about equal to the percentage of marks gained last year in the same subject. There can be little doubt therefore that geography, so far as it has been relegated to the list of class subjects, has suffered by the change. The percentage of passes in history last year, when it was a pass subject, was 48, which means that 48 per cent. of those examined gained 50 per cent. (or upwards) of the possible marks. This year the mean percentage for the same subject is 34, and only half the schools equal or exceed this. It may therefore fairly be concluded that history has not received the same attention, on the whole, that it has received in times past. The highest percentage of marks for geography as a class subject was gained at Kanieri (67), as well as the highest for history (52). These figures, of course, represent the mean percentage of the four classes examined in history, and of two in geography. A careful perusal and consideration of that portion of the Minister's last report which refers to inspection will probably correct some misconception on this point, and lead to a more general endeavour to improve this portion of the school work.

Object lessons and elementary science together form another class subject. Nine schools—all the smallest being included in this number—have not attempted anything in the shape of object lessons, and thirteen have presented no classes in elementary science. In these last cases I think the teachers have acted wisely in not attempting more than they could reasonably expect to accomplish. The mean percentage for each school in this class subject ranges from 13 at Gillespie's to 70 at Kumara. The "additional marks" vary from 10 at Lower Kokatahi to 87 at Kumara, the maximum possible being 120. Tables VIII. and IX. give the percentage on the several class subjects, and the additional marks for each school. I have already pointed out to the Board the necessity of providing the larger schools with some chemical and other scientific apparatus, if the teaching of elementary science is to be made of any real value to the scholars.

The mean average percentage on pass subjects and class subjects together gained at the several schools will be found in the first column of figures on Table 7, the percentage of passes taken in making the calculation being the same as that given on Table 4. Class S7 was represented at the schools, and with the following results, the percentage referring to pass subjects only: Kumara presented two, and gained an average percentage of 80; Goldsborough, seven, percentage 67; Stafford, nine, percentage 73; Arahura Road, one, percentage 85; Hokitika, eleven (only eight examined), percentage 66; Blue Spur, two, percentage 77; Kanieri, three, percentage 69; Woodstock, two, percentage 80; Ross, ten, percentage 71.

PREPARATORY CLASS.—The condition of this class in most of the larger schools is fairly satisfactory. Where the school is large enough to allow of a separate class-room for this and Standard I., and has a portion of the staff exclusively devoted to the work, there is little to be desired. In the smaller schools I have sometimes found it necessary to object to the length of time employed in one kind of work, or, rather, divided between a short "spell" of work, followed by a long interval of listless or restless idleness. Children at this stage should never be kept for more than half an hour (at the outside) at the same occupation. It would be far better, if it could be done without unsettling the rest of the school, to allow the little ones frequent intervals in the playground, when they would at least be exercising their bodies instead of sitting or "lolling" in uncomfortable and injurious attitudes for three-quarters of an hour at a time. By a judicious employment of a few minutes between every change of lessons in the other parts of the school, and by occasionally obtaining the assistance of some of the more advanced scholars, the preparatory class could at all events be preserved from mental and physical stagnation, and kept constantly