

1887.
NEW ZEALAND.

EDUCATION : REPORTS OF INSPECTORS OF SCHOOLS.

[In continuation of E.—1B, 1886.]

Presented to both Houses of the General Assembly by Command of His Excellency.

[It has not been thought necessary in all cases to print the tables and those portions of the reports that relate only to particular schools.]

AUCKLAND.

MR. GOODWIN'S REPORT.

SIR,—

Auckland, 21st February, 1887.

I have the honour to submit my report for the year 1886.

The portion of the Auckland Education District allotted to me at the beginning of the year for the purposes of inspection and examination included the city and suburban schools, and those on the south-east and south-west coasts, extending on the one side to Opotiki and on the other to Kawhia. I also examined and inspected the industrial schools at Kohimarama, and St. Mary's, Ponsonby, and the Parnell Orphan Home. I have during the year examined in standards sixty-five schools, and paid fifty-six visits of inspection. I have not been able to find time to visit either the Huia or Great Barrier Schools.

The following table shows the particulars required by Section 13 of the "Standards" with respect to the total number of schools under the control of the Board examined by me. The names of the schools, with the additional particulars required, will be found in the list prepared for the whole district:—

Standard Classes.	Presented.	Absent.	Excepted.	Failed.	Passed.	Average Age of those that passed.	
						Yrs.	mos.
S 7	25	...	...	...	...	...	...
S 6	212	5	7	51	149	14	10
S 5	460	27	31	136	266	13	5
S 4	992	70	50	205	667	12	8
S 3	1,555	101	104	297	1,053	11	5
S 2	1,824	108	155	277	1,284	10	2
S 1	1,537	82	90	141	1,224	9	2
P.	4,070	...	...	...	...	...	...
	10,675	393	437	1,107	4,643	*	

* Mean of average age, 11 years 11 months.

From the above table it will be seen that, of 5,750 scholars who, not coming under the head of "Absent" or "Excepted," should have passed a standard, 4,643, or about 80 per cent., did so pass. These results, as far as standards are concerned, may, I think, be deemed satisfactory.

I must here express my regret that so much importance is attached to "percentages" by parents and teachers. Surely the former should be contented if the general results and work of the school are pronounced "good" or "satisfactory," without urging upon the teacher the necessity of obtaining a record of passes equal or superior to that of some neighbouring school. I believe teachers themselves have been mainly to blame for this. One or two began by getting a notice in the newspaper—favourable, of course—of the results of their annual examination, and others followed. I have been told that in one district the names of all the children who passed were published in the local paper.

It is necessary that parents and Committees should understand that a standard examination is a somewhat rough and ready method of ascertaining that the programme of instruction prescribed

by law has been carried out; and, although these examinations should be conducted with the greatest care, yet the results, as shown by numbers, are not and cannot be a thorough criterion of the state of a school as a place for education as well as instruction, for training as well as teaching.

I have not yet found that the new standards, which came into force at the beginning of the year, have made any great change in the work of our schools. It has become easier, no doubt, to pass in Standard IV., now that history and geography have been withdrawn from the list of pass subjects; and the regulation restricting the Inspectors to problems requiring the application of only one principle has, of course, made the arithmetic in standards below the Fifth lighter. But with these exceptions I do not consider that the work either of pupils or teachers has been materially lessened. The class and additional subjects are now absolutely compulsory. I regret that in the case of small and half-time schools no discretionary power is apparently allowed the Inspector to permit, in cases of real necessity, the omission of one or more of these subjects. I have had but little to do with these schools this year, but I have a vivid recollection of the utter inability of some teachers in very small schools to comply in full with the regulations relating to extra subjects as laid down in the standards in force prior to 1886.

In my report last year I drew attention to defects in the results of the instruction given in certain subjects. I am glad to say that in most of those subjects an improvement has taken place. Reading has been, on the whole, good, and free from such defects as mispronunciation, hurry, and neglect of stops. The work shown in grammar is certainly superior to that of last year. The composition papers, I am sorry to say, still exhibit in many cases gross errors in spelling. That this proceeds from carelessness, and not from ignorance, I am convinced, as the words misspelt are nearly always short and simple ones, and the same classes rarely fail in dictation. The arithmetic work is steadily improving in the direction both of accuracy and intelligence. The concrete mental arithmetic introduced into Standards I. and II. will, I think, have a good effect in preparing those classes for the work of the higher standards. Physical geography is more skilfully taught. In Standard V. I notice a falling off in the knowledge of places of importance on the European Continent. I must repeat what I said in my last report about writing. It certainly is not so good as it was. I notice this in Standard III. particularly. I consider that in almost every case bad writing in the pupils is the direct effect of negligence in the teacher. Very few children will write well without strict supervision: with such supervision few children will write badly. In elementary science more has been done this year than last. In some of the larger schools experimental instruction has been given with fair results. Taking into consideration the great number of separate subjects of instruction now made compulsory, it cannot be expected that in this branch much ground can be covered: it is far more important that the scholars should undergo the intellectual discipline inseparable from the study of natural science. The teaching of agricultural chemistry is attended with many difficulties: many teachers know little or nothing of practical agriculture, and their lessons, being derived from books only, are not likely to be of much value to their pupils. The results in singing and drawing are satisfactory: credit is due to Mr. Robinson, instructor, for the great improvement in scale and geometrical drawing.

The methods of teaching pursued in the schools under notice are, generally speaking, skilful. The classes are handled with firmness, and the teaching—mainly oral—is intelligent. In the smaller schools the defects in teaching and organization arise principally from the failure of the teachers to appreciate the advantages of a judicious grouping of the classes for instruction in certain subjects, and from their not being sufficiently alive to the great distinction between teaching and practising lessons: in many cases time is wasted by the teacher doing for the pupils what they are perfectly able to do for themselves.

As I have, in all my visits of inspection, spoken fully to the teachers upon such faults in organization and teaching as my experience enabled me to detect, I do not think it necessary to extend this report by commenting in detail upon the numerous shortcomings to which young and inexperienced teachers are subject. So far as I have been able to judge, I believe that our schools are doing real work; that the teaching is good in quality and tends to develop the minds of our children. I trust I am not taking too sanguine a view; but it must be remembered that I have no means of comparing the work in our schools with that in any other educational district.

In most of the schools I have found good discipline and behaviour. I have had in one or two instances to call the attention of head teachers to laxity in this respect in the lower classes, in charge of junior teachers; but these cases have been few.

The drill and gymnastics in the town and suburban schools are under the general superintendence of Lieut.-Colonel Mahon. To that officer credit is due for the general proficiency of the children in these departments. Apart from military drill and formal gymnastics, the desk and interior drill of the schools deserves mention: the unseemly scrimmage of boys and girls in lobbies, struggling to reach their places in the class rooms, is a thing of the past; and even on the day of the annual examination, when the ordinary arrangements of the school are somewhat disturbed, I have very seldom indeed had to complain of disorder.

I have, as before, received every assistance from teachers when examining their schools.

The Chairman, Education Board, Auckland.

I have, &c.,

JOHN S. GOODWIN, Inspector.

TARANAKI.

SIR,—

Education Office, New Plymouth, 10th March, 1887.

I have the honour to submit report on the schools of the district for the year ending 31st December, 1886.

On the requisition of the settlers at Waiongona one of the old school buildings at Inglewood

was removed to and re-erected on a suitable site given by them in that district. At the opening the promised attendance was forthcoming, and I am now able to report this school as one of the best attended. Much interest is taken by the children's parents, who show a considerable desire to maintain the school's position in this respect. The new school at Bell Block is in every respect a model one: not only carefully and thoughtfully planned, but erected at a minimum of cost, it compares favourably with any I have yet seen in the colony. The cost of its maintenance should be trifling, as all useless detail has been avoided in construction. Fortunately the majority of the school buildings is well adapted for enlargement; consequently, at Frankley Road and Stratford no great difficulty has been experienced in arranging for the increased attendance. Both buildings are improved by the change, while the discomfort and injury to eyesight by the cross lights from the gables—somebody's hobby in the past—have been very much lessened. The stability of the school building at Opunake has been assured by the recent alterations. Throughout the year applications for schools were received from the settlers in the Tariki Road, Kina Road, Eltham Road, and Waihi Districts. Doubtless, in course of the present year the Board will be in a position to erect schools in the most necessitous and pressing of these localities. The decisions of the Waitara and the New Plymouth Committees will, I hope, also receive attention, as their recommendations would economize teaching power and money, as well as give greater efficiency. I anticipate applications from Norfolk Road, Waipuku, and Egmont Village District Committees for extension of their schools, the attendance at all being in excess of the accommodation. The number of schools open during the year was thirty-five.

In addition to the visits of inspection and examination now required by the new regulations, I have been able to pay special visits to a number of the schools for the purpose of suggesting or criticising methods, and reporting on information required by the Board in respect to buildings or appointments.

At the midwinter vacation the pupil-teachers' examination was held, when eleven attended. As several complete their terms of engagement during the present year, the practice of aiding some of these to attend one of the normal training schools should be followed. The Department has given assistance for this purpose elsewhere, so that I apprehend no difficulty is likely to interfere with what will be a benefit to the teachers in preparing for the certificate examinations and qualifying them to fill their office with success.

Twenty-one candidates competed for the six scholarships offered by the Board at the examination at the Central School, New Plymouth, on the 1st and 2nd December. Ten of the competitors failed to make 25 per cent. of the marks in all subjects: indeed, several, whose nominations had been made without or against the consent of their teachers, were quite unfit for the competition. To bring out the ablest it is necessary to give work that will test the intelligence and teaching of the candidates; consequently those that are unable to take a good position in their own schools need not expect to fare even honourably in a competition where merit only can gain reward. In the schedule of marks the names of those retired are withheld; the candidates' numbers will sufficiently acquaint those concerned or interested. In connection with this examination I remark that one candidate failed to obtain any marks in arithmetic. The time for some change in the regulations affecting scholarships has now come, and it would be well to consider the raising of the standard required to the Fifth, along with an increase of age to fourteen; the value also of one or two scholarships should certainly be increased to meet the difficulties of country competitors. I am certain that the present low rate shuts out many country scholars whose parents cannot afford the expense of providing residence in town.

The increase on the attendance for the year shows about the same advance as on the preceding. At the close of 1885 the register number was 2,261, against 2,368 for December, 1886. An improvement is, however, seen in the average attendance, which has risen from 1,632 to 1,814. This is certainly owing to the greater and more active interest now generally taken in most of the school districts. Another hopeful sign is the increased percentage of attendance on the examination day. Last year it stood at 83 per cent., but has now mounted to 88 per cent.

Returns Nos. 1 and 2 are prepared as required by Regulation 13. No. 1 summarizes the results for the whole district. It will be sufficient here to explain that the age classification, which is far too high, and necessarily must be so for some years to come, does not compare favourably with past returns, especially as the ages of pupils are now computed from the examination month, instead of, as formerly, from a date usually three or four months preceding the examination; also as the return requires the average ages of those that had passed only.

When examining the detailed results for each school, as shown in No. 2, it must be borne in mind that the "percentage of passes" is calculated on the roll number of each school, instead of, as formerly, on the number presented, or the number examined in standards. In the following table the pass percentages for the district are given: those of last year are taken from the departmental report for comparison:—

	Percentage of Passes.			Passes as Percentages of Numbers presented in the several Standards.		
	1884.	1885.	1886.	1884.	1885.	1886.
Standard I.	13·7	13·2	10·9	79·3	72·6	68·3
Standard II.	3·3	11·9	12·6	37·8	56·6	61·6
Standard III.	3·3	6·0	6·6	34·2	46·5	40·9
Standard IV.	1·9	4·1	2·3	38·1	60·2	36·0
Standard V.	0·4	1·1	1·6	28·1	43·8	39·3
Standard VI.	0·1	0·4	0·2	30·0	83·3	35·7
Totals	22·8	36·8	34·2	53·3	59·3	53·7

It will be remembered that in my last report I referred to the improved results of several schools as the outcome of a preparation extending over two years, likewise to the conviction that a corresponding success would not be attained in the then coming year. If Table 2, column 3, be examined it will be observed that there is nearly one-fourth of the presented number attending thirteen schools, which have returned upwards of 61 per cent. of failures, or, in the more familiar terms, 38 per cent. of passes on the number examined in standards, exclusive of the absentees and the excepted. As now computed the latter is 20 per cent. It is evident, therefore, that passes cannot be looked for in the allowed time from some of the teachers in your employ, although the revision of the syllabus has done much towards lessening the difficulty towards a pass. Practically the returns for the year have been reduced by the schools alluded to, and it appears to me better, as there are so many difficulties which time alone will reform, to accept the present outlook than to seek by hasty action a very doubtful remedy. Already changes in the teaching power of several of these have taken place, so that a more hopeful organization, with better efficiency, can safely be expected from them. The percentages on "Class Subjects and Additional Marks" are 34·8 and 32·9 respectively. Only eight schools in the district—Bell Block, Central, Fitzroy, Rahotu, Inglewood, Tikorangi, Waitara East, and Waiongona Schools—are deserving of honourable mention for their work in class subjects, while similar mention may be given to Waitara East, Central, Fitzroy, Waiongona, Bell Block, Inglewood, Rahotu, Egmont Village, Frankley Road, and West Infants' Schools for the positions they take for additional marks.

The percentage of marks for the year is 58, a percentage slightly under last year's return. Fourteen schools, however, have made from 60 to 69 per cent., the "percentage of failures" for the same being 22; thus showing that the work asked for can be well met when schools are efficiently conducted.

PREPARATORY CLASS.—But little practical teaching enters into the instruction of this class. Without any code or suggestive syllabus, which should provide for an accurate groundwork in the rudiments of instruction in the principal subjects, much of the teaching is theoretical and misdirected. It seems to me that until such provision is authorised the work and its inspection cannot be satisfactorily dealt with either by teacher or inspector. Many teachers display a sad want of acquaintance with what may be expected from children; hence it is not an unusual occurrence to hear lessons given without any effort to excite their interest or curiosity. Suitable games, marching, and other exercises, along with the wonderful power of song, ought to take a fair share of the day's occupation; the schoolroom also, by a little exertion, might be made to brighten school life by its attractive and cheerful appearance, instead of the time-discoloured walls repeating the discomfort seen in the restlessness of the little ones. The best classes are usually in the large schools; still, there are two or three of these where there is a great lack of methods and training to good habits.

PASS SUBJECTS.—I have come to the decision that the only way to raise the style of reading is to mark it less leniently than has been done. It appears that to some minds the syllabus is fairly met when the mechanical difficulty is overcome. Articulation, enunciation, attention to pauses, do receive a great deal of attention, but little or any attempt is given to express the sense or the spirit of what is read. Emphasis, save in a very few schools, seems to be altogether forgotten, and it is no unusual event to take the reading throughout a school without a single instance of any approach to expression. My remarks refer chiefly to the senior standards; still, in training the younger children it is preferable to encourage an emphasized style, somewhat overdone, which will in time tone down as they acquire a readier grasp of the subject matter. Questions on the ideas and sentiments, word and phrase meanings of the lessons read were generally answered, especially in the larger schools, with intelligence and vigour. Spelling and dictation continue to be moderately well taught. The tests were fairly exacting, and covered the year's work. Writing steadily improves: this subject in a very good proportion of the schools is rapidly taking a good position. To prevent any misunderstanding at examination, a printed list of the copy books to be used in each standard was issued early in the year. The marks were awarded on a page written during the examination. The slate writing of the First and Second Standards was in some instances marked heavily through the carelessness of the teacher not having seen to the ruling of the slates. In several schools much painstaking effort had been given to this writing, and I cannot but award the first place to the excellent specimens of the Preparatory Third of the Central School at Courtenay Street. The drawing of the First Standard has not been severely dealt with, except in cases where the work either had been neglected or was bad. Where failure in any other subject had occurred, a pass was usually given if the drawing showed anything like promise. On the whole the results were hopeful, and, though I look for much up-hill work in the treatment of the subject as year by year the extra standard is added on, I do not foresee any great embarrassment with the freehand portion. The best papers in arithmetic were those done by Standard III., in which standard many made the maximum marks. Where the teaching was satisfactory the pupils of Standard V. made excellent marks; most of the papers, however, showed much faulty preparation and weak instruction in principles that led to frequent misunderstanding even in the easiest questions. In Standard IV. the commercial questions and problems, especially the first, had been too much restricted to the ordinary tests in compound multiplication. Questions introducing easy fractional parts ought to be largely used, and this work supplemented by simple tests of a like character in mental arithmetic, which is lamentably weak in many schools. A great portion of the examination in Standard I. was done mentally. I regret to say that the altered syllabus seemed to be but poorly understood by some teachers, as I was occasionally unable to get from the class the names of the current coins and their value, or the relative lengths of the foot and the yard drawn approximately on the blackboard. The teaching of subtraction appeared to be the weakest part of the examination in Standard II. I should like to call attention to the method of teaching problems as given in Ricks's Pupil-teacher's Arithmetic, or Mr. Inspector Goyen's text-books. The arrangement in either is excellent, can be easily followed in any standard, and, with careful revision of each group as a

new one is attacked, the trouble and worry to a teacher are reduced to a minimum. A very good plan, followed by successful teachers I know, in introducing a new problem, is to confine the numbers used to factors and multiples in the easiest columns of the multiplication table. The question is written on the blackboard, carefully explained, and worked out. In each subsequent question the numbers are slowly increased until the principle is grasped by the class, when a slate is substituted by the teacher for the blackboard, and a few more worked along with the class, assistance or guidance by reference to the examples on the blackboard being given only when required. Both grammar and composition have met with better treatment than formerly. More intelligence is now sought for in the instruction, and very rarely are papers seen similar to those of past years. The work in composition has been greatly aided by the use of Park's excellent Composition Exercise Books. I am confident that, with fair handling and practice, a good grounding in the art must follow. Several teachers have already expressed to me their surprise and satisfaction with the results after a short use of these books. Geography is now the lowest in the scale of percentages. The subject suffers from the want of that interesting and general information which should be the aim of every teacher to supply. Mere repetition of names without such facts as awaken an intelligent interest will never make it the popular study it can be made. Map-drawing from memory is not insisted upon to any extent; at the Central School, however, much taste and care were observed in the maps, of a useful kind, done throughout the year.

CLASS SUBJECTS.—Drawing was confined to the freehand required for the standards. I was therefore unable to award class marks beyond Standard III. In some schools the teaching had been fairly successful. The work done by the senior standards was treated as extra drawing, and marked under additional subjects. History in Standard III. seems to be gaining in popularity by the introduction of the Royal Story Book, as it certainly was well answered, and appeared to have been suitably prepared. Less was attempted in the other standards; but the examination, which was conducted orally, either by the teacher or myself, afforded evidence of no want of careful instruction. About a third of the schools had prepared elementary science. The want of apparatus is a great hindrance, and until the Board is in a position to provide such I am afraid very little science teaching will be done. The cost of the apparatus cannot be undertaken by the teachers unless they be supplied at an easy rate. Object lessons were insisted upon in all schools; but, in many heard, the want of the knowledge and the needful preparation to put the information simply and clearly before the class were very apparent.

ADDITIONAL SUBJECTS.—The Ladies' Sewing Committee has expressed much satisfaction with the needlework for the year. The requirements are now generally known, and with the recent appointments made, all the schools will in future be represented. Instructions have been issued requiring specimens of knitting, in addition to the needlework, from Standard II. upwards. Very little attention is given to singing, as most of the teachers are unable to give instruction in the subject. Excepting at the Central School, where there is a well-drilled cadet corps, and at two or three others, drill instruction is confined to the ordinary desk or floor drill. The other subjects receive attention with more or less success.

For the past three years I have looked forward to this year's work as the crucial test of the capabilities of the teaching power of the district: the results are neither a surprise nor a disappointment to me. If the district is to take an honourable position, and the instruction be intelligent and efficient, the teacher's experience and training must be seen to. It is useless to expect returns from persons, however well-intentioned in effort or conscientious in discharge of duty they may be: their pupils suffer through their inexperience, and much valuable time is lost. But much of the inefficiency in the district has been removed, and from the steadily increasing numbers of well-conducted schools, I can with all confidence assure the Board of better things than have been realised in the past. At any rate, though the district may not take a high place in the returns of class and additional subjects, its position will in the coming year be materially improved amongst the list of districts in the pass returns.

The Chairman, Board of Education, Taranaki.

I have, &c.,

WILLIAM MURRAY, Inspector.

WANGANUI.

SIR,—

Education Board Office, Wanganui, 15th February, 1887.

I have the honour to submit my report on primary education in the Wanganui District for the year ended the 31st December, 1886.

WORK OF THE YEAR.—During the year I paid 151 visits to various schools, eighty-two being for the purpose of inspection, and sixty-nine for that of examination. The inspection visits were paid chiefly between February and August. At these visits everything in connection with the organization of the schools and with the buildings was looked into and reported upon; but I paid especial attention to the treatment of reading in the lower classes, and in many log books I wrote a good deal upon the methods recommended to be employed in teaching this most important subject. I am glad to be able to state that the examination in standards showed that teachers materially benefited by the suggestions given. During the last week of June I examined thirty-one pupil-teachers for promotion and eight candidates, and in the following month I reported fully to the Board upon the results. I may here state that the weakest points were—in arithmetic, practical work, explanation of four simple rules and of vulgar and decimal fractions, and mensuration; in grammar, want of thorough knowledge of the sentence and of the verb; in geography, ignorance of mathematical and physical geography and of the features of the map of the North Island. The work, however, was better than that of last year. Many pupil-teachers, too, have considerably improved in their style of giving lessons; and some handle, and do very good work with, large classes. At the same time with the pupil-teachers eight candidates were examined for three senior

scholarships and eighteen candidates for three junior scholarships. Twelve of the Board's schools, and one secondary school, Wanganui Collegiate, were represented. The examination showed that practical arithmetic—entailing merely multiplication, addition, &c., of money—and geography were very weak. At the same time some most creditable work was sent in. A few candidates, however, were presented whose papers were very far indeed below the scholarships' requirements. It seems a hopeless task to get pupil-teachers, scholarship candidates, or standard pupils to discriminate between such words as "rise" and "raise," "lie" and "lay," &c. In geography also the majority of candidates either fail, or do not attempt, to answer questions requiring them to name geographical features from one point to another. Further information regarding these examinations may be found in my special reports thereon. During March and April, in addition to paying inspection visits, I examined eleven schools. From the 5th August to the 15th December I was engaged almost daily in examining fifty-eight schools. The examination schedules, together with exhaustive reports, were sent, in duplicate, to the Board and the Committees within a week of the examinations. The work was thus very heavy, extending over the seven days of the week, generally until after midnight. Also, to get through some of the larger schools in the allotted three days, the examination went on from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m., continuously for the Inspector, but not so for the children, as various classes had their recesses at different times. From the 15th to the 21st December I supervised the Government examination of teachers in Wanganui.

ATTENDANCE.—At the close of the school year seventy-five schools (including two half-time schools) were in active operation, having an average weekly roll number of 6,221 and a working average of 4,644, or 74.6 per cent. The roll number shows an increase of 251 and the working average an increase of 211 on the corresponding numbers of 1885, while the percentage of attendance has been much the same for the past three years. Last year I pointed out the serious loss to the Board's revenue on account of the irregularity of pupils, and from the Minister's Report it will be seen that Wanganui occupied a lower position as regards attendance than any other district except Taranaki. Now, this year has seen no improvement. A good deal has been said and written against the syllabus, but undoubtedly one of the greatest difficulties in the way of the success of the present system is irregular attendance. Of course some parents have at times to keep their children at home to help on the farm, and in a few cases bad roads are responsible for irregularity; but truth compels me to state that many parents make no effort to secure the regular and punctual attendance of their children at school. Indeed, parents in some cases appear to be "slaves to the liberties of their children." Again, some parents who have taken an unmerited dislike to a teacher keep their children at home in order to injure him not only with respect to his salary, but also at the annual examination. I know of one large school where, although the instruction is good, seventy children are almost daily absent out of a roll number of under two hundred. Now, what is the effect of this irregular attendance? Children waste not only their own time, but also that of others. In a small school the teacher has to-day six standards; to-morrow Standard I., Standard II., Standard III., and Standard VI., but no Standard IV. and Standard V.; the following day Standard III. and Standard IV. are absent and the remaining classes present; and so on. Or, again, to-day a new rule is commenced in arithmetic with all the pupils in the Standard (VI.) present; to-morrow two, and the next day three, pupils are absent, and so a fortnight goes by before the very first rudiments of the rule are grasped. But how can fairly regular attendance be obtained? Some of the best means are undoubtedly, as I stated in former reports, to intensely interest the children by making the school in the highest degree attractive and the lessons as interesting as possible, to teach well, and to let each pupil see that regularity is a duty which he owes to himself and to others, and that it is closely connected with success. I have known children almost broken-hearted because they were compelled to stop away from school for one afternoon in the year. But, in addition to the above, it will be necessary to interest the parents also, by showing them how the irregular pupil falls behind his class-fellows, becomes discouraged, and loses his self-respect. Again, no cases of absence or unpunctuality should be passed over, and punishment should be inflicted where advisable. It will be found a good plan to give pupils marks for their work and conduct during the week, and on each Monday to place pupils in their seats in the order of the total marks. For irregularity or other breaches of discipline during the week pupils would lose one or more places. With place-taking in oral work I do not at all agree, for it is entirely opposed to teaching, as distinguished from examining, a class by questioning. The issuing of a neat certificate, such as I asked the Board some time ago to supply, to pupils that have attended regularly would, I think, improve the attendance. From the compulsory clauses of the Act little benefit can be derived, so much trouble is there in obtaining a conviction under them, to say nothing of the natural dislike of Committees to put them in force against their neighbours.

EXAMINATION IN STANDARDS.—All schools in the district open for twelve months were examined. The aided schools at Mars Hill and Moutoa were closed for a considerable portion of the year, and Upper Tutaenui was closed at the time set down for its examination owing to the sudden departure of the teacher. These three schools, consequently, were not examined; but I purpose to take them early in the autumn. New schools were opened during the past year at Paraekaretu and Cardiff, and these were inspected, and they will be examined before midwinter. A half-time school was opened at Cheltenham, and with it Kimbolton Road, formerly a full-time school, was made a half-time school. On the days appointed for the examination there were 5,874 children on the rolls of the sixty-nine schools (the six additional schools above mentioned bring the roll number for the district up to 6,221), of whom 3,704, or 63 per cent. (3 per cent. more than in the previous year), were presented for promotion in the six standards, 2,146 were in the preparatory classes, and 24 had passed Standard VI. Of the 3,704 children presented for promotion, 3,449, or 93 per cent., attended and were examined, and 255 were absent; 249 were excepted, 955 failed, and 2,245 passed the requirements. The percentage of failures was 29.8, and the percentage of passes

(calculated, according to the new regulations, upon the number on the school rolls) was 38·2. To compare with last year, however, I give the percentage of passes on the number examined in standards only, omitting exceptions—70·2. In the majority of well-taught schools children appeared to look forward to examination with great pleasure, and the percentage of pupils present increased from 92 in 1885 to 93 in 1886. But some teachers, I am sorry to say, work up their pupils to an unhealthy state of excitement by constantly holding the examination and the Inspector before them in a threatening manner, in place of having the work regularly and well done week by week throughout the year simply because that it should be so done is the bounden duty of teacher and child, irrespective of any passing of standards or of censure or praise from the Inspector. Of the 255 children absent seventy belonged to the three Wanganui town schools. For the whole district the percentage of children absent in each standard was as follows: Standard VI., 12·6; Standard V., 6·7; Standard IV., 8·4; Standard III., 7·2; Standard II., 6·7; Standard I., 5·1. In looking at these percentages, however, it must be borne in mind that bad weather affects the attendance more in the lower than in the higher classes. The majority of absences in Standard I. were due either to this cause or to sickness.

The following table (Table A) gives a condensed summary of the examination results during the past two years, Table B shows the result in each Standard, and Table C (not printed) gives every information with regard to individual schools.

TABLE A.

		1885.	1886.
Number on rolls on days of examination...		5,834	5,874
Not presented for promotion—			
Preparatory classes	...	2,180	2,146
Re-presented	...	110	...
Passed in Standard VI.	...	33	24
		2,323	2,170
Presented in Standards I. to VI., inclusive		3,511	3,704
Percentage of roll number presented	...	60·5	63·0
Examined in Standards I. to VI.	...	3,233	3,449
Absent in standards, although presented	...	278	255
Excepted	...	193	249
Failed	...	974	955
Passed	...	2,066	2,245
Percentage of passes (roll number)		35·4	38·2
Percentage of failures		32·1	29·8
Percentage of passes on number examined in standards		63·9	65·0
Percentage of passes on number examined in standards, omitting exceptions		67·9	70·2

TABLE B.

No. of Schools examined in Standards.	Standard Classes.	Presented.	Absent.	Excepted.	Failed.	Passed.	Average Age of those that passed.	Percentage of Failures in Standards.
							Yrs. mos.	
38	S 7 ...	24	...	...	...	...	...	...
52	S 6 ...	143	18	4	45	76	14 2	37·2
66	S 5 ...	336	23	25	126	162	13 2	43·8
67	S 4 ...	542	46	40	209	247	12 6	45·8
66	S 3 ...	775	56	54	233	432	11 6	35·0
66	S 2 ...	849	57	62	177	553	10 4	24·2
68	S 1 ...	1,059	55	64	165	775	9 0	17·6
	P. ...	2,146	...	...	...	...	...	...
	Totals ...	5,874	255	249	955	2,245	*	29·8

* Mean of average age, 11 years 9 months.

I am glad to see that the number below Standard I. is less than it was in 1885, though the number on the rolls is higher; or, in other words, the percentage of the roll number presented in Standards I. to VI., inclusive, is higher than it was in 1885. The percentage of passes for the district on the number examined in standards, omitting exceptions, has increased from 67·9 in 1885 to 70·2 in 1886; or, to put it in another way, the percentage of failures has decreased from 32·1 to

29·8. Last year, having kept only the total number of exceptions, without reference to particular classes, I cannot compare the percentage of failures in each standard in 1886 with that in 1885; but, on calculating the percentage of passes on the number examined, not omitting exceptions, I find that Standard I. has advanced from 63·7 to 77·1, Standard II. from 63·7 to 69·8, Standard III. has remained much the same, while the percentages in the higher three standards have declined, more especially those in Standard VI. and Standard IV. Undoubtedly much of the work (above all, the arithmetic) in Standard I., Standard II., and Standard III. has greatly improved during the year, and I am not prepared to say that that of the remaining standards, geography and grammar excepted, has at all deteriorated, although the percentages are not so high as formerly. Certainly I do not know that the examination cards were any more difficult as regards subject matter than hitherto, except that there was rather more on the cards. This increase of matter, coupled with the fact that marks from 0 to 50 were used, not from 0 to 10 as formerly, may, perhaps, have made the examination more searching and thorough, and consequently more difficult, than hitherto in the higher standards. Pupils were generally allowed a failure in one subject unless it was very serious failure in reading, spelling, arithmetic, or grammar. I do not think that a pupil, when the majority of his work is intelligent, should be thrown back a year because he fails by a few marks in one subject to reach the limit number required for a pass in that subject. Sometimes I find that the arithmetic of a boy who works only three sums out of seven is superior to that of him who manages four sums. Much the same remark will apply to dictation with reference to the number of misspelled words. I do not, therefore, lay down any hard and fast rule with reference to passing and failing for a standard, provided only that I adhere to the spirit of the standard regulations. The following table (Table D) shows the number of pupils examined and the percentage passed in each of the seven pass subjects: [Not reprinted.] On comparing the table with the corresponding one of last year the most striking points are: The improvements in the reading results in the lower three standards; the serious decline in the spelling results in all classes but Standard I. and Standard II., where they have improved by 9 per cent. and 4 per cent. respectively; the improvement in the writing results in every class; in the arithmetic results the improvement in Standard I. (12 per cent.), Standard II., Standard III., and Standard V., and the serious decline in Standard IV. (sixty-one to forty-nine) and Standard VI.; in the grammar results the decline in all classes; and, lastly, the extraordinary falling off in the geography results in Standard V. (seventy-eight to forty-eight) and Standard VI. (eighty-nine to fifty-five). I shall now refer more particularly to the various subjects under their separate headings.

READING.—As already stated, I paid particular attention on my visits of inspection to the teaching of this subject in the lower classes, and it has, in consequence, I am glad to be able to say, much improved in Standard I. and Standard II. at those schools where pupil-teachers are employed. I limit my remark as regards improvement, because I find in the majority of schools under one teacher the same old errors that I have been fighting against for three years are perpetuated, and no effort appears to be made to eradicate them; in fact, reading is merely heard, not taught. In such schools pupils, when familiar with the words, rush along regardless not only of the logical divisions of the sentence, but also of the period and paragraph; and, as the sentence generally begins with an easy word, it is after such word that the pupil comes to a stop. Thus, in Standard I. reading-book, in the sentence, "Edith took her little sister to play on the sands by the sea shore," I get from the very backward boy the sentence read word by word; from the boy familiar with the text, the sentence raced through; from the ordinary boy, the following: "Edith tooker-little sister to—play on the—sands by the—seasho." But this is what is wanted: "Edith took—her little sister—to play—on the sands—by—the sea shore." [*The short dash illustrates a slighter pause than the long dash.*] Neglect of pauses and stops is due, firstly, to their not being attended to on the reading cards in the preparatory classes, and, secondly, to the teacher, in place of setting the pupils a good model when they advance into the standard classes, allowing them to jerk out at their will as many words as they know at first sight, and to spell those with which they are not familiar. In Standard IV. I have now for three years found so many pupils unable to make out the words of the text that I must come to the conclusion that either the book in use is too difficult, or that sufficient time is not devoted to reading. This inability, however, to make out words is due in a large measure to pupils not being trained from the first to recognise the sounds of letters and syllables, and to look before them at the end of the sentence and paragraph. In Standard V. and Standard VI. pupils seldom read as if they thoroughly understood the sense of the passages and the parts of the sentence. Not only would reading, but also composition and grammar, be materially benefited if a great deal of attention were paid to analysis and synthesis. A senior boy who is unable to see at once the principal verb in a sentence, and to distinguish the enlargement of a subject from a co-ordinate sentence, or from a clause, or a participle from a finite verb, cannot, in my opinion, read intelligently. Some pupils have got into such a habit of disregarding the pauses and of slurring the final and initial consonants that they have contracted quite a lisp. I am afraid the subject-matter of the reading-lessons—the truly intellectual portion of the work—received little attention during the year. Seldom could I obtain more than the meaning of one word (often not that), and even then only a corresponding word given, without any statement. Thus, at five schools examined on successive days I put on the Sixth Standard at each school in the same piece, "Colonial Loyalty;" but not one pupil in the five classes could tell what the title meant. Again, in Standard IV., in the piece, "Anecdotes of Washington," to tell who Washington was or the meaning of "anecdotes" was beyond many. Again, in Standard III., in a chapter on Wellington and Bonaparte, many pupils failed to tell who such men were, or for what they were remarkable. There is, therefore, no doubt that if the regulation with regard to intelligent reading had been rigidly enforced, the percentage of passes in the subject would be lower than it now is. Some people say that by enforcing this regulation Inspectors can bring the reading in schools to whatever pitch of excellence they wish. This statement, however, assumes that all teachers are able, and have time, to teach

finished reading. Such people, also, do not reflect how little support an Inspector who failed a whole class for lack of intelligence in reading would get from Committees, parents, and, perhaps, the Board itself. I should like to see some attention paid to impressing upon the children the moral lessons contained in many of the pieces in the books. In the preparatory classes many teachers now recognise the fact that Nature instructs her pupils by presenting to them wholes, to be resolved into their elements; and so such teachers employ the "look and say" method in teaching reading, while they exercise the child's analytical and inductive faculties by a combination of this method with the phonetic. A few teachers, however, still adhere to the old plan of drawing so largely on a child's faith as to ask him to believe that *tea—aitch—oh—you—gee—aitch—tea* spells "thought," or *bee—a—bee—wy* "baby." Such teachers, when a child is unable to read a word, ask him to spell it. But, in place of that, they should print the word on the blackboard, get the class to look at the word and pronounce it, and then impress the main sound on the class by frequently changing the initial consonant, and by having the words so formed pronounced.

SPELLING.—In Standard I. and Standard II. pupils were examined orally at all schools except those in Wanganui, where the words were dictated and the pupils wrote them on their slates. The percentages show that, as far as passes go, these standards have much improved. However, the old fault, rote learning, was still apparent even in the best schools; for when pupils did not know how to spell a word, absurd combinations of letters were made. I always forgive a boy for making an error through spelling a word phonetically—indeed, I rather like to see him make such an error; but a meaningless jumble of consonants shows bad training. In Standard III. spelling was judged by dictation alone, given by the teacher from the reading-book of Standard II., a passage almost wholly free from difficult words being selected by myself. The results were often bad, sometimes incredibly so. It was in easy monosyllables, such as "saw," "break," "broke," "knew," that pupils most frequently broke down. Some teachers excused failure on the ground that pupils would spell better in the text of their own reading-book. Truly there is little education, little mental training, in a system that leads children to spell words in a known connection only, or in one book only! No doubt many of the mistakes were the result of carelessness: but then carelessness is a bad fault, while ignorance may be excusable; and if pupils are not careful on examination days, they certainly are not careful on ordinary days. In Standard IV. the spelling was very moderate, and sentences were not recognised; but pupils were not failed for the latter shortcoming. In Standard V. and Standard VI. the spelling was very fair on the dictation papers, but would have been better if pupils had only looked over their work. Many who spelled well in dictation were very careless in other written subjects. I may here state that not one pupil in twenty of all I examine appears to look carefully over his written work in any subject.

WRITING.—In the majority of schools the writing was very good indeed. In only two large and about eight small schools could I find no improvement. Those teachers that train the youngest pupils to draw clean, straight lines at the proper slope, and to form the letters correctly in every particular, find no difficulty with writing in the higher classes. In some schools—notably Normanby, Hawera, and Wanganui Infants—the writing in the preparatory classes was wonderfully good. In the first mentioned school the figuring in these classes was almost perfect. In Standard II., in many cases, slate transcription should have been more careful as regards spelling, capital letters, punctuation, and paragraphs. For good writing throughout all classes I give the palm to Feilding, Waverley, and Normanby. At some schools, while there is plenty of evidence that considerable attention is devoted to the formation of the letters, the writing is too upright and scratchy, and is lacking in firmness.

ARITHMETIC.—In Standard I. the results in arithmetic showed a marked improvement by 12 per cent., and the work was put down in a much better manner than in former years. Most teachers carry their pupils in this standard beyond the requirements. This is all very well, provided that the pupils thoroughly understand and can apply multiplication and addition. In Standard II. also there was some improvement, but notation, as usual, was weak. Again, most of the class would work correctly "Subtract 70,804 from 906,375;" but if the sum were stated, "What is the difference between 906,375 and 70,804?" half the class would probably put the larger under the small number. Or, again, "Divide 292,315 by 5" would be worked correctly; but in "I have 292,315 apples to divide equally amongst five boys: how many will each receive?" several of the class would use multiplication. In Standard III. a very manifest improvement was shown in the working of problems. Inaccuracy in addition of money and inability to work simple long division and long multiplication were the most frequent causes of failure. In Standard IV. the results showed a great decline, in Standard V. a slight improvement, and in Standard VI. a slight decline, on those of last year. In the best of the larger schools the arithmetic in these higher three standards was very fair; but, on account of its being bad year after year in so many schools in these standards, and after carefully noting the style of errors made, I must come to the conclusion that the syllabus is too extended. In Standard IV. this is very apparent, for few pupils can manage compound practice or square measure. Perhaps, then, when a Standard VII. is formed, these two rules (excepting square links, square chains, and acres in square measure) might be left out of Standard IV. syllabus. With regard to methods, in my last report I pointed out that all data, values of lines, &c., should be written down, and sums worked in a logical fashion. Some teachers have carefully taught their pupils in this style, with excellent results. At Waverley, where every pupil wrote the value of each line, so that the sum could be followed without reference to the question, and worked by first principles, the arithmetic was the best I have seen. At this school seventy-three pupils out of eighty-nine passed in this subject, and the passes, as a rule, were very strong, many clearing the cards. Mental arithmetic appeared to have been very much neglected. In Standard I. and Standard II., and sometimes even in Standard III., counting on fingers was very prevalent. In Standard III. and Standard IV., such questions as, "What is the cost of nine yards at 6d. per yard?" "Divide a pound amongst three people," "I spent 3s. 6d.: what change had I left

out of 10s.?" generally puzzled the majority. Pupils appeared to me to be ignorant of how to set about working such sums, or to be unable to concentrate their attention upon working them. There is no doubt arithmetic would be far better than it is if there were more mental work and more blackboard work. As soon as fairly mechanical accuracy is obtained, no sums should be given that do not require more or less thought to enable the pupil to set about working them. The lesson should frequently be introduced by mental work; but this, again, is of no use unless the pupils understand the processes. An example will explain my meaning. After Standard III. pupils have fairly mastered the mechanical work in subtraction of money, the teacher desires to give them a problem like the following: "A house and its furniture cost £1,000: the furniture cost £378 15s. 6d.; what did the house cost?" Now, should the teacher dictate the sum at once to the class he will probably find more pupils will add the amounts than will subtract. He should, however, first give an easy mental sum, such as, "A horse and cart cost £50: the horse cost £20; what did the cart cost?" Probably every pupil in the class would know the answer, £30; but this is of no use, for still few would be able either to clearly explain how they got the answer, or to work the first problem. What the teacher, therefore, requires to do is, to educe from the class, and write upon the blackboard, the following:—

Cost of horse and cart	...	=	£50.
Cost of horse	...	=	£20.
∴ Cost of cart	...	=	£50 - £20 = £30.

This is what I call working a sum in an intelligent fashion. The teacher should seldom be satisfied with the mere answer. After a few more simple examples like the above have been given the first problem is dictated, and it will be found that, if the majority do not get the answer, they have at least set about working the sum correctly, which latter, after all, is the intellectual part of the work. On the examination schedules of most schools I wrote numerous examples of methods in teaching arithmetic.

GRAMMAR.—The results in grammar show a serious decline in the higher three standards, and this subject, perhaps, as well as arithmetic, points to the advisability of another standard. Thus I find every year that fully three-fourths of Standard IV. pupils completely fail to grasp the inflexions of noun and pronoun, while in Standard V. the same difficulty is experienced with the inflexions of the verb. Of course, that pupils cannot tell whether the word "children" is singular or plural, the word "me" nominative or objective, that they parse a participle in "—ing" as present indicative on one line and past indicative on the next—all this shows defective training and great want of thought. But, still, there is the fact; and if other districts have similar experiences to the above, it would be better to extend the requirements over more classes than to perpetuate shams. Standard IV. pupils generally failed in the parts of speech that required thought to distinguish them, through not noting the functions of the words—telling, naming, describing, limiting, &c. In Standard VI. analysis of complex sentences was generally beyond the power of the pupils. Not only would grammar, but also composition, be benefited, if simple analysis were begun earlier than at present.

COMPOSITION.—In letter-writing I found considerable improvement in beginning and ending letters. The subjects for composition, too, were often well handled. Still, however, sentences commenced with small letters or with the everlasting pronouns, "it" and "they," were far too common an experience, and in the higher classes ideas about punctuation were very vague. For composition I should like to see only such subjects given as would draw out the pupil's powers of observation and description. When treating such a subject as "The Elephant" the pupil merely reproduces information given, in something like the following manner: "The elephant is a quadruped. It is found in India and Africa. It has a trunk and two tusks," &c. Now, work of this class ought to teach the pupil the formation of sentences and the use of capitals (that, through bad management, it does not is an every-day experience), and also by means of it a pupil may be led to connect his statements by means of conjunctions, relative pronouns, &c.; but such work is not true composition. How much better would it be to ask a boy to give his own ideas on the appearance of a mountain, the bush, a rata tree, &c.; to describe how he spent a holiday, how he enjoyed a ride, how he played a game, his father's farm—in fact, anything that would bring out his own ideas, not those he had received from his teacher! Transcription might be made a valuable means for improving composition, grammar, reading, and spelling. The pupil should carefully notice everything in connection with the passage transcribed, and no mistake of any kind is excusable. But transcription is almost useless unless a few minutes towards the end of the lesson are devoted to oral work, the teacher educing from, and impressing upon, the class matters of importance, such as paragraphs and sentences, capitals and punctuation marks, use of "'s," peculiar spellings, &c. If this system were pursued pupils that have been transcribing for four years would not be incapable, for instance, of distinguishing the possessive from the nominative case. I think it is Mr. Payne who points out that a child who has thoroughly mastered five or six pages of a reading book mainly by his own powers of observation, analysis, and synthesis, which powers were so directed by the teacher that the child was hardly aware how much he had himself discovered, how much he had been told (the art of true education), is, *pro tanto*, an educated person.

GEOGRAPHY.—In Standard II., except at a few schools, geography in no way suffered from being made a class subject. The term "map" was seldom clearly understood, but otherwise the work was generally good. In Standard III. the slate work was neater and better than formerly, but often the oral examination betrayed great ignorance of local geography. I call to mind a very large class examined in a room from the windows of which the Tararua Mountains could plainly be seen, as they were only a few miles distant, yet not one pupil could name them. A very common error in this standard was the confusion of the names of the provincial districts, as Otago and Canterbury, with the names of towns. In Standard IV. a peculiar experience of the work was that pupils almost invariably showed a more intimate knowledge of the features of the South Island than of those of their own district. In treating capitals in this standard particular attention should be paid

to such important countries as Canada, United States, &c. In Standard V. and Standard VI. the work was strangely weak in everything but knowledge of the position of places. I found questions dealing with mountain systems and river systems generally ignored, because, I presume, the terms were not understood. In treating any country the teacher might first introduce his pupils to its people, their habits, &c., and then proceed to its physical features. The object lessons in the lower standards on animal and vegetable productions ought to be a valuable help to physical geography in the higher.

HISTORY.—In some schools I found history had been almost wholly neglected; in a few the work was good. In Standard III. events were seldom well chosen. Of what importance are the Gunpowder Plot and the South Sea Bubble (favourite events) in comparison with the union of the Crowns, the Revolution, the planting of the English colonies in America, and the foundation of the British Empire in Canada and India? It appears to me that in history, as in everything else, pupils should be gradually led from the known to the unknown. Thus, in Standard III. they might first be drawn out to name some of the greatest Empires of the present day in Europe; then the ancient Roman Empire would be touched upon, and its boundaries would be pointed out on the map; a general of modern times would be compared with Julius Cæsar, New Zealand as a province of the British Empire with Britain as a province of the Roman Empire, the British Governor in New Zealand with the Roman Governor in Britain, the Maoris with the Britons, and so on, until pupils had intelligent ideas of our great Empire. In most schools the Third Standard was examined somewhat after the preceding style. At Wanganui Boys' School the pupils knew their work in a most intelligent manner; but at some schools pupils were ignorant of the Queen's name, at many of the Governor's name. At one school, upon asking who was the Governor of the colony, I was gravely informed "Yourself," while at many schools some boys pinned their faith to Sir Julius Vogel, and others had a weakness for Major Atkinson. Want of knowledge of this kind appears to me to clearly show that history is not well taught, with proper illustrations. In Standard VI. more attention should be paid to "government." Also, I am inclined to think that in neither history nor geography is sufficient importance attached to the growth, position, &c., of the various portions of the British Empire.

EXTRA SUBJECTS.—An effort has been made to teach physical science in nearly all the schools, but only in a few has much success been achieved. Results in this important subject would perhaps be better if a more limited and more fully defined programme than the present one were laid down. Naturally enough, many teachers have little knowledge of physical sciences beside that which they have obtained from text-books (Professor Huxley says, "Mere book learning in physical science is a sham and a delusion"), and an unaided teacher, with five or six standards in his school, finds a difficulty in getting time for science. In treating the subject it should, above all, be remembered that true science teaching consists in getting a pupil to investigate, discover, and invent for himself. "The only basis of science teaching is the method of investigation."—Object lessons have been treated at all the schools. I am afraid, however, that they are not made a means for the culture of the observing powers. There is often no relation between the object of one lesson and that of the next; words are taught, not things; the pupil is told, in place of being led to feel, to smell, to taste, &c., for himself. Again, much time is wasted in giving pupils of from seven to eleven years old such information as "A cow has four legs, and gives us milk and butter," or "An elephant has a trunk and two tusks;" while probably not one pupil has been led to observe the radical differences between the hoof of a cow and the hoof of a horse, the hind leg of an elephant and the hind leg of a horse. Notes of all science and object lessons, made before their delivery, should be kept. I recommend all teachers to procure and read carefully a little book entitled "An Essay on the Culture of the Observing Powers of Children," by Eliza Youmans. The "Typical Lesson in Mechanics" in the supplement by the editor shows clearly how science may be used to exercise the powers of perception, reflection, comparison, and reasoning—in fact, how science may be made an instrument of intellectual culture.—Singing is well taught in many schools. The singing and drill of the infants' classes at Hawera, Wanganui, Terrace End, and Normanby were very pleasing.—Needlework was very satisfactory in most of the schools, but in some all the requirements of the syllabus were not reached.

ORGANIZATION.—After my visits of inspection I reported fully to the Board upon the organization of each school, and duplicate copies of the reports were sent to the teachers through their Committees. The organization in many small schools is weak. Classes are left too much to themselves. Certain tasks are set to be done by some classes on slates or paper, while the master takes another class orally; and, paying no heed to the pupils in desks, he gives to this one class his exclusive attention, in place of keeping every pupil in the room under his eye. Slate work is either not examined or is examined in a very perfunctory manner, and the child is not made sure of the ground covered by the written lesson. In this district an average daily attendance for the quarter of fifty (recently lowered from sixty-two on my recommendation) is required before any assistance is given to a principal teacher. I think that, in deciding when assistance should be given, something more than the average attendance should be considered. Thus, a school with only three standards may have as high an average as a school with six standards; but the latter has far more need for a pupil-teacher than the former. Again, the average is often temporarily lowered by an epidemic. It will, then, readily be seen that a teacher unaided, with six standards and two preparatory classes to teach, has no easy task to keep all employed and to examine all written work. Such, however, can be done with good management. It is very important that the time-table should be so arranged that the teacher can devote a few minutes to examining written work, and to impressing upon the class the principal features of the lesson by sharp questioning and the use of the blackboard. This, it appears to me, can be best accomplished by taking several classes in the same subject at the same time, slate work and oral work being alternated. Thus, in a grammar lesson to Standard IV., Standard V., and Standard VI., while Standard IV. pupils are

writing upon their slates the parts of speech in a sentence, Standard V. and Standard VI. are parsing orally the same sentence with the teacher; then, when the teacher proceeds to examine the written work of Standard IV. and to teach the class for a few minutes, Standard V. and Standard VI. show upon their slates how they have benefited by their former oral work. This method could sometimes be diversified by taking the three classes together orally, when a healthy spirit of emulation could easily be engendered amongst them, and a good deal of the work of the higher standards would be anticipated in the lower. Slate work had better not be done at all if it is not carefully examined. I also found that the preparatory classes wasted a good deal of their time in scribbling upon their slates. In some cases more frequent or longer intervals of play might be given to these classes. As to the behaviour of the pupils, it was on examination days very good at most schools. The unvarying courtesy of the pupils I meet in the Wanganui streets is very pleasing to notice. I only wish I could make the same remark with regard to the pupils in other towns. On my inspection visits I frequently found a great deal of petty disorder in the small schools through pupils being left too much to themselves, and through their not at all times being kept busily employed. In small class rooms it ought not to be difficult for teachers to keep their ears awake for every movement, and to hold each pupil in the room under their eyes. But the latter is impossible as long as teachers sit down during their work and place a class before them on the floor. Success in school management depends upon watchful and unremitting attention to little details. The custom of allowing pupils to answer indiscriminately, still pursued by some teachers, is responsible for a certain amount of disorder in some schools. Such a custom is entirely opposed to the undeniable principles that the main object of a teacher is to get every pupil to think, and that learning should be self-teaching.

SCHOOL BUILDINGS.—Most of the buildings are in good order, and several large additions and improvements have been effected during the year. Many teachers keep their class-rooms very neat, and in a few schools the children appear to take much pride in looking after their desks. Some of the playgrounds are in a very untidy state, in place of their being a pattern to the neighbourhood.

PROBATIONERS.—In my last report I pointed out the advisability of appointing young men and young women as teachers on probation at some of the largest schools, where they might gain some insight into school management. During the year the Board appointed several such probationers. Little advantage, however, was derived from the appointments, for the head teachers at the schools where the probationers attended were unable to devote any time to their training owing to the present system of staffing the schools. It appears to me that, at all events, the very largest schools—Wanganui (two), Hawera, and Palmerston—should be officered in such a manner that each head teacher, in place of being obliged to teach a class daily, could devote a great deal of his time to looking after the training of his subordinates and the general working of his school.

THE SYLLABUS.—As the new syllabus has now had a year's trial, I cannot close this report without some reference to it. Standard I. and Standard II. found little difficulty with the drawing. In the higher classes I recommended that for the first year some of the elementary books should be used. I am afraid little progress can be expected above Standard II. in those schools where the teachers themselves are not proficient in the subject. The introduction of the new tables into the work of Standard I. and Standard II. was a step in the right direction. Children found no difficulty in them, except at a few schools where to teach them had been forgotten. In my report of 1884 I pointed out how easily these tables might be used with advantage in the lower classes. Few teachers took advantage of the regulation allowing Standard IV. and Standard V. to be taught together in the history and geography of Standard V., and in the case of those that did I generally found that Standard V. geography was too difficult for Standard IV. pupils. Mapping in Standard IV. deteriorated very much, whether because geography was made a class subject in this standard, or for some other reason, I know not. Speaking on behalf of the small schools more particularly, perhaps a Seventh Standard would be an advantage, for I find that the majority of pupils in Standard IV., Standard V., and Standard VI. do not get a thoroughly intelligent grasp of the arithmetic and grammar as laid down in the present syllabus. Perhaps, too, if teachers had less ground to cover in a given time more attention would be paid to true education—the training and development of the mind—to which the acquisition of useful knowledge, however important and valuable it may be, should be entirely secondary and subsidiary. When too much is attempted in a limited time education suffers. Comprehension, not apprehension, is what is needed—*multum*, not *multa*. There is no doubt that now oral questioning and answering is altogether too hurried, and, consequently, the ground attempted is not thoroughly covered and made sure of. Children, in answer to questions, throw out one or two disconnected words; these the teacher accepts, and he fills in the gaps himself. By-and-by the pupil is asked to express his thoughts in writing on some subject treated, or the examination day comes round, and it is found that he is utterly unable to write a readable sentence. The teacher is astonished, and says, "Why, you told me all about it a few days ago!" But, in reality, it was the teacher told the pupil. Again, with a Seventh Standard on the syllabus, more time could be devoted to reading. I am of opinion that at least two reading books should be mastered in the year, the one being a geographical, historical, or natural history reader. Some of Messrs. Blackie and Son's books—"Readings from Scott," "Readings from the *Spectator*," "The Shakespeare Reader," "The Newspaper Reader," &c.—are very suitable for a school library.

In conclusion I desire to bear witness not only to the conscientious work of many teachers, but also to the desire manifested by the majority to improve their methods of teaching, to receive any assistance I may be fortunate enough to be able to give, and to carry out suggestions. Of course there are, and, I suppose, always will be, a few teachers who think themselves beyond improvement, and, naturally enough, their schools do not progress; but teachers of this class are few in

number. The unaided teacher in a small country school, with six standards to teach, and a heavy syllabus and irregular attendance to contend with, has no easy task; and all honour is due to him who surmounts all his difficulties. The fact that an Inspector has not time for more frequent and longer visits of inspection, at which he could consult with and advise his teachers, has always appeared to me to be a weakness in the present system. Again, if the syllabus were somewhat lightened, perhaps there would be more true education and less preparation for standards. When children are regularly and systematically educated the standard examination takes care of itself.

I have, &c.,

W. H. VEREKER-BINDON, M.A., Inspector.

The Chairman, Board of Education, Wanganui.

WELLINGTON.

SIR,—

Wellington, 28th February, 1887.

I have the honour to present my thirteenth annual report on the working condition of the primary schools in this district.

The present system of education in the colony, which is now assuming a fairly complete form, is the development and, I may say with confidence, the natural growth of that which was inaugurated by the Board twelve or fourteen years ago. Most of the details of work under the system are now so fully laid down that my duty is mainly to satisfy you that the teachers are faithfully discharging their duty in working out the present syllabus not only to the best of their ability, but, as far as possible, in such a manner as to obtain the best attainable results. Every year brings in its train a set of features which, if not altogether previously unseen under a different aspect, are well worthy of note; but it will be understood that, when the whole machinery is in fair motion, the action of the parts moving most evenly and smoothly may not call for the most consideration.

The increase in the roll number for the year is 601, the number of children attending our schools being 8,836, as compared with 8,235 last year. The number of schools in operation is sixty-four, being one more than last year. Two small aided schools were opened—one at Paikakariki and one at Mangaone; and the aided school at Bideford was closed. The increase in the attendance is nearly wholly found in the larger schools, and more particularly in those at Mount Cook and Te Aro, which are becoming overcrowded. I have not included Otaki in my returns, as it was brought into the district too late in the year to admit of its being examined.

Before I can put before you the standard results of the year, it will be necessary to point out that the introduction by the department during the past year of an amended schedule of standard work, the enlargement of the syllabus by making drawing a pass subject, the classification of subjects outside standard work into class subjects and additional subjects, and the requirements under these heads, and also the revised method of estimating percentage results, have combined to make the present year one of increased examination work, and one of new departure in obtaining data for comparing the year's work with that of the last. The tables, which form the Appendix to this report, and are given on forms supplied by the department, will present features more apparently than really new. They contain, however, all the detailed information concerning each school which it is thought desirable by the department to publish for general information. An examination report on each separate school, and also an inspection report on each of those visited, have already been furnished the Board a few weeks after the examination or inspection was made, and copies of these reports have been forwarded to the several School Committees. The school authorities are, therefore, already in possession of full information as to the work and condition of each particular school; and it now only remains for me to deal with the results as a whole. In the Appendix I have grouped the schools in classes according to size, for convenient reference, and for purposes of fair comparison. What is here described as percentage of passes is struck on the whole roll number, and will be small where a large number of infants attend. The percentage of failures is only the complement of our old percentage of passes. By subtracting, therefore, the percentage of failures from 100, we have the former percentage of passes, the principal examination result; and it is now, as formerly, a fair return, being struck on the number of expected passes, after the absentees and bad attendants are excluded.

Referring now to Summary No. 1 of the Appendix, the results for the year in standard work may be thus compared with those of last year:—

—	Number of Passes.		Percentage of Passes.		Average Age.			
	1885.	1886.	1885.	1886.	1885.		1886.	
					Yrs.	mos.	Yrs.	mos.
Standard I.	882	1,167	95	96	8	8	8	10
Standard II.	920	984	86	88	9	10	9	10
Standard III.	644	872	71	74	11	2	11	4
Standard IV.	430	574	75	83	12	3	12	2
Standard V.	344	318	76	76	13	2	13	2
Standard VI.	166	152	73	56	14	0	14	0
Total	3,386	4,067	81	83	11	6 $\frac{1}{8}$	11	6 $\frac{2}{8}$

Here is a satisfactory increase of 681 in the number of children who have passed standards, representing a rise of 2 per cent. on the whole—from 81 per cent. in 1885 to 83 per cent. in 1886. It will be seen that the average age remains fairly constant. The number of children absent from examination—207—together with those classed as excepted for bad attendance—294—is altogether 501, or about an eighth part of the number passed. Considering the difficulties of many districts, the vicissitudes of health, and other drawbacks, this cannot be looked upon as an unsatisfactory result. The falling off in the passes in Standard VI. is partly accounted for by the increased difficulty in the pass, now that serious weakness in any one subject is made fatal. It is noticeable that the whole number of children classed above Standard IV. is under eight hundred, or about 1 in 11 of all on the roll. A considerable number of the children leave school before or as soon as they have passed Standard IV.

Turning now to Summary No. 2 of the Appendix, I have to point out that the average percentage of failures for the whole district this year is seventeen, and, therefore, schools showing a higher average in column 3 are not doing such good work as the others. It will be seen that the large schools in Class A have all done well this year, and three of them exceedingly well. I look upon 10 per cent. of failures, if sustained year by year, as almost the lowest practically attainable under ordinary difficulties of exacting test-work. As already stated, the percentage of passes in column 4 depends much on the number of infants included; hence the low figures of the Newtown School, to which no separate infant school is attached, and which is largely crowded with them. This applies in a less degree to the Terrace and Masterton Schools, and in some degree to all schools. I am sorry to still find large classes, especially in the city schools (not meaning the infant schools), of children of nine, ten, and even eleven years of age, who cannot be presented for Standard I. These, with those who are not attending school at all, form a large part of the neglected children of the district. It is an evil which calls for a remedy hard to find.

The schools in Class B vary considerably in educational value. Two of them produce excellent work—Clareville and Featherston. Two or three others have shown considerable weakness in particular classes, with capital work in other classes—the work varying with the ability of the class teacher. Of those in Class C, five are weak, seven are good, and the remaining five have done fairly. In Class D, eleven schools show poor results, the others being more or less satisfactory. I do not expect such good results in small schools as in large ones, though I find them in a few.

Speaking generally, I may say the quality of the work compares favourably with that of past years. Many of the reading classes showed improved style and tone. In arithmetic there is still some tendency to lose sight of the best methods, and to make the obtaining of the answer the whole aim of the pupil. If I were asked in what lessons the skill and resources of a good teacher were most called into play, I should answer, in a reading lesson in which the sense of the passage is well brought out and comprehended, and in an arithmetic lesson in which the process is clearly stated step by step, and the reason of each step understood. Only the best teachers succeed in doing this, and hence it is that in grammar and arithmetic there is so much failure in examinations.

I am pleased to state that I have been much impressed during the past year with the fact that nearly all the classes which have done work far above average merit—large classes in which all or nearly all the candidates have passed, and many made strong passes—have been taught by teachers who have grown up in the Wellington service, some being pupil-teachers of the third or fourth year, some assistants who are ex-pupil-teachers, and some teachers of standing who were quite unable to do such work a few years ago, but who have year by year been rapidly improving in skill by practical experience in their work.

With regard to the large infant schools, I can continue to report favourably. Owing to pressure of work, I have not been able to afford them so much time as I have done in former years; but I am satisfied with their management, except in one or two instances in the matter of attempting too difficult work in the higher classes, and more especially in using a reading book prescribed for Standard II.

But it is in the region of work outside the ordinary standard boundaries that I find much of the success of the past year. Of the class subjects, which include history, geography (Standards II. to IV.), drawing (Standards II., III.), and science, the percentage results are given in Summary 2, column 5. The average of these percentages is 80 for schools in Class A, 58 in Class B, 54 in Class C, and 43 in Class D. This is the first year in which these results have been thus dealt with. The high marks obtained in the larger schools are due in a great part to the impetus and direction given to the teaching of drawing by the establishment of a School of Design, and to the reorganization of the science classes by the special teacher of science. All the class subjects are taught throughout the district, with the exception of elementary science, which, as a rule, cannot at present be taken up in the schools of Class D, and is not taken up in a few of Class C. In the smallest schools of Class D, in which a teacher holds sole charge, there are often only one or two children in higher standards, or the teacher is not prepared to undertake the technical work.

The marks in the last column of Summary No. 2 are for additional subjects, including drill, singing, needlework, drawing (S4 to S7), recitation, and the subject matter of the reading book. Of the maximum 120, the following are the average marks obtained: Schools in Class A, 100; in Class B, 76; in Class C, 56; and in Class D, 47. Here, again, the fairly high results in many schools are attributable in a great measure to the action of the Board in appointing a special teacher of drill and gymnastics, in addition to the specialists in drawing and science. In the schools of Class A all the additional subjects are faithfully taught, if we except, as a matter of course, needlework from the curriculum of the Mount Cook Boys' School. I mention this fact, because it necessarily lowers this class of results in that particular school.

With regard to the additional subjects, I have to report that drawing, recitation, and the subject matter of the reading book are everywhere taught. In drill, instruction is given in all but

nine schools, which, with the exception of Kaitara, are in Class D, and generally under a female teacher. Singing is taught in thirty-seven schools, and not taught in twenty-seven, including one in Class B, seven in Class C, and nineteen in Class D. It is a good feature of all infant schools, and more especially of the large one in Tory Street, Wellington. In all the schools of Class A the singing is fairly creditable, and in two or three a good quality of singing is produced. The quality of the singing in the smaller schools varies very much, and is seldom good. I am of opinion that there is just as much need of a specialist in directing the teaching of singing as there is in the teaching of drawing, science, and drill.

The instruction in needlework improves year by year, and is now generally in strict accordance with the programme issued by the Education Department. Darning should, however, receive more attention in higher standard work.

In drawing, the work has been well defined by the art master, in printed syllabus, by lectures, and by illustrated class instruction. The drawing syllabus is being worked up to from the lowest classes. The upper standard classes are not yet fully organized, and great diversity in the work exists at present; but, still, considerable improvement has been effected, as evidenced by the increased passes made at the late July examination of pupils, when 232 passed in first grade freehand, and 284 in first grade geometry. From my personal inspection of nearly all the work, including the outline drawings cut out in cardboard, I was satisfied that extended work of a right kind has been accomplished, and that much of the way is prepared for the teaching of drawing from the object, which is soon to follow.

Instruction in drill is given in all the schools of Class A, all of Class B, and in many of the smaller schools which can be conveniently reached by the instructor. In other small schools the teacher acts as sole instructor. M. de Mey has formulated a system of exercises, chiefly on Ling's system. This is found to be sufficient of its kind for the present, and workable. In the larger schools the instruction includes Indian club, parallel bar, and horizontal bar exercises, as a regular part of the training. Since the appointment of a local instructor for the largest Wairarapa schools only, some departure has been there made from the approved programme, upon which it will be my duty to report on another occasion. M. de Mey's work is now confined to large city schools and sixteen others in the Wellington country district. I am well satisfied with the drill instructor's work. The exercises are carefully and systematically done, with attention, precision, and fair exactitude. Some of the more advanced classes display considerable cleverness and training. Military drill, as well as extension motions and gymnastics, is included in the programme of work.

In elementary science, the programme of work in physics and chemistry issued by Mr. Purdie is found to be workable; and it is now fairly comprehended by many teachers who have received direction from him in experimental work, and they will be able to do even fuller justice to the programme another year. The upper classes of girls in the city schools are specially taken in botany by the science master himself. The instruction is confined to a reasonable limit of practical work, and is intelligently given. The science work, taken as a whole, has made a considerable advance during the past year.

In referring to the teaching of class and additional subjects, I am aware that the work could not have been done without the hearty co-operation and assistance of the head teachers and assistant teachers of the respective schools. In some cases the good work is very largely due to them. For instance, physical science and chemistry have been wholly taught by the head masters themselves, following the programme and using the apparatus supplied by the science master.

Besides examining all the schools, I have inspected those of Classes A and B, and all in Class C except Pahiataua, which was closed for additions to the building. I have been unable, however, to find time for seeing more than sixteen of the twenty-eight schools in Class D. By increase of roll numbers and extended syllabus of work the examination work becomes heavier year by year, and as it increases my time for inspection is lessened. I much regret this, as I believe the practical working efficiency of the schools can be best maintained by thorough inspection. In the absence of other training in method for many young teachers and pupil-teachers, it is desirable that my time for inspection should be rather increased than diminished.

There is a question of school organization to which I should briefly refer, and that is a tendency which exists to interfere with the plan and arrangements of school buildings as authorised by the Board. Against this there should be some regulation, or many of our well-designed schools will suffer. No change should be made in arrangement of rooms or fixtures without the approval of the Board. And, lastly, I should like to say a few words, or, rather, as more in accord with my functions as an examiner, to ask a few questions, on the system of prize giving, now so common. If prizes must be given, could not rewards be given to all the children who well deserve one? Cannot the heartburnings, and the violation of the sense of justice of many children, be spared? Could not the gentle and industrious but dull pupil be recognised? Shall all these good things go to the intellectual Philistines of a school? In prize competitions, shall the young pupil continue to be handicapped by classification with others several years his senior in years or tuition? Shall the boy with the accident of advantage on his side win the prize, and the one struggling against every drawback—poverty, physical infirmity, unlettered parents, and enforced irregular attendance—lose all chance of it? Are we to take no note of the finer qualities of human nature—temper, disposition, tastes, feelings, manners—and the less school-ridden faculties of youth? Would it not be better, if something fairer cannot be devised, to put all these prize books into a school library for the common good?

I have, &c.,

ROBERT LEE, Inspector.

J. R. Blair, Esq., Chairman, Education Board, Wellington.

HAWKE'S BAY.

SIR,—

Education Office, Napier, 31st January, 1887.

At the close of the ninth year of my inspection of the schools in this education district I have again the honour to submit, for your information, a summary report upon the progress of education generally, but more particularly upon the work done in the schools under my inspection during the year ended the 31st December ultimo.

SCHOOLS IN DISTRICT.—The number of schools open for inspection remains the same as at the date of my last report. Of the thirty-nine schools established, five are in the Patangata County, fourteen in Waipawa, ten in Hawke's Bay, three in Wairoa, and seven in the County of Cook. Twenty-nine of the schools are in charge of head masters, and the remaining ten have each a competent mistress as principal teacher. In twenty-two schools the average attendance warrants the appointment of either assistant teachers or pupil-teachers, or of both. At the close of the school year ten assistant masters, twenty-five assistant mistresses, and fifty-five pupil-teachers were employed in the schools.

SCHOOL BUILDINGS.—With few exceptions I am able to report that the school buildings are in excellent repair, many improvements of a substantial character having been carried out during the year by the School Committees, partly at their own expense, and partly by means of special grants. It is seldom that I have had occasion to complain of the untidiness of a schoolroom, and I find that much more care is being taken by teachers than was formerly the case with the school apparatus and appliances which are so bountifully provided for all schools. As remarked by me last year, some of the teachers take pleasure in making their rooms models of neatness and arrangement, and I am at one with them in their aspirations in this direction, for it seems to me that few things have a more lasting effect upon children than neatness, good order, and arrangement. They are school virtues which, though not measurable by percentages, have yet a high moral and social effect, and this is no small matter in the training and bringing up of a nation of children. Among the best ordered and arranged schools I would name Makatoku, Waipukurau, Waipawa, Wairoa, Napier Infants', Gisborne Infants', Taradale, and Hastings Infants', as being worthy of special praise.

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE.—Although there has been no increase in the number of Board schools, the increase in the school attendance is very marked, the attendance for the year having averaged 8·3 per cent. over that of 1885; and, had not sickness caused the absence of many children from school during the second half of the year, the increase in the attendance would have reached a much higher rate. At the close of the school year 5,052 names were returned as attending school, or an increase of nearly four hundred compared with the corresponding quarter of 1885. The accommodation provided for this number of children amounted to 46,320 square feet, or an average, if equally distributed through the schools, of nine square feet for each pupil. This, of course, is much below the actual school needs of the district, but, further provision having recently been authorised, the overcrowding in several of the larger schools will soon be materially lessened, if not actually met. Compared with the school attendance, the accommodation which will shortly be provided will place the district in a better position, relatively, than it has occupied since the passing of the Education Act; but even then it will still be lower than I think it should be, considering the school population for which the Board is responsible. There are now five districts where the number of children of school age warrants the erection of schools—viz., Tolaga Bay and Te Karaka, in Cook County; and Blackburn, Upper Maunga-atua, and West Maunga-atua, in Waipawa County. But, in addition to these places, it would seem that there are large numbers of children scattered through the several school districts who have never yet been influenced by the establishment of Board or other schools. According to the census of population taken during the year, there are 7,500 children of school age in this education district, exclusive of Maoris; but, as pointed out above, only 5,052 names were enrolled as attending school at the end of the year, and it is certain that less than five hundred were attending private schools at the same date. The two thousand absentees are not so situated that they cannot attend school; but the fact is, that the compulsory attendance clause of the amended Education Act of 1885 is practically dead, for the reason that, all the larger schools being full, the School Committees have realised the incongruity of a position which requires them to enforce attendance when, at the same time, barely sufficient room is obtainable for the children who are already attending school. In any case it is to be regretted that, after the lapse of so many years of education work, only eleven out of every fifteen of the school population in the education district can be accounted for as attending school, whilst at the same time school provision has only been made for forty-six out of every seventy-five of the children liable to attend.

MAORIS AT SCHOOL.—I am pleased to report the continued increase in the attendance of Maori pupils at the district schools during the year, and, as far as I can gather, the increase is likely to continue. It would appear that the Maoris do not take kindly to the purely Native schools, and when the more intelligent among the Maori parents have the opportunity of sending their children to the district schools they gladly do so. In nineteen districts Maori pupils are to be found in the schools working as diligently and, on the whole, as successfully as the European children. From careful observation I am convinced that the attendance of Maori pupils at the district schools is greatly to their advantage, and it is certainly no disadvantage to the European children, as some persons seem to imagine; besides, it is a phase of Maori progress which, in my judgment, is worthy of encouragement. At the close of the year 5 per cent. of the children attending the district schools belonged to the Maori race.

PAST YEAR IMPORTANT.—Considered from an educational point of view, the past year has been one of special interest and importance to those engaged in school work. For the first time since the passing of the Education Act in 1877, great and important changes have been made in the standard syllabus of instruction, as authorised to be taught in the district schools. The new standards came into operation at the beginning of the year, and all schools throughout the colony

were examined for the first time under the conditions stated in the new regulations of instruction. The issue of the standards naturally caused anxiety to many teachers, and I therefore took the opportunity offered by the midsummer holidays to invite the head teachers throughout the district to meet me at the Education Office, when I made such explanations as to the course I intended to pursue in my examinations under the new standards as appeared to me to be necessary. I have reason to think that much good resulted from our meeting, and I could wish that similar meetings, though widened in their scope so as to include members of School Committees and friends of education generally, were frequently held for the discussion of questions affecting the welfare of education throughout the district.

STANDARD MODIFICATIONS.—The Board is probably aware that there is a wide difference between the old and the new standard syllabus. The work to be done in each standard is now arranged under three heads, known respectively as pass subjects, class subjects, and additional subjects. Class subjects are compulsory for all standards equally with the pass subjects; but weakness in them does not count against a pass in the standards. The additional subjects may or may not be taught, at the option of teachers. Drawing is now a compulsory subject for all standards. Last year it counted as a pass subject in Standard I. only, but next year it will also count for a pass in Standard II.; the year following in Standard III., and so on till it becomes a pass subject in each standard. Geography and history in Standards III. and IV., and history in Standards V. and VI., are now class subjects. Formerly they were pass subjects. These changes have lessened the number of pass subjects in the standards, except for the first and second, but the work expected under pass and compulsory subjects is more than was required under the old regulations. The effect of the changes I shall have occasion to refer to further on in this report.

EXAMINATION RESULTS.—All the schools except Tarawera were visited by me twice during the year—once for inspection purposes, and once for the examination of the children under the standards. Although the number of pupils attending the schools was greater than in previous years, I was able to complete all the necessary examination work before the breaking up of the schools for the midsummer holidays. The pupil-teachers' examination was also concluded early in December. This is the first time the examination of the pupil-teachers has taken place in this month. Formerly it was in July, but I am satisfied that the alteration of the date has been a wise one. In all fifty-three pupil-teachers were examined, and the results, with a few unimportant exceptions, were exceedingly satisfactory. The regulation passed by the Board, requiring in all schools where pupil-teachers are employed the keeping of a teachers' attendance register, showing also the character of the daily instruction given to the pupil-teachers, has been complied with in nearly every instance. Cases where the regulation has been disregarded I have not reported to the Board, but the fact has been entered in the school log books for future reference.

CHILDREN EXAMINED.—The number of children who were entered for examination in standards was largely in excess of the number presented in the previous year, the increase in the presentations being even larger than the actual increase in the school attendance. The number of standard passes, however, does not show a proportionate increase, being only slightly higher than the number of passes for 1885. This shows that the new regulations present difficulties which were not met with under the old, for the percentage of failures for the year is much larger than it has been for a number of years past.

At the date of my examination 4,788 pupils were enrolled as attending school, and of these 3,113, or a fraction over 65 per cent., were entered by the teachers for presentation in standards. The proportion is a large one; but of the number thus presented, 206 were absent on examination days, 172 were excepted under a new and, I think, needless regulation—which allows children who have made fewer than half the possible attendances during the three quarters preceding that in which the examination is held, to be examined, but they do not count as failures against the school even though they actually fail in the examination—and 633 others, or over 20 per cent., actually failed to reach the necessary standard entitling them to a pass. Deducting these items from the number presented, there remain 2,102 pupils, or 33 more than in the previous year, as the net number of standard passes for the year. These facts will best be seen in the following table, which contains full information as to the numbers presented, examined, excepted, failed, and passed in each standard. The average age of the pupils who passed the standards is also given.

Standard Classes.	Number Presented.			Absent.	Examined in Standards.			Excepted.	Failed.	Number passed in Standards.			Average Age.		
	M.	F.	Total.		M.	F.	Total.			Total.	Total.	M.	F.	Total.	Yrs.	ms.
S 7 ...	8	4	12	1	7	4	11	...	...	6	4	11	...	...
S 6 ...	30	33	63	4	29	30	59	...	7	25	23	48	14	1	
S 5 ...	133	119	252	37	119	96	215	8	66	90	61	141	13	4	
S 4 ...	211	175	386	18	199	169	368	20	50	134	124	258	12	3	
S 3 ...	369	299	668	37	347	284	631	44	185	224	178	402	11	6	
S 2 ...	343	362	705	42	324	339	663	44	102	240	277	517	10	3	
S 1 ...	532	495	1,027	67	498	462	910	56	179	368	357	725	8	11	
Preparatory	1,626	1,487	3,113	206	1,384	1,384	2,907	172	633	1,078	1,024	2,102	...	...
	858	817	1,675												
	2,484	2,304	4,788												
	Mean age, 11 years 8 months.														
	Percentage of passes to number presented, 43.9.														

PREPARATORY CLASSES.—The 1,675 children too backward or too young for presentation in standards were examined by me either individually or collectively, as circumstances required. I am inclined to look upon the preparatory classes in the schools somewhat jealously, because the more I see of the different influences operating to make a successful school, the stronger grows the conviction that the preparatory or initiatory classes constitute one of the most important factors in them. In this district no infants' department is, or has been for years past, so ably taught and disciplined as the Gisborne Infants', and there is no school in my district where the standard work is so thorough as that done by the Gisborne children. The one is the outcome of the other. There are other teaching staffs in the district equally as good, equally as efficient as there is at Gisborne, but hitherto they have had no infants' department of any marked efficiency to help them in laying a solid foundation on which the standard work could be effectively built. Hence I am pleased to recognise the good work that has been done during the year in the infants' departments at Waipawa, Hastings, Waipukurau, Napier, Clive, Makatoku, Hampden, Danevirke, Wairoa, Norsewood, and in a lesser degree at Kaikora, Port Ahuriri, Taradale, Matawhero, Meanee, and Makaretu. In each of these schools earnest lady teachers are at work, and I am convinced that nothing will be wanting on their part to make their several departments as efficient as the one I have ventured to refer to as an example. In schools where the attendance does not admit of the appointment of a suitable teacher for the preparatory classes, the teaching of the little ones is carried on under specially difficult conditions, and the progress, as might be expected, is not good. Still, I do not see how matters can be much improved as things are at present. The standard children in such schools demand the first consideration of the teachers, and certainly much greater progress would be made by them in the standard work if the young children were not permitted to attend school at all; but were such a course adopted a greater difficulty would arise, for the withdrawal of the junior class in many of the country schools would result in the schools being closed altogether.

EFFECT OF NEW STANDARDS.—As already pointed out, the effect of the new standards has been to lower the percentage of passes for the year. But I do not think there is anything to regret in this. It is general efficiency rather than percentages by which the progress of education should be estimated. If the standard work has been as well done as in previous years, when fewer subjects had to be taken, it shows that either the teachers have worked harder than formerly, or that the tendency of the new regulations is to improve the character of the work required for a pass by insisting on greater thoroughness; but of the alternative I am doubtful. One thing I specially welcome in the standards is the regulation which insists upon "intelligent reading," and which makes a failure in the subject to count as a failure for the standard. If children can be got to read intelligently, the apt teacher will not find it a difficult matter to make them think; but it is the absence of the "reading with intelligence" where much of the weakness of the school work has its origin. The operation of the new rule has caused the failure of many children who were otherwise fairly prepared, but I am satisfied that the rule is a good one, and that it will tend to improve the general character of the work as the children pass into the higher standards. In my last report I drew special attention to the great importance which ought to be attached to reading in the schools, and if the operation of the regulation only causes more time and attention to be given to the subject a great advance will have been made in the work of education. Already an improvement has taken place in the quality of the reading throughout the schools, and, as teachers come to find that the term "intelligent reading" has a meaning in the standard examination, we may expect to find that still greater progress will be made in this, the most important of all school subjects.

DRAWING.—The introduction of drawing is also a feature in the school course which I am inclined to think will do much good if properly carried out. But care and discrimination are needed, for I find its introduction into the school work to be often surrounded with many and grave difficulties. The requirements at present are beyond too many of the teachers, and the progress of the children in such cases is necessarily slow. Still, I might say that, on the whole, a fair beginning has been made. In schools where the teachers know little or nothing about drawing, my aim during the year has been to show them how the subject may be taught by them with fair success. Nor have my suggestions and teaching been in vain. Drawing has always been a compulsory subject in the pupil-teachers' syllabus of instruction, and its instruction as a standard subject has produced little inconvenience in the larger schools, where it has often been taken as an additional subject under the old regulations. The admirable rule which the Board has adopted of paying the railway fares of pupil-teachers outside Napier to enable them to attend the Saturday classes for drawing and singing which have been established is one I should like to see extended so as to include assistant and even principal teachers who hold no certificates of competency for teaching subjects like drawing and singing. Exceptionally capable teachers are now available both in Napier and Gisborne for the carrying on of such classes, and the expenditure of a comparatively small sum of money would be amply repaid by the improved character of the standard work in this direction. In all the schools, I have examined the drawing books done by each pupil, in the same way as I usually do with the copy books and exercise books. In the First Standard, where drawing is a pass subject, I have tested the children's knowledge of perpendicular, oblique, and horizontal lines by asking a pupil here and there in the standard to draw these lines at my dictation upon their slates or the blackboard. Although the result in some schools has not always been satisfactory, so long as a start has been made I have failed no standard pupils for weakness in the subject, but intimation has been given that the full demands of the syllabus will be required another year.

OTHER STANDARD SUBJECTS.—I have little to complain of as to the way in which the other pass subjects of the syllabus, including writing, spelling, dictation, grammar, and geography, have been prepared. I fear, however, that the pass and class subjects form somewhat too wide a compulsory syllabus for the pupils in the smaller country school. I do not wish it to be understood that the work for each standard is beyond the capacities of ordinary children, but I am convinced that many of those who are now passing through the schools would be able to look back upon their

“school life” with much greater pleasure if more thoroughness in a few subjects were demanded from them instead of superficiality in the many. Too many subjects of instruction, except in large schools well and ably staffed, are fatal to the employment of intellectual methods in teaching, and I am satisfied that much harm is now done to the children and to education generally by its being supposed that teachers of all sorts and conditions are able to give instruction in any and in every subject which it is deemed necessary to have taught in the schools. This view of the education question is quite overlooked at present. Teachers themselves know and recognise their defects in certain subjects, but they show their capacity to teach in other ways, and one can hardly blame them for certain defects in their work, as their own knowledge cannot always be rounded off to meet the requirements of the syllabus. It is, indeed, curious to observe how thoroughly at home some of the teachers are in some of the “additional subjects,” and in those of the class subjects, like elementary science and object lessons, which they are able to select for themselves. This part of the standard course is better prepared on the whole than the pass subjects; and, although the results do not count towards the standard passes, one cannot but appreciate the efforts of those among the teachers who select the additional subjects as much for the good of their pupils as to show their own special knowledge and skill in teaching them. In quite a number of schools singing is very well taught, and the musical skill displayed by some of the children—notably at Napier, Hastings, Hampden, Waipawa, Gisborne, Makatoku, and, in a less degree, at Kaikora, Wairoa, Waipukurau, Danevirke, and Woodville—is very creditable to the teachers who give instruction in this subject. In twenty-nine schools recitation was taken as an additional subject, and in some of the smaller schools I have been at times agreeably surprised at the proficiency of the children. Indeed, I have seldom listened to better recitation than was given by the children at Porangahau, Gisborne, Makatoku, Waipawa, Napier (Standard VI.), Waipukurau, and Matawhero (Standards V. and VI.). I can only account for the improved results generally by supposing that the greater attention which has been given to reading during the year has also aroused more interest in recitation among the children and the teachers. Sewing continues to be taught with much success by the lady teachers in a large majority of the schools. At the November examination twenty-nine schools were represented, and 1,075 standard specimens of sewing were separately examined and marked by the lady examiners, who for years have worked to promote the efficient teaching of this important subject. I suggested a year ago that sewing should be made an alternative subject with drawing for the girls. I still think that something should be done in this direction, as the large amount of time spent in sewing by the girls demands some consideration beyond a mere nominal allowance in the standard examinations. Physical training does not at present receive sufficient attention in this district; indeed, there is hardly a school outside Gisborne where the boys and girls receive instruction—not to say systematic teaching—in gymnastics and calisthenics. Elementary drill is taught; but Napier, Gisborne, and Waipawa are the only schools where anything like efficiency has been reached. The employment of a drill instructor for a year or so, to visit all the schools, would, no doubt, arouse the teachers to a greater sense of the importance of elementary drill as an aid to discipline; and, should the funds at the Board’s disposal permit of such an appointment being made, I venture to hope that the suggestion thrown out will be adopted at no distant date.

In concluding this report, I am pleased to state that the discipline and general management of the schools continue to improve. The majority of them are in the hands of earnest and conscientious teachers, whose chief aim, I believe, is to improve the moral equally with the mental condition of their pupils. In fact, the close of no previous year has promised so well for the educational welfare of the district; and I am certain of this; that the School Committees throughout the district will not be found wanting in helping forward the good work which so many of them have hitherto done so well, and for which I beg to offer them here my special thanks.

I have, &c.,

The Chairman, Board of Education, Napier.

H. HILL, Inspector.

MARLBOROUGH.

SIR,—

Picton, 17th March, 1887.

I have the honour to lay before you my annual report on the public schools in the District of Marlborough for the year 1886.

Twenty-eight schools, with a roll of 1,627 scholars, have been examined, the increase in numbers since last year being ninety-two. There were 1,481 scholars present, the number of absentees from examination decreasing steadily year by year.

A reader unacquainted with the geographical peculiarities of the Marlborough District would at once be struck with the largeness of the proportion of very small schools on the list. Thirteen of the twenty-eight schools count among them only 238 scholars, even taking all the names on the roll, which gives no more than eighteen to each school, or, taking the average attendance, barely fourteen. The unavoidable waste of teaching power consequent on this state of things both diminishes the efficiency and increases the cost of education in Marlborough; but, from the physical conformation of the district, and the nature of the occupation of many of the inhabitants, there seems to be no help for it but to maintain a large number of thinly-attended, comparatively costly, and, from the nature of the case, not very efficient schools.

It is to be feared that the elaborate tables of figures attached to this report, which are the outcome of the new regulations, will prove a stumbling-block to all but the initiated few who have made this matter a special study. The figures as they stand certainly do not tell their own tale to the cursory reader, and, indeed, are apt to mislead even the careful. It seems, then, to be well worth while to explain the real import of the new method of tabulating “passes,” “failures,” “exceptions,” and “percentages.” The term “presented” does not mean, as might at first sight

be supposed, those scholars only who are actually present at an examination, but includes all who are absent from any cause, such as sickness, or even death, provided their names still appear on the school roll. Those scholars are said to be "excepted" who, during the three quarters preceding that in which the examination takes place, have made less than half attendances. The "percentage of passes" simply shows the proportion that the number of passes in standards bears to the total roll number, and is, of course, usually largely affected by the number of children in any given school who are too young for standard work. Taken alone, this is a most fallacious test of the quality of the work done in a school. The "percentage of failures," on the other hand, has reference solely to the standard scholars actually present, and is the column that will inevitably be practically accepted as the measure of success. Broadly speaking, indeed, it may be taken for granted that a school which shows less than 10 per cent. of failures has done well, and that a record of (say) 40 per cent. of failures (a rate that has this year been largely exceeded in several Marlborough schools) stamps a school as being unsuccessful. By the help of this explanation, and by taking a moderate amount of pains, the actual percentage of passes in standards, in any case, may easily be ascertained, it being obvious that 10 per cent. of failures implies the high rate of 90 per cent. of passes. It must further be explained that the percentage on "class subjects" is calculated on quite a different basis, a maximum of 100 marks being allowed for each of the four class subjects, drawing, history, geography, and elementary science; the sum of the marks, divided by four, giving the percentage of passes. For each of the six "additional" subjects a maximum of twenty marks is allowed.

Broadly speaking, it may be safely affirmed that in the majority of the Marlborough schools both "pass" and "class" subjects are fairly well taught. The least satisfactory portions of the work are still, however, reading and writing. One ought not to rest content until the copy books in almost every school show something approaching to the well-formed penmanship that is invariably to be found in a few schools, where the teachers do not grudge the pains without which excellence cannot be attained. It is in the careless teaching of beginners that the mischief usually begins, bad habits being acquired at the earlier stages that it is almost impossible to cure later on.

With the express object of setting free more of the teachers' time for instruction in reading than could formerly be spared, the arithmetic papers have been made easier this year. The results are somewhat disappointing. The general improvement in reading is not so great as might have been expected from the additional facilities that have been given for practice. It is surely not unreasonable to ask that scholars of fourteen or fifteen should leave school so far equipped for the work of after life as to be able to do what few are not called upon to do at some time or other, to read aloud with such fluency, distinctness, and correctness of intonation that they may give pleasure to the sick, the aged, or the blind. It would be well for our teachers to ascertain for themselves how many of their best scholars can face this simple test of efficiency. So far as I have observed, our teachers do not themselves take a sufficient part in the class reading, forgetting how much more effective example is than precept. The younger children read far too little, and their reading matter is too little varied. Boys of eight or nine years old are frequently presented for the First Standard, after having read during the preceding twelve months no more than thirty or forty pages of a single little primer. Properly taught children at this age ought to have got over most of the mechanical difficulties of reading. As it is, I believe, the intention of the Board to undertake the procuring and distribution of a sufficient supply of well selected books, in accordance with my off-repeated recommendations, there will be no excuse for leaving the younger scholars, at least, unprovided with two reading books apiece.

I subjoin a detailed account of the state of each school at the time when it was last examined. Exception has frequently been taken, but, as it seems to me, without sufficient reason, to the publication of these detailed reports. Usually they are treated almost as confidential communications, a knowledge of which is confined to the members of the Education Board, and of the School Committee specially interested in each school. The outside public, therefore, has little or no means of ascertaining what is actually going on in the individual schools, the conduct of which is a matter of vital importance to hundreds of parents outside of the bodies which alone are put in possession of the necessary facts. Mere general statements that certain subjects are being well or ill taught must necessarily be vague, and, to a certain extent, inaccurate, as hardly any broad statements can be equally true of all, or nearly all, the scholars in any district. Nor, on the whole, are the teachers themselves sufferers from the publicity given to the strictures on the conduct of their schools. On the contrary, the harsh, and occasionally unjust, conclusions that would be arrived at, in some instances, from a bare perusal of the record of passes and failures are corrected by the statement of extenuating circumstances, where such can be shown to exist. Irregularity of attendance, long continued and general sickness, and changes of teachers are again and again set forth in the detailed reports as accounting largely for what would otherwise be probably set down to negligence or incapacity. And it is a weighty argument in favour of the publication of detailed reports that an opportunity is thus afforded of doing justice to exceptionally good teachers, whose merit might otherwise be overlooked by all but a few. As for those teachers—the number of whom in this district is now, fortunately, small—who either do not know their business, or, knowing it, will not take the trouble to do it, the wrong that they suffer from publicity does not appear to be very grievous. Either they will mend their ways or they will leave the service. In either case the public will be clearly the gainer. [Here follow reports in detail on the several schools, not reprinted.]

Two sets of tables are annexed giving the result of my examinations in accordance with a form prescribed by the Education Department, in a summary form and in detail. The result of the examination of pupil-teachers is also appended.

The Chairman, Board of Education, Marlborough.

I have, &c.,

W. C. HODGSON, Inspector.

SUMMARY of RESULTS for the WHOLE DISTRICT.

Standard Classes.	Presented.	Absent.	Excepted.	Failed.	Passed.	Average Age of those that passed.	
						Years	months.
S 7 ...	12	...	...	...	...	...	...
S 6 ...	39	1	...	6	32	14	2
S 5 ...	112	4	7	10	91	13	4
S 4 ...	187	12	19	49	107	12	2
S 3 ...	256	18	21	35	182	10	4
S 2 ...	236	17	16	51	152	9	0
S 1 ...	220	7	7	31	176	8	7
P. ...	565	...	...	...	...	...	...
Totals ...	1,627	59	70	182	740	*	

* Mean of average age, 11·3.

NELSON.

SIR,—

Nelson, 31st December, 1886.

I have the honour to submit to you my report for the year 1886 on the Nelson public schools. Seventy-nine schools have been examined, 4,991 scholars being on the rolls of these on examination day. Including four small schools that have not yet been examined, for reasons that will be given further on, the total number on the roll of this district at the end of the December quarter was 5,146. There were 4,692 scholars present at examination, the number of absentees being reduced to 299. Only 118 standard candidates were absent. In several important respects the new regulations issued by the Education Department, which came into force for the first time during the past year, and which tend to affect materially not only the method of recording results, but the results themselves, render comparison with the work of bygone years difficult, if not impossible. It is fortunate, however, that one of the tests by which the progress of our schools has been tried in former years—the proportion of passes to the number on the roll, the sole basis now allowed—is still available for comparison. The proportion of passes to the number on the roll was last year 49. This year it is slightly higher, being 49·9. Such a result, under the changed conditions, cannot but be regarded as very reassuring. For the regulation, which practically insists that, in order to succeed, a scholar must satisfy the examiner in every pass subject, has been carried out in this district with a strictness that, to some teachers and to many parents, may even seem to savour of harshness. But the fact should not be lost sight of that the difficulty of obtaining a pass has been considerably lessened by placing among the list of class subjects history for the four highest standards, and geography for the fourth. The diminution in the number of pass subjects almost necessarily implies the application of increased stringency to those that remain. The rule that has borne most hardly, and, as it turns out, most unequally, on our teachers, has been that which excepts those scholars only from having their failures recorded who have made less than half attendances during the three quarters preceding the quarter in which the examination takes place. The stringency of this rule will, indeed, go far to account for the large proportion of failures in some of our best schools. In these the list of the unsuccessful has been largely swollen by scholars the sum of whose attendance during the year amounted to little more than six months' schooling. A few, by reason of their superior age or quickness, have contrived to pass in spite of the disadvantage of bad attendance, but the majority, as might have been expected, have broken down. I can only regret that the rule adopted in several districts, including Nelson, according to which the minimum of attendance below which failure did not count was fixed at from 250 to 260 half-day attendances between one examination and another, is no longer in force. It was simple, reasonable, and had stood well several years' trial.

Although there is some danger of a report of this kind degenerating into a mere essay on the practical details of teaching, it seems convenient each year to give some notion, in general terms, of the way in which the several subjects included in the course of instruction prescribed for our public schools are being taught. It will, doubtless, be found necessary in some instances to qualify the broad statements thus made, but a careful reader will have no difficulty in finding out the exceptions by a reference to the detailed report of each school.

READING.—Last year it was found necessary to remind our teachers that this important matter was getting less than its fair share of attention. So much can no longer be truly affirmed with respect to the great majority of our schools. Seldom indeed does it happen that energetic steps are not at once taken to remedy any defect pointed out in a report. The improvement is most noticeable in the city schools, where really good reading, formerly confined almost entirely to Hardy Street Girls', is now very general. It may be fairly said of both town and country schools that the reading is now, as a rule, good, while in some instances it may even be termed excellent. Unusual pains have been taken this year to ascertain whether the scholars understand what they are reading; and they have stood the test, on the whole, satisfactorily, though a few schools still survive in which no attempt is made to explain the subject matter of the reading lesson. Our schools have been less successful, so far, with the art of reciting passages of verse. The difficulties of checking gabbling or sing-song are, however, much greater with recitation than with reading. The instances in which a piece of recitation can be listened to with any degree of pleasure are, indeed, at present very few.

ARITHMETIC.—Although this subject is no longer permitted to overshadow the rest of the school work, it cannot be said, even now, that it receives less than its proportionate share of time and attention. As a rule, it is thoroughly well taught, the most approved modern methods being generally adopted. The papers set this year have been made considerably easier than they have hitherto been, with the exception of those given to the Sixth Standard candidates. It is undesirable to attenuate the difficulties of passing at this stage—to give one reason among many—because the surmounting of this last step in our public school ladder is too often made the pretext for withdrawing a child from school altogether, just at a time of life when another year's training might be of incalculable benefit to him.

WRITING.—An experience of several years, coupled with the almost unanimous approval of our teachers, has shown pretty conclusively that the style of handwriting given in the "Abbotsford" copy books (which closely resembles that given in the "Public School" and other modern copy books) turns out, under the supervision of teachers who understand their business, clear and expeditious writing. The discontinuance, on account of its expensiveness, of the plan of supplying the scholars gratuitously with note paper and envelopes, with the object of giving them facility in the useful arts of writing in proper form and addressing neatly a letter, has, I think, turned out to be a mistake, which it is not yet too late to rectify. The few pounds spent in training hundreds of scholars to do well what it will be incumbent on them to do very frequently in after life, would be found to be an excellent investment.

GRAMMAR.—Not much has been exacted even from the older scholars during the past year in the shape of analysis of sentences, or formal grammar; but whatever has been demanded has usually been supplied. Conceding that the study of the grammar even of one's own comparatively grammarless tongue affords a valuable means of mental discipline in skilful hands, it is disappointing to find how little practical effect the teaching in this direction has on either the speech or the writing of the bulk of our scholars. When one listens to their talk out of school, or reads their attempts at composition, when they are off their guard, and are not specially warned to be careful about their cases and numbers, it is hard to resist the conclusion that all the elaborate rules that have been drawn up for their guidance might almost as well have been written in water. For this reason, and also because so much else has to be done in so few years, technical grammar takes but a subordinate place in our school course.

GEOGRAPHY.—Little fault can be found with the way in which this is generally being taught. In one or two instances I have noticed such survivals of the pedantry of a bygone age as the giving very young children a list of the counties of England and Scotland for a memory lesson; but the broad outlines of political geography are all that the majority of our teachers now attempt. Physical geography still retains the prominent place to which it is entitled, most of the older scholars being able to give an intelligent explanation of the causes of such phenomena as spring and neap tides, or land and sea breezes. Map drawing is also carefully taught.

HISTORY.—It is gratifying to be able to record that, although history has been withdrawn from the list of pass subjects, our teachers have not on that account suffered it to fall into the background. The older scholars can usually give a clear enough narrative of the sequence of the leading events in the period that they have taken up. History is still, however, the least popular subject in the school course. Nor are the reasons far to seek. Hardly one scholar in a hundred has imagination enough to enable him to bridge the vast gulf that separates the people of two or three hundred years ago from those now living. The distance of the England of the sixteenth century in time, space, and manners from the New Zealand of to-day seems to oppress the learner, and gives a feeling of unreality to all that he reads.

DRAWING.—In spite of the drawback that very few teachers have received any special training in this art, a promising beginning has been made, the subject being generally a favourite one with the scholars. It is to be feared, however, that as the work becomes more complex the want of technical skill on the part of the teachers will be seriously felt. As yet the difficulty is not very pressing, but in a year or two at furthest it will urgently require some solution.

SPELLING.—What I have noticed about grammar applies to some extent to spelling. When the scholars are on their guard, as when they are writing from dictation, even passages of some difficulty are given quite correctly, so that an examiner might be easily led to overestimate the proficiency of the scholars in this respect. But when no special attention is being paid to the matter, as in writing a paper on geography, mistakes are frequently made in the simplest words. From want of practice, in fact, correct spelling, in all but a few instances, is not yet, as it were, instinctive and habitual.

DRILL, which in our large schools always includes military as well as class drill, now takes its proper rank as a valuable help to discipline, and as a potent moral as well as physical factor in bringing up an alert, well-poised, and readily obedient race.

With the view of avoiding as far as may be the mischiefs that attend a stereotyped form of examination, I have been at some pains each year to make the details of each examination differ as widely as possible from those of its predecessor. Thus, for grammar, which last year was taken orally, printed papers have been substituted on this occasion; while geography, which was formerly tested by paper work, has this year been treated to a great extent *viva voce*, or by means of questions set on the blackboard. In arithmetic, by way of avoiding unconscious repetition, I have not hesitated to borrow occasionally questions set by fellow inspectors, so altering them that they are not easily recognisable. Too much has, perhaps, been made of the risk of an examiner falling into a groove; but the risk undoubtedly exists, and can only be lessened by some such device as I have indicated.

The steadily growing practice of harassing children by extra school and home work for some weeks before the standard examination, with the mistaken view of preparing them for that ordeal, cannot be too strongly deprecated. The mischief is, indeed, twofold. The children suffer in health, and their chances of success are diminished. Scholars of average capacity, who have attended

throughout the year with reasonable regularity, and who have been carefully and steadily taught during that period, stand in need of no overpressure just before their work is to be tested to enable them to pass their several standards. As for those who have attended badly, or who have been unskilfully taught, it is hopeless to attempt to make up for the shortcomings of eleven months by the feverish activity of the twelfth. Nor ought I to pass over the not much less objectionable practice of making a bugbear of the examiner. From the outset it has been my endeavour to disarm examinations of many of the terrors with which they have been quite needlessly beset. There is no reason why cheerfulness and good humour should not have some part even in the cut-and-dried routine of a standard examination. Both teachers and scholars have quite enough to try them on that occasion without the purely gratuitous additions of harshness and irritability on the part of the examiner. I find, however, that my best efforts in the direction of softening the hardships of an examination are, singularly enough, often neutralized by the ill-judged intervention of the teachers themselves, some of whom go so far as to prognosticate the failure of their scholars—a kind of prophecy that not unfrequently brings about its own fulfilment. Some of my most painful experiences have been in schools where the children had evidently been wrought up to a fever of nervous anxiety which I found it almost impossible to allay. Nor is it easy to judge, under conditions of morbid excitement, what the children could really do in calmer moments. It should not be forgotten that the competitive element enters little, if at all, into a standard examination, the main scope of which is simply to ascertain how many scholars know enough to enable them to fulfil the requirements of the regulations. Ample opportunity for those who long for a keener intellectual struggle is afforded by the numerous examinations for scholarships and for the Civil Service. That these exciting contests are an unmixed boon few will be hardy enough to assert; but they are at least optional, and those who enter into them do so with their eyes open.

HOME LESSONS.—It is mortifying to have to complain that my persistent efforts to abate the nuisance of home lessons—efforts which at one time promised to be crowned with success—are in a fair way to be entirely thrown away. By quoting the examples of some of our best schools, to show how home lessons might successfully be dispensed with, I had, as I thought, convinced all but a few of our teachers of their inutility (the Board, the School Committees, and the parents were with me from the outset). I now discover that many teachers have slipped back into the old vicious groove, and that long tasks are being inflicted on young children, who must perforce prepare them during hours that ought to be devoted to recreation or to sleep. I only regret that my power of interference is limited to remonstrance. Otherwise, the mischief should not endure for a day. As it is, I can only appeal to School Committees and parents, with whom the remedy lies, to help me vigorously in this matter. Let a beginning be made at once by insisting that under no pretext shall night work be given to any scholar below the Fourth Standard. And if a concession to inveterate prejudice must needs be made, let it be a rule that the tasks imposed on the older scholars shall not exceed an hour in duration.

ORDER AND DISCIPLINE. MANNERS.—Not the least perplexing part of my task on this occasion has been the attempt to fill up, with any degree of satisfaction to myself or to others, the column in the Inspector's annual return headed "Manners." The column for "Order and Discipline" presents comparatively little difficulty. Rare, indeed, are the instances where I do not find the scholars attentive, well trained in school drill, and reasonably quiet in school hours. But good manners mean somewhat more than all this. An Inspector who is unable to visit the majority of the schools in his district, at the utmost, oftener than twice within the year, has but slender opportunity for forming a decided opinion as to what the behaviour of the scholars may be, especially outside the schoolroom, on ordinary occasions. He is, indeed, the last man who is likely to detect unmannerliness. He never sees the school, as it were, in undress. During his visits of inspection the children are naturally all on their best behaviour, and on examination day there is too much serious work going on to leave much scope for impropriety of conduct. On the whole, however, after making due allowance for the difficulty of coming to an accurate conclusion on this head, I feel justified in giving a favourable opinion as to the manners of our scholars. But too much must not be expected from our teachers. It must be borne in mind that the school is only one of the many influences that go to build up a child's character. To go no further, the roadside and the street, and—most potent of all—the home life, largely modify, for good or for evil, the school training. All the virtues under the sun, including the graces, cannot be taught within the space of five hours a day for five days a week during ten months of the year. On the whole it is not too much to say that, if all other agencies, including parents, did their part as well as the teachers of our public schools, there would be little to complain of on the score of manners, or, as it may be better put, morals. [Here follow reports in detail on seventy-nine schools, not reprinted.]

Rockville and Little Grey Schools have both been inspected, but have not been examined. At Rockville the building was in course of removal to a more central position at the time appointed for examination. At Little Grey the school was temporarily closed owing to the teacher having just left before my arrival in the neighbourhood.

Long-continued bad weather again prevented me from visiting the two schools at the Karamea, which could only have been done at such a sacrifice of time as I could not just then afford. Each year, indeed, an increasing proportion of my time is unavoidably frittered in endeavours (occasionally abortive) to reach the small and sometimes almost inaccessible schools that are now being planted in nearly every bay and ravine of the Nelson District.

The Chairman, Education Board, Nelson.

I have, &c.

W. C. HODGSON.

SUMMARY of RESULTS for the whole District.

Standard Classes.	Presented.	Absent.	Excepted.	Failed.	Passed.	Average Age of those that passed.	
						Years	months.
S 7	70	...	...	...	...	...	...
S 6	202	5	3	35	159	14	3
S 5	427	15	16	46	351	13	1
S 4	627	28	39	188	372	12	0
S 3	652	34	31	103	484	10	11
S 2	773	14	41	113	606	9	7
S 1	616	22	22	49	521	8	7
P. ... ..	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Totals	3,367	118	152	534	2,493	*	

* Mean of average age, 11·5.

GREY.

SIR,—

Education Office, Greymouth, 12th April, 1887.

I have the honour to present my first annual report upon the schools of the Grey District, with some account of my work since my appointment as Secretary and Inspector.

I received my appointment to the combined offices in May of last year, and pressure of office work prevented the completion of my visits of inspection until October. Early in November I began the examination of the schools, which, with short intervals for attention to office duties, occupied until the 24th December, on which day I examined the school at Kynnersley, or Seventeen-mile Beach. My plans were considerably disarranged by an outbreak of measles at the latter end of the year, and I was compelled thereby to defer the examination of the Greymouth and Paroa Schools until February and March of this year.

For all the smaller schools I was able to hand the schedule of results to the teacher immediately after the examination. Since the beginning of this year I have ascertained the results for six of the larger schools examined at the end of last year, prepared and examined the papers for Scholarships A and B, ascertained the results of the examination of pupil-teachers, prepared and examined the papers for the Watkins Medal, and have examined the Greymouth and Paroa Schools. In addition to the foregoing, a considerable amount of office work has required attention.

The postponement of the examination of the largest school in the district, and of another important school, to this year, has caused much inconvenience, the duties of the Secretary being most onerous in the early months of the year, owing to the yearly audit, and the requirements of the department in the way of returns, &c. I have therefore been obliged to employ clerical aid, it being impossible for me to deal satisfactorily with all the subjects requiring attention. There was the more necessity for this as the department is very much inconvenienced by the delay in sending forward the returns necessary for the Minister's yearly statement, and urgent appeals have been made by the Secretary for promptness in their despatch.

As the new regulations for standards of education and inspection of schools came into operation last year, it may be as well that I should give some particulars concerning them, and show the principal points of difference between them and the regulations superseded by them.

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Setting the concessions in the subjects of geography and history, and in the matter of "exceptions," against the introduction of a new pass subject—viz., drawing—with the greater strictness of the regulations generally, it cannot be said that there has been much relief to the teacher. To what extent relief may be given depends very much upon the Inspector's reading of the regulations. I imagine that the purpose of making history and geography class subjects is to take them out of the category of those subjects in which text-books are used, especially for memory work and the acquisition of stores of detail, and to make them what may be called reading subjects, to be tested by oral examination. This view is, I think, most likely to furnish relief, and to lead to more satisfactory methods of teaching, particularly in the direction of combining the two relief subjects, as they may be called. I shall have more to say upon this subject under the head of "Reading."

As to the mode of examining class subjects, always in class, and, in the case of geography, before a blank map, is, in my opinion, the most desirable. This manner of examination allows of a wider range of questioning; and the nervous or timid child who would ponder helplessly over a cord of questions, only getting more confused as the time allowed drew to a close, would, by the play allowed to the spirit of competition, and the possibility of meeting with a question it could answer satisfactorily, be cheered and encouraged, especially if the examiner prefaced the examination with a few kindly words.

As the most considerable change under the new regulations may be said to be in the manner of calculating percentages, it is necessary, to prevent misconception on the part of Committees, parents, &c., that I should give some explanation of the new process. I am inclined to think that, as a means of preventing a too implicit belief in the oracular powers of percentages, and a too literal translation of them, the change effected will be beneficial. This being my first essay in the art of inspection, it has come upon me with some degree of surprise that a hankering for large percentages has grown up in this district, the results, in my belief, being anything but favourable

to the promotion of real education. Without the abundant proof to the contrary which is forthcoming, one would be much inclined to believe on examination day that the only interest the teacher takes in his scholars is identical with that which the Roman generally took in his captives—viz., as useful instruments in ministering to his triumphs. The teacher should not be blamed for this; for he has so long been judged by this fallacious standard that he naturally regards these figures as the only possible means of expressing the condition of his school. Committees, no doubt, have acquired the tendency by means of the great interest they take in the well-doing of their schools, and parents from a laudable desire to see their children excel. Those who are over-anxious about the passing of their children should remember that, whereas the school minimum compulsory age is seven years, children are more frequently admitted at the age of five, and that an uninterrupted progression from the latter age brings the child into the upper standards when its mental powers are too immature to allow it a thorough grasp of the work, and therefore it furnishes another of the already too numerous mechanical products of the standard system. My short experience as Inspector has furnished me, unfortunately, with too many proofs of this.

The percentage of passes, as now computed, is of very little value in indicating the condition of a school, for the following reasons: It is calculated upon the school roll, including the infant class, the proportion of which latter to the roll number is most variable. Absentees and exceptions count against the percentage, though I cannot say that I think this objectionable, as it will, no doubt, tend to prevent scholars absenting themselves from examination, and also act as a deterrent in the case of irregular attendance. The percentage of failures gives a more directly available means of judgment of the kind derivable from mere figures. There is so much, after all, in the inner life of a school which can never be expressed arithmetically that perhaps the safest guide will be the Inspector's report upon each individual school, which may be taken to give expression to his estimate of the value of the percentages, and of what he observed which is beyond the power of percentages to express.

One thing it seems to me that the new regulations make clearly manifest—viz., that the Inspector is expected to have an opinion concerning each individual school, and the courage necessary for its free and unreserved expression.

I have reason to think that a statement of my impressions as to the meaning of the standards of instruction may not be ill-timed. The explanatory pamphlet issued by the department says (page 2): "Teachers should always remember that the standards represent the minimum of attainments of which the Inspector will require evidence at each stage." Page 9: "A teacher who knows that proportion is the soul of arithmetic, and that an equation of fractions is a form of a higher statement of proportion, will be able to anticipate much of the work of the two higher standards, and so secure more intelligent work in this lower one (Standard IV)." So much for the regulations. But I am not now considering the matter so much in connection with the amount of work a teacher can legally be required to overtake as from a higher standpoint. Teachers of small schools who, without assistance, are required to teach an infant class and six standards may, if they cover as much of the programme as possible, well be allowed to fall back upon the line of the regulations. In this grade, even, there are not wanting bright exceptions, whose only limit is that of possibility. In schools favoured with better advantages and opportunities it cannot be considered satisfactory for teachers to show too great a tendency to take shelter behind the regulations. I cannot imagine a more undesirable influence for pupil-teachers, or a more insufferable bondage for assistant teachers who have ideas of thorough work, than to be under the direction of a head teacher who consistently applies to all school work the restrictive measure of the standards. Scholars are not slow to discover and imitate the spirit which governs the teacher, and will probably have to be taught by disagreeable experience that regulation work does not pay out of school. A practical and highly successful teacher under the English code says: "In every standard the teaching should be in advance of the examination requirements." "A bare minimum of knowledge in the class is sure to result in many unlooked-for failures." Again, speaking of the introduction of analysis in grammar at an earlier stage than that fixed by the regulations, the same author says: "Against teaching in this way it may be objected that it is anticipating the work of Standard V.; but this is no reason why the work of Standard IV. should be done in an unsatisfactory manner."

It must not be supposed from my dwelling somewhat at length upon this subject that there is any serious necessity for so doing, for I can bear full testimony to the excellent spirit generally prevailing amongst the teachers. The effect, however, upon educational matters would be so lamentable if what the Americans call the "pay-day and term-end teacher" were to get a footing amongst us, that I may be excused for anticipating the possibility of such a calamity.

As to my own reading of the regulations, as expressed in the examination test-cards and the valuation of the work, I think that the accompanying schedules furnish ample proof that I have not been too exacting. My intention has been to administer the regulations indulgently—firstly, because it was the first year of their practical operation; and, secondly, because my rendering of them would probably differ to some extent from that of previous Inspectors. Seventeen schools were examined, being the same number as in 1885. The following table will enable a comparison to be made between the results for 1885 and for last year:—

Roll number on day of examination	...	...	1885.	...	1886.
Number of above already passed the standard course	...	...	1,383	...	1,484
Within standard classification	...	...	14	...	28
Infant Division	...	...	872	...	994
Number enrolled in standard classes present at examination	...	...	497	...	462
Number promoted to a higher standard	...	...	828	...	830
Percentage of promotions—					
On roll number of school	...	...	579	...	594
On roll number of standard classes	...	...	41·87	...	40·00
On number present in standard classes	...	...	66·4	...	59·7
			69·93	...	71·5

Appendix I. gives the summary of results for the whole district, and Appendix II. for each school. In this I have included the percentage for each school, as calculated previously, the average age of pupils in standards, and the average of attendances for each school. Appendix III. gives the detailed particulars for each school, with the average age for each school in each standard. Appendix IV. is a summary of passes in standard pass subjects, and must be taken to represent a good general condition of the schools, coupled with regulations administered without severity. No table was furnished last year which can fairly be compared with this summary. Appendix V. gives the percentage in each class subject for each school. Drawing, as a class subject, was omitted at Kynnersley, Ahaura, Red Jack's, Greymouth, and Paroa; history at Maori Gully, Marsden, Westbrook, and Teremakau; elementary science and object lessons at all schools excepting Orwell Creek, Brunner-ton, Cobden, Greymouth, Paroa, and Westbrook. The mean average percentage for drawing is 48·9; for history, 49·9; geography, 54; and elementary science and object lessons, 55·6. The mean general percentage is 52·1. These results may be considered satisfactory, though there are some schools in which I think object lessons should not be omitted. Appendix VI. supplies information as to the marks gained for additional subjects. The blanks in the columns for these subjects do not always mean that the subject had not received attention, as in a few cases time did not permit me to give them attention. Further reference to these matters will be found in my report upon individual schools, hereto appended. The mean average of marks is—for repetition and recitation, 13·5; drill and exercises, 15; singing, 17·5; needlework, 16·5; subject matter, 15: the possible total in each case being 20. The mean general average is 45, the possible number being 120. Appendix VII. contains a summary of percentages on pass and class subjects, and totals for additional subjects.

I will now proceed to review the various subjects of instruction, in the order in which they appear on the schedule.

READING.—Treated less mildly, this subject would have supplied a considerably large number of failures in some schools, while in others it reaches a really good standard. The principal faults are, hurried reading, inaudibility, omission of the aspirate, and placing the emphasis on a wrong word or syllable. Knowledge of subject matter also varies considerably, in some schools reaching a fair degree of excellence, in others surprising one by the manner in which apparently intelligent and fluent reading may accompany very limited knowledge of the subject matter. This appears to me to be the most serious feature in connection with this subject. Placing history and geography amongst the subjects to be taught by means of reading would give greater practice in reading, and lead to a closer questioning out of the subject matter. Possibly the taste which is exhibited by so many young people for light, trashy literature may be largely attributable to imperfect teaching of reading: for, no matter how well selected the subjects contained in the reading book may be, they cannot be enjoyed by the scholar unless he has a thorough comprehension of them. The higher numbers of the books used in our schools (Nelson's Royal Readers) appear to me to be too full of matter to be fairly mastered by a class during one year; thereby rendering it unfair to expect the scholars to show proficiency in subject matter when a chapter is chosen promiscuously by the Inspector at the examination. This appears to have been brought under the notice of the publishers, from the fact that the later series issued by them is much more moderate in bulk. I am of opinion that benefit would result from the introduction of a new set of reading books. By adopting the use of the historical and geographical readers greater variety would be supplied, and there is reason to believe that by treating history and geography in this way the taste for acquiring knowledge in those subjects would survive after the school course was finished. "The love of good reading, if acquired early, would prevent the corruption of the taste and the morals, and arrest the demand for the sensational and the gross." In this subject especially the teacher must be the model for the scholars to imitate. If his pronunciation be faulty, and he cannot, by entering into the spirit of the author, give an example in modulation, he cannot be a successful teacher of reading. In connection with subject matter I would strongly recommend the cultivation of the practice of giving full answers to questions. The very abbreviated form in which answers are often given tends to mislead the teacher as to the amount of knowledge actually acquired.

SPELLING AND DICTATION.—This subject is, on the whole, not an unsatisfactory one, though the tests could not certainly be charged with undue severity. Transcription in the lower classes of most schools is remarkably well done; but in some the correction of the exercises had evidently been neglected. Though the regulations do not require dictation in Standard II., I think it should not be omitted, especially dictation of a complete sentence. I am inclined to this opinion because I find that, if a list of the longer words be taken from the reading book, the spelling is generally fairly correct, while mistakes are often made in the way of confounding *as* and *has*, *is* and *his*, *to* and *too*, &c. Perhaps the explanation of this may be that the scholars feel that they may be called upon at any time to spell the longer and more difficult words, and consequently pay more attention to them. These difficulties are, I believe, best dealt with by practice in writing short passages from dictation, instead of separate and disconnected words. In recommending dictation, I do not mean in the same way in which an examiner would use it as a test of spelling, but dictation given after careful preparation, and dictation of sentences instead of words having no connection. In all classes special preparation should precede the dictation, but especially so for Standard II. Some such course as the following might be adopted: Let the piece be first read; then let the children spell orally, not omitting the short words, and pointing out the special difficulties connected with some of them; then let the piece be transcribed, and finally dictated. The words before mentioned, and others, present special difficulties, which, if not conquered in the lower classes, will make their appearance, more or less, in the higher standards. In all classes I have allowed the teacher to dictate the passage and words chosen, recognising the difficulty to the children of a voice and manner to which they are unaccustomed. More variation should be intro-

duced into this exercise in the upper classes. A supply of roots, affixes, and suffixes may be given, and the pupils required to make words. Special exercise in those little words to which I have before referred should be given occasionally: for just the reason, perhaps, that they are small, mistakes in them are specially objectionable. The proper division of words into syllables should not be neglected. In the upper classes the punctuation and use of capitals seldom show good teaching. There is too great a disposition to confine the exercises in dictation to the reading books used, with the result of disaster when, at a special examination, the examiner goes outside that boundary. Fairly good composition is often disfigured by incorrect spelling. Thorough drill in words of special difficulty should be attended to. Sullivan's "Spelling-book Superseded," and Stormonth's "English Spellings and Spelling Rules" are useful books. Oral spelling is not to be despised, and, as an exercise, it is a help to pronunciation.

WRITING.—The writing throughout the district, though reaching a fair level, very seldom attains anything approaching excellence, and in a few cases it is extremely bad. In the lower classes slate writing is generally well done, though improvement may be effected by insisting upon larger slates being used, and having them carefully ruled. The practice of allowing the use of small pieces of pencil is much too common, and, seeing that both pencils and pencil holders are issued by the Board, there is no excuse for it. In some schools Standard I. scholars write in copy books, and with good results, as might be expected, where teachers exhibit interest sufficient in their scholars to commence this work earlier than required by the regulations. In Standards II. to IV. there is some room for fault-finding. Want of uniformity is an objectionable feature, and it could not well be otherwise, owing to the absence of a defined system of instruction. Standard II., just commencing the use of a pen, and not having yet mastered the difficulties of posture, nor learned how to hold the pen correctly, is supplied with an exercise book for home work. In this book the child is allowed to write without the help of double lines—freedom which cannot safely be given earlier than Standard IV. The writing generally has, no doubt, been unfavourably affected by the reintroduction of Darnell's copy books. Vere Foster's are also used; but, though some fairly regular writing is produced by the upper classes, it is wanting in boldness and freedom, and seems to me to be the style of writing most likely to degenerate easily under the pressure of the principal business requirement—viz., rapidity. Where one meets occasionally with a specially favourable specimen, it appears to be more the result of a strong individuality than of the excellence of the system. I consider the books published by Whitcomb and Tombs, Cox's, and Cowham's on the Mulhauser system, to be decidedly superior to those at present used, and would recommend their introduction. I am fully aware that good copy books alone are not sufficient to produce good writing, and even that very satisfactory results are produced in schools where they are very little used. To produce a clear, bold, round, and regular hand, something more is necessary. Corrections and illustrations on the blackboard must not be omitted, and strict attention to details must be insisted upon. Thorough drilling in the lower classes in holding the pen, posture at desk, and formation of the various parts of the letters, will prevent the necessity for anything much more than practice, under strict supervision, in the upper classes. The use of exercise books with single lines only should be restricted to the three upper standards. Galleries are very nearly obsolete in this district, and, in connection with this subject, it is well that it is so. That so many of the younger children accomplish good slate writing in schools where galleries are used is testimony to the power of the teacher to triumph over difficulties.

ARITHMETIC.—Notwithstanding its invariably prominent position in the time table, this subject furnishes the largest number of failures, though the percentage is not sufficient to indicate any great degree of weakness. There is evidence of careful attention to the lower, and of diligent working in the upper classes, but not altogether that kind of drilling in tables and notation and numeration which insures the correct and certain application of these details where necessary. The subject would be sounder in the upper classes if there were a greater searching after the best methods, securing variation of treatment, and illustration and exhibition of shortened processes. Mental arithmetic requires more practical treatment, and its connection with slate and paper work should be more insisted upon. Not that mental arithmetic is neglected; but it is confined too much to formal processes, which are not without their value, but do not cultivate that mental keenness so essential to correct and rapid computation without artificial aids. The teaching of mental arithmetic by rule has a tendency to increase the possibility of arithmetic becoming mechanical work. I recommend teachers to procure a little book upon this subject published by the National Society. The most serious feature in connection with this subject is the strong evidence which exists of the neglect of revision of back work. Other subjects are not exempt from this defect; and it is one which reveals the possibility, in connection with standard work, that a child may pass through the course by means of a series of efforts which have no due and proper connection, and that his equipment on leaving school may consist of that which he acquired during the last year, the remainder having become dim, or altogether forgotten. The cases were not few where the questions confined to the work for the year were satisfactorily answered, and a question in a rule belonging to the previous year's work proved an insurmountable difficulty. At the scholarship examination, the candidates ranging from fourteen to sixteen years of age, the majority failed to work correctly very simple questions in the elementary rules. In framing simple problems for the lower classes I have, on the whole, carefully observed the restriction imposed by the regulations. Still, the results cannot be accepted as altogether satisfactory. It is no uncommon thing for a teacher to say—and this applies as well to the upper classes—"I cannot understand why so many fail in working the problems. I have been so careful to give plenty of practice during the year." Here, perhaps, lies the secret. There is too much inclination to believe in the precept that "practice makes perfect." Practice is certainly most necessary; but without skilful and painstaking analysis on the blackboard it is of only limited use. Another remark one often hears—that "if the question had been put in another shape," &c.—goes to prove the soundness of my con-

tention. To be satisfied with the mechanical imitation of examples worked on the blackboard is not compatible with sound arithmetical teaching. In Standard III. and Standard IV., in a few schools, weakness in notation and numeration, and in knowledge of tables, is perceptible, evidently owing to insufficient drill in the lower classes. Want of neatness in setting down the work in the compound rules would have failed in one or two cases the whole class if dealt with strictly. The ruling of one side of the slate into squares for all classes below Standard IV. would greatly promote improvement in this respect. Though the regulation teacher may protest, simple exercises in the reduction of money cannot well be dispensed with in Standard III. In Standard IV. practice, and consequently bills of parcels, are not often well done, the weakness generally indicating defective knowledge of division. Teachers would find it to their benefit to endeavour to give some preliminary work in fractions to this class. In vulgar fractions, cancelling requires more drill. There is scope in this rule, and in decimal fractions, for effective object lessons. A writer says: "Arithmetic is a failing subject with many children because it is difficult to lead them to exercise their mental faculties; but it is rendered more difficult because there is little attempt made to cultivate the reasoning powers." More of the why and the wherefore is necessary; and it would be good practice to encourage the scholars not only to state fully the meaning of the various progressive steps, but also to give reasons. A word of caution is necessary as to the statement of answers. Many cases occurred where the sums were correctly worked; but the statement of the answers was either neglected altogether or very carelessly performed. It is not wise to trust too implicitly to the good nature of the examiner in this respect. I propose to give, for the future, a larger proportion of questions in the lower classes in words, and to deal more strictly with failures in notation and numeration.

GRAMMAR.—This subject is generally well taught, the analysis of the higher classes being the weakest feature. During the year I introduced to the notice of the teachers Abbott's little book on parsing; and I was glad to see that the effect of its teaching is to make the parsing decidedly less mechanical. It is difficult to understand why simple analysis should not be commenced in Standard III. The adverb might with advantage be added to the list for this class, when by breaking up short sentences into their various parts a much better notion of the functions of the adverb and adjective would be obtained, and the current fault of using the latter in place of the former would not be so likely to occur. Constructive exercises are not nearly so often used as they should be; indeed, it is a common mistake with teachers not to give children sufficient credit for constructive capacity, but to regard them too much as receiving vessels. Even in Standard III. a list of words might be given out to use in short sentences as different parts of speech, and exercises be given in forming nouns, adjectives, verbs, and adverbs from each other. Anything which enables them to exhibit their skill as producers has a special charm for children. Some time might occasionally be given in the upper classes to analysis practice with the reading lesson. The search for the subject, &c., in a rather involved sentence would be excellent practice, and be appreciated by the scholars. The effect would, I think, be also felt in the composition. Composition is generally fairly well done, Standard VI. being, on the whole, the weakest. The chief defects are not so much want of expression as faults in punctuation, the use of capital letters, and the reiteration of the same word unnecessarily. In one school most of the letters in Standard IV. commenced with the time-honored formula as to the condition of the writer's health. Below Standard VI. I think that better results may be secured by obtaining from the pupil narration of the simplest and commonest experiences of every-day life. In Standard VI. this may be accompanied by paraphrase or metaphrase of some interesting story or poem, taking care that it is something which the child has not only read, but read with pleasure. "There is no known process of drawing out of a child's mind what is not in his mind. Composition being a constructive or building exercise, a pupil must have materials to build with." The existence of a school library would be an effective aid in composition.

GEOGRAPHY AND HISTORY.—These subjects are, on the whole, up to the requirements of the standards. The knowledge of locality of Standard II. and Standard III. I tested by means of a blank map which I carried with me—and, considering that a blank map had not previously been seen in our schools, with most satisfactory results. In dealing with the subject of reading, I have already expressed my opinion as to the teaching of these subjects. The question of whether they are made interesting to the pupils must be answered in the affirmative before the teaching can be pronounced satisfactory. The introduction of the geographical and historical readers appears to me the surest way of effecting this. The geographical readers contain accounts of imaginary journeys, the best possible means of teaching geography, especially when the particulars are amplified from the teacher's own store of knowledge. It seems to me that there should be no attempt to store up in the pupil's mind any great quantity of names of places, persons, or occurrences, for the retention of which by the scholar for any length of time after leaving the school no patent mental stopper has yet been invented. Still, text-books for, at any rate, the two higher classes cannot altogether be dispensed with, as by their use the children can acquire a knowledge of facts for themselves, in preparation for their next map lesson. Geographical pronunciation and spelling require attention. For the former, Foster's "Geographical Pronunciation" and Chisholm's "Modern Geographical Names" are most useful books. The spelling of names in Standard II. is a most decided difficulty, though not an unconquerable one, as a few of the best schools prove. For Standard III. there is a less degree of excuse; and when an examiner finds the greatest difficulty in deciphering the names written by a large class there is evidence of carelessness. Improvement in map drawing will, no doubt, come with the knowledge of drawing generally. In history the memory work should be reduced to a minimum. If children carry away from school a taste for its study the best result has been gained. It is never gained by trying to cram the mind with bare facts. I have coupled the two subjects because the first is often only important on account of its historical relations, and the latter can never be studied satisfactorily without good knowledge of the localities referred to. If wall maps were procurable similar to those contained in "Morris's History" they would be

extremely useful, as showing how the ownership of various parts of Europe has changed from time to time.

OTHER SUBJECTS.—Singing.—Apart from its merit as an accomplishment, singing has such a decided value in school work that the word "impossible" should not be lightly applied to the introduction of it. In the infant class especially it affords an effective instrument of relaxation and refreshment after a trying lesson. I hope to see it more generally introduced this year.

Drawing.—Drawing in the upper classes has received attention in most of the schools, and with satisfactory results. Two schools, Kynnersley and Paroa, omitted the drawing prescribed for Standard I.; but as in the first case it was so clearly a mistake, and in the other it arose from obvious want of desk room, I did not feel called upon to inflict the stern sentence of failure.

Repetition and Recitation.—Judged by the diligence exhibited in learning the pieces, the verdict would be "Good:" but for a few decided exceptions the recitation may be considered decidedly poor. A great degree of elocutionary power is hardly necessary to teach children to recite poetry with some expression. It is very trying to listen to children racing through their poetry regardless of stops or of notes of interrogation, &c. This could hardly happen if pains were taken to make the scholars understand and feel what they are learning.

Drill.—This is not neglected, though it reaches in only a few schools beyond the most elementary movements. The teacher at Cobden School has discovered the value of musical drill, the children marching to the sound of the flute. In most schools the marching in and out of school is carefully and quietly performed. I should like to see the custom, observed in some schools, of saluting the teacher on entering and leaving the schoolroom become more general.

Needlework.—Feeling that good work should receive credit from competent judges, I requested two ladies in Greymouth, Mrs. Nancarrow and Mrs. Robinson, to oblige me by examining and reporting upon the sewing. Their report is generally very favourable, the average of the work being decidedly good, and in the case of the Nelson Creek School most excellent.

Object Lessons.—Some few teachers have done fairly good work in this subject by means of Oliver and Boyd's boxes of materials; but the schools are generally very poorly furnished with material, and lessons consisting merely of descriptions may just as well be omitted. Cabinets of objects are now procurable at a moderate price, and, having been procured, would form the nucleus of a collection to be made by the scholars themselves. An excellent manual upon the subject by W. Taylor says: "Whenever the facts to be taught admit of easy demonstration by experiment, then experiments, and not verbal explanations, should be used. The simple facts that sealing-wax easily breaks, easily melts, will fasten up a letter securely, takes an impression, are facts that the good teacher imparts by actual experiment before the class. Experimental lessons cost labour in preparation, but it is labour readily repaid in enhanced interest and thorough teaching." See also Hassell's "Object Lessons" for description of simple experiments with india-rubber. There are plenty of simple experiments which would cost nothing beyond a little trouble in preparation, and which would give zest and enjoyment to the lesson.

CLASS P.—Considering the scarcity of apparatus necessary for the teaching of infant classes according to the most modern and approved systems, those who have charge of these classes in the larger schools must be congratulated upon their condition. Teachers having charge of small schools find some difficulty in so arranging matters as to prevent the younger classes being sometimes an element of disturbance. Possibly means could be devised whereby some of the elder scholars could accordingly act as monitors. I do not say that it is an impossibility, but under these conditions it is only a teacher clever in devices who can secure a thoroughly satisfactory appearance of all those under his charge on examination day. In one or two cases I have noticed that no longer period of recess is given to this class than to the upper classes. This is a decided mistake, detrimental to the children, and calculated to add to the teacher's trouble. The appointment to the Greymouth School of a thoroughly-qualified head mistress, who possesses a knowledge of the kindergarten system, will most probably have a beneficial effect upon that school, and ultimately, it is to be hoped, upon other schools.

TIME TABLES.—Considering the varying circumstances to be found affecting each school, I have not attempted any direct interference in the matter of time tables excepting in cases of giving too much time to one subject. I have in several cases suggested alterations which appeared to me desirable, and have always found the teachers ready and willing to accept a useful hint. Printed forms have been prepared, which, while securing uniformity of size and appearance, leave the teacher full liberty of arrangement. Preparing a time-table is perhaps one of the most difficult duties appertaining to school work, and one without some defect is not easily found, especially where one teacher has to distribute his efforts over the whole programme.

DISCIPLINE.—There is little to be said upon this subject. It is very seldom that at a country school I have had to remonstrate with the scholars for any kind of misbehaviour; and their manners are generally good. The rule existing is generally mild, the teachers having evidently learned by experience that personal influence is more potent than too ready recourse to the cane. It may be set against the numerous disadvantages of the teacher of a small school that the pupils, being always under his immediate supervision, are more within the reach of that personal influence before referred to. But, however more difficult it may be to maintain discipline in a large school, with many subdivisions, there is the most decided necessity for its existence; for without it satisfactory work cannot be done. I am not an advocate for a dead level of absolute quietude in the school-room—there are periods when, if the interest of the children is awakened, it must have some outward manifestation; but too much laxity tends to prevent that respect for the place which is a factor in school work. To pupil-teachers, and young teachers generally, I would say, Do not make the mistake of considering yourselves merely instruments in the teaching of so much reading, writing, &c. The blackboard is an extremely useful instrument in school work; but it is not sympathetic, which you must be if you desire to become good teachers.

PUPIL-TEACHERS.—The pupil-teachers were examined at the Greymouth School at the same time as the candidates for certificates, and with very satisfactory results. Four were examined for admission to the fourth class, of whom two passed, and two passed with credit. Two presented themselves for the third class, one passing, and the other passing with credit. Two were examined for Class 2, and one for the first class, all gaining a credit pass. The work is generally satisfactory, more particularly that of the second class (from the Greymouth School), which, for accuracy, fulness of detail, and intelligence, is creditable alike to the teacher and the pupils. The work generally deserves commendation, excepting the arithmetic of some belonging to the fourth class. During the past year I prepared a new code of regulations for pupil-teachers. The principal changes are—the extension of the term for which the pupil engages to five years, the introduction of vocal music and drawing into the programme, more definite provision as to the employment of pupil-teachers after the expiration of the term of apprenticeship, and the introduction of practical work in keeping the school register, in connection with the subject of school method. The programme of instruction has also been modified, and so arranged as to lead up to the examination for an E certificate. Provision is made for payment of a bonus to pupil-teachers who pass a satisfactory examination in kindergarten work. Changes have also been made in the text-books prescribed. The changes are generally recognised by head teachers and pupil-teachers as satisfactory, and as affording a considerable degree of relief.

DISTRICT HIGH SCHOOL.—The decision of the Board to create the Greymouth School a district high school meets a real want in the community; and will, no doubt, be productive of the best results. There must be mutual assistance on the part of the Board and the public if success is to be assured; the Board sparing no pains to make the school thoroughly efficient, and the public according it a hearty support. The principal difficulty for the first year or two is likely to be the financial one, the Board's funds not allowing of its at once engaging a full staff, and the public naturally wanting thorough efficiency before they make use of the advantages offered by the school. It can therefore only be by means of help from the Government that the school can safely pass through the elementary stage of its existence; and it is to be hoped that this help will be ungrudgingly given.

HOME LESSONS.—I have not been able to perform such a thorough examination of the exercise books as I intend to provide for in the future; but I have seen sufficient to show that there is in some schools considerable laxity in the examination and correction of the lessons. The system pursued hitherto in the lower classes appears to me to have had a most prejudicial effect upon the writing, counteracting in a great degree the care which may have been exercised with the copy books. I have already pointed out how this to some extent may be remedied. This is one of the branches of school work about which there is great diversity of opinion, some scouting the idea of the necessity for home lessons, others being just as determined advocates. The question hinges very much upon the circumstances of the school in the matter of staff, &c. For my own part, I consider home lessons useful and desirable, provided the quantity be restricted, and correction receive careful attention; otherwise they are better omitted altogether. I am afraid that a good deal of the weakness perceptible in arithmetic is attributable to children having sums given them for home work before they have acquired sufficient knowledge of the rule to work the questions even mechanically. Perhaps one of the strongest reasons for giving home lessons may be found in the fact that they commence a process which the child must carry on after leaving school if he is ever to become really a scholar—I mean self-teaching. As to the amount of work given to be performed at home, I think that it should in no case be more than can be properly done in an hour and a half, and if commenced in Standard II. should consist principally of writing, and learning tables and rhymes, and transcription.

MAPS, APPARATUS, ETC.—Much improvement has been made in the condition of the schools with reference to these matters during the past two years; but much remains to be done. None of them are supplied with blank maps; and I recommend that a blank map of the world on Mercator's projection be supplied to each school as soon as possible. Materials for illustrating the different weights and measures should be also supplied. The existence of a thermometer in the schoolroom would tend to prevent carelessness as to the condition of the atmosphere, so detrimental to health and work.

GENERAL.—Though it is requisite that I should call attention to any defects which may be perceptible, it must not be considered that I am in all cases passing condemnation upon the teachers. Speaking generally of the teachers employed by the Board, I can say that they are capable, diligent, and earnest; and there are some who, if they continue in the same course, will undoubtedly secure good positions in the profession. There are, after all, circumstances connected with school work over which in some cases the teacher can exercise little control, however diligent he may be. One of these is irregular attendance, for which parents must take their share of responsibility. The printed forms issued to teachers for furnishing reports to parents of the scholars' periodical examinations have effected some improvement; but there is still reason for complaint in this respect. With an average possible number of attendances amounting to 315 for the three quarters ending the 31st September, 1886, the mean average number of attendances was 239, or 76 per cent. Though our climate is, no doubt, answerable in a great measure, it is still open to doubt whether good reasons existed for a loss of one-fourth of the opportunities of attending school, and it is noticeable that those who live the farthest from the school are often the most regular in attendance. Parents should realise that by keeping their children from school they are not only not discharging their duty to the children, but are actually curtailing the revenue of the Board, and thereby possibly preventing expenditure upon the school which may be urgently wanted. Revision of back work is so much a matter of necessity that I may be excused for again referring to the symptoms of its neglect. If it received attention we should hardly have scholars of sixteen years of age informing us that Wallace was the leader of the English army at the Battle of Ban-

nockburn, and that the Duke of Wellington was killed at the Battle of Bosworth. It is hardly creditable to the parents of children attending so large and important a school as the Greymouth School that it possesses no school library. The Act permits the payment by the Board of pound for pound subscribed for that purpose; and to the examiner only is given the melancholy privilege of seeing how necessary some such provision is for awakening the interest and intelligence of the children. I must render my thanks to the Committees for the hearty manner in which they have seconded any suggestions I have made for the improvement of the schools, and it is with regret that I find myself compelled in the case of one school especially to speak unfavourably of the work of the past year; for, while the distribution of praise to deserving teachers furnishes absolute enjoyment, the exercise of the reverse duty is anything but an agreeable necessity.

I have, &c.,

The Chairman, Education Board, Greymouth.

E. T. ROBINSON, Inspector.

WESTLAND.

SIR,—

Hokitika, 15th January, 1887.

I have the honour to present my twelfth annual report on the state of elementary education in this district.

The number of schools now in operation in the Westland District is twenty-three, one small aided school having been established during the past year at Hende's Ferry, on the Okarito Road. All these have been examined except that at Hende's Ferry, which had not been opened at the time of my visit to that part of the district. Separate visits of inspection were also made to all the schools excepting those in the extreme southern part of the district, and reports of these visits were furnished to your Board and to the Committees in the manner and form prescribed by the new regulations.

In order to enable me to finish the examination and furnish teachers with the results before the commencement of the Christmas vacation, I commenced this part of my work two months earlier than last year; consequently the results, excepting a few cases to be hereafter referred to, represent the work of ten months, instead of twelve, a fact that must be borne in mind when comparing the returns of this year with those of former years or of other districts.

The changes introduced by the new regulations in the method of recording the percentage of passes is likely to cause considerable misapprehension in this district, the percentage being calculated upon the roll number, instead of the number actually examined in standards. This would be a matter of little moment were it not for the mischievous and growing tendency on the part of Committees, teachers, and parents to attach an undue importance to this percentage of passes as an indication of the efficiency of a school. If the children of a school are quiet and orderly in their conduct, neat and methodical in the execution of their work, and if that work is thorough as far as it goes—if the behaviour and language of the children in the playground and on their way to and from school are free from violence, rudeness, or any other impropriety—if the condition of the school grounds, buildings, and furniture shows a regard on the part of the scholars for the preservation of the property placed to some extent at their mercy—if on the examination day the work goes on smoothly, without giving reason for any suspicion of unfair practice—if, in a word, there is evidently a healthy moral tone inside the school and influencing the lives of the scholars beyond its walls, the teacher of such a school has a far higher claim upon the gratitude of his district than if he annually passed 100 per cent. of "educated larrikins." I am happy to believe that the district is not without teachers of this kind, and I have a melancholy satisfaction in being able to mention one now beyond the reach of praise or blame or flattery, who during his long period of service under this Board might justly have been classed among them. I allude, I need scarcely say, to the late Mr. William Charles Kelsey. Having in view the growing tendency referred to above, I think it is a question worthy of consideration whether it is not advisable to discontinue altogether the publication of such statistics, seeing that there is not only the danger of many teachers' efforts being almost exclusively directed towards the attainment at all cost of a "good percentage," but that to estimate the merits of a school solely upon its percentage of passes must often lead to erroneous and unjust conclusions, and must have an injurious effect, whether they gain or lose by the comparison, upon the schools so compared. There can be very little doubt that this portion of the report is too frequently regarded by Committees and the public generally as the sole criterion of a teacher's fitness for his position. Such being the case, it is at least desirable that the liability to error should be reduced to a minimum; and this can scarcely be claimed for a method of recording the percentage of passes by which a small and comparatively poorly-taught school, having few or no children below Standard I., can gain as high a percentage as a highly efficient and well-organized school having a considerable number in the preparatory classes. It is true that the "percentage of failures" gives the initiated a clue to the true state of the case; but the majority of the skimmers of reports of this kind seldom trouble themselves to bestow more than a glance at any other portion than that from which they have been accustomed to form their opinions as to the merits of the schools in which they are more immediately interested. I have therefore but little hope that much notice will be taken of the statement I am now about to make—namely, that the percentage of failures subtracted from 100 will give the percentage of passes as this last term has been hitherto understood in this district. To correct the erroneous impressions likely to be conveyed by the new percentage, I have given on Table 4 the percentage of passes calculated on the roll number of each standard class. This table, however, is no more reliable a guide by itself than any of the others: the mean average of "pass" and "class" subjects, as well as the additional marks, must be taken into account if it should be thought necessary to compare the performances of similar schools. The number of absentees should also be considered, as they tend to reduce the percentage of passes. In fact, a lengthened experience of the manner in which,

by a judicious selection of one set of figures and a prudent disregard of others, the admirers of any teacher can exalt his school into a position wholly unmerited, together with a conviction of the impossibility of contriving any set of tabulated statements which should place schools exactly in their true order of merit, has convinced me that the sooner their publication is discontinued the better it will be for all concerned. If thought absolutely necessary by the powers that be, they might, without the slightest diminution of any usefulness they may possess, be advantageously consigned to the deserved obscurity of official pigeon holes, and to the rarely-explored recesses of the Parliamentary Blue Books. I am not blind to the fact that in this and former reports I have introduced, perhaps, more of these tabulated statements than many other Inspectors; but I have done so, not because I have any great love for or value of such statistics, but in order to place the condition of our schools in every possible light, for the purpose of disarming hasty criticism and unfair comparison. Perhaps the nearest approach to a just comparison of the work of the several schools that can be formed from tables alone would be obtained by adding the mean percentage of "pass" and "class" subjects to the "additional marks." Table 7 shows the figures obtained by this method.

The change in the standard regulations has not caused any material alteration in the method of examination hitherto followed in this district. The class subjects were examined, at all but a few of the smallest schools, by written papers, and more prominence was given this year to the questioning of classes upon their comprehension of the subject matter of their reading lessons. The examination of the class subject by means of written papers seems to me to be preferable to an oral examination, when circumstances permit, for several reasons. It gives all the children in the class an equal chance and a better opportunity of showing their knowledge of the subject, and that in a manner the least trying to the nervous and timid, who would probably do themselves but scant justice at an oral examination before a comparative stranger. When the classes are large a more accurate judgment can be formed, both as to the amount of knowledge possessed and the method upon which it has been taught, and that, too, in a manner capable, if necessary, of satisfactory and incontrovertible demonstration. In large districts, where Inspectors have more schools under their charge than they can possibly do full justice to, the oral method, or any expedient by means of which time can be saved, is doubtless a necessity; but where time will allow it I consider the other plan to be more satisfactory to all concerned. The only alteration I propose to make with respect to the class subjects at the next examination is to give a much larger number of questions on each subject, leaving the selection of a certain limited number to the scholars themselves.

Tables Nos. 1 and 2, on a form prepared by the department, give (1) the summary of results for the whole district, and (2) the summary for each school. In the latter, the expressions "fair," "good," "satisfactory," "very good," and "excellent" may be regarded by admirers of percentages as approximately equivalent to 20, 40, 60, 80, and 100 per cent. respectively. Table 3 gives the detailed results of each school, on the same lines as the general summary, but supplemented by the addition of a column showing the average percentage of marks gained by each standard class. This column I regard as the most important in the table, for, as the marks of all the scholars examined are taken into account, it affords perhaps the best of many imperfect indications of the amount of success that has attended the teachers' efforts during the past year, as far as the pass subjects alone are concerned. Table 4 has been already explained. Table 5 shows the number examined and passed in the several subjects in the whole district. Compared with the corresponding table in last year's report, and making a proportionate reduction for the shorter interval between the examinations of 1885 and 1886, it can be shown that there is an improvement in all the subjects except geography, amounting to 1 per cent. in arithmetic, 4 per cent. in spelling, 5 per cent. in reading, 9 per cent. in grammar, and 11 per cent. in writing. Geography shows no improvement, and is the least successfully taught pass subject in the district. Table 6 [not reprinted] contains the same information in the case of each school in the district. The average ages of scholars who passed the several standards were—Standard I., eight years nine months; Standard II., ten years; Standard III., eleven years six months; Standard IV., twelve years six months; Standard V., thirteen years; Standard VI., thirteen years eight months.

The form of examination reports supplied by the department provides in Parts II. and III. for one percentage on class subjects, and one number of additional marks for the whole school. Now, as in the former there are four subjects and in the latter six, for each of five or six standards, I thought it advisable to prepare for the information of teachers and Committees a table to show how the final totals were arrived at, and a copy of this was attached to each examination report. One of the printed forms used for this purpose is annexed. The highest possible number for the class subjects is, of course, 100, and for additional subjects 120.

A careful and intelligent consideration of the foregoing statistics will give some idea of the strong and weak points in our schools. Geography and arithmetic, though well taught at some schools, give on the whole the least satisfactory results, notwithstanding the very large, and in some instances undue, proportion of the school time that is devoted to the latter. I took the trouble to analyse several time tables in the schools in the northern portion of the district, to ascertain exactly how the time was distributed among the various subjects, and I found that in the Fourth Standard, which I selected for comparison as being represented in all schools, the mean time devoted to arithmetic at the seven schools referred to was rather over 25 per cent. of the whole school time. At one large school 36 per cent. of the time actually employed in teaching (that is, leaving out the 100 minutes per week which are spent in the playground) was devoted to this subject. Yet, of this class, out of forty-six examined only five gained more than half the possible number of marks. Geography, which is a class subject in the Fourth Standard, received 150 minutes a week at five of these schools, and 187 and 100 minutes respectively at Kumara and Hokitika, the percentage gained on this subject being 43 at the former and 39 at the latter. The large number of passes gained in writing is, no doubt, due to its receiving in some schools, not more attention than its importance demands, but more time than can be spared in the present crowded state of the syllabus without prejudice to

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

employed and interested during their ordinary school hours, which, in my opinion, should never exceed two hours, including a short interval in the playground. In acquiescence with my recommendation, the infant classes at several of the smaller schools are dismissed, both morning and afternoon half an hour sooner than the rest of the scholars. A mischievous practice of allowing children to write with little scraps of pencil, sometimes not an inch in length, prevails in some schools. The evil effects of this practice are too well known to need repetition here. There is, moreover, no excuse for it, as slate pencils and pencil holders are supplied by the Board for use in this department, free of charge. The slates are frequently very badly and unevenly ruled, the spaces being either much too large or the reverse, with scarcely any two slates ruled alike. This is a matter that should not be left to the children or to their parents. All the slates should be ruled by the teacher to a uniform gauge, so as to fall in with the requirements of the First Standard.

THE NEW REGULATIONS.—I fail to see that the work of elementary school teachers has been materially lightened by the alterations made in the standard regulations. The placing of certain subjects under the head of class subjects may perhaps enable a teacher to gain a higher "percentage of passes," but if the following remarks in the Minister's last report are to be regarded (as, no doubt, they should be) as authoritative, the work of a really conscientious teacher will certainly not be diminished. The passage referred to runs thus (page vi., E.-1, 1886): "It is necessary, therefore, to say that it must be clearly understood that the class subjects are to be studied as thoroughly and examined as carefully as the 'pass subjects,' that a child cannot pass until he has been examined in the class subjects, and that a school will gain as much distinction by obtaining a high percentage on class subjects as by gaining a high percentage of passes." The permission to group standard classes for the purpose of instruction in some subjects has only given an official sanction to what must necessarily have been a pretty general custom in schools having the full complement of standards taught by a single teacher; and in the larger schools it will, no doubt, be found advantageous to adopt the system of grouping classes for instruction in such subjects as vocal music, science, and drill. I subjoin a few remarks upon some of the standard subjects as treated in this district.

READING.—That there are fewer failures in this subject than in any other except writing is not altogether due to its being comparatively better taught, but partly to the fact that I thought it proper on this first examination under the new regulations to be rather more lenient in judging the subject than I intend to be in future. For instance, in numerous cases the voices of the readers were scarcely audible. This was naturally more common amongst the girls, and has frequently been referred to in my former reports. In future no instance of this kind will escape failure. In the higher standards I shall expect to be able to follow the reader without seeing the book, and shall not pass any reading that is not intelligible under this test. In the First Standard I provided myself this year with books not used in the schools, and tested some of the more fluent readers by causing them to read a few sentences out of these new books, and generally with satisfactory results. On the whole I am satisfied with this portion of the school work. The recitation, however, shows a falling off both in the number of pieces prepared, and (in some schools) in punctuation and expression. In the lower classes it is common to find children glibly repeating poetry without the faintest idea of its meaning. I often asked in vain for the meaning of simple words constantly in use, such as "linger," "replied," "chide;" whilst inattention to punctuation sometimes produces ludicrous nonsense. Two lines of "The Well of St. Keyne" were frequently recited,—

If the husband of this gifted well;
Should drink before his wife.

WRITING is in a satisfactory state, as a rule, throughout the district. That of the first class, on slates, is generally very good, though at a few schools the uniform ruling of the slates is neglected. Writing with pen and ink in exercise books is introduced at some schools as early as the primer class, and, being very carefully attended to, is really surprisingly neat and clean for such young scholars. The writing of the higher standards is always judged by the transcription exercise, and produces very creditable results—in some cases far better than the handwriting of the other papers would lead me to expect; but this is, no doubt, due to the necessary limitation of time for each subject, which certainly does not allow for an elaborate exhibition of penmanship.

ARITHMETIC.—Notwithstanding the large—in some instances excessive—amount of time occupied by this subject, it yields nearly the lowest percentage of passes. I am disposed to regard this not altogether as the result of inferior skill in teaching the subject at present, but to various causes, including defective early training. I fear, too, that some of the failures might be traced to the vicious habit of "copying" during the year, and others to the fact of arithmetic being sometimes regarded as a convenient means of keeping classes apparently busy while the teacher's attention is engaged elsewhere. In some schools the children are permitted to work from text books containing the answers to the examples. This is a fruitful source of disappointment at the examination, and would never be tolerated in any good school. The most disheartening aspect of the case, however, is the very small practical benefit derived from the expenditure of so much valuable time. In the Fourth Standard comparatively few of the scholars were able to make out correctly a small "bill of parcels" or "invoice," and if called upon to add up quickly a tolerably long column of figures, I fear there would be very few scholars in this district who would arrive at the correct total. I put this to the test at several of our best schools this year by giving the higher classes a long column of £ s. d. to add up, allowing them as much time as I required to add up the same column twice; and, although I am not particularly expert at this kind of work, there was scarcely a solitary instance of complete success. When the time was up some had finished, but were altogether wrong; a few only had the sum correct as far as the shillings. I believe this is the outcome of defective training while in the lower standards. The mere addition of numbers should be performed with little or no mental effort if a thorough drilling in the addition table has been received, and if the practice of counting on the

fingers (which, if allowed at all, should certainly be confined to the preparatory classes) has not been permitted in the intermediate stages. I have frequently seen a Second, and even a Third Standard class while at their arithmetic constantly engaged in a species of noiseless "five finger exercise" on the desks, or even in making groups of strokes on their slates to represent the numbers to be added, and then counting the strokes. No wonder, under such circumstances, that the work of higher standards should so often fall below reasonable expectation. Imperfect acquaintance with the money tables gives rise to much loss of time. I have noticed children in the Third and Fourth Classes writing down such small sums as eighty-seven pence on their slates and dividing by twelve to reduce them to shillings, which they ought to have been able to do at once mentally. In fact mental arithmetic is not so generally utilised as it might be. It is indeed taught in a formal manner at all schools because it is required at the examination, but its use in the ordinary operations of arithmetic is in many cases entirely neglected. All the best writers on school method agree in attaching the utmost importance to this branch of the subject. Every arithmetic lesson might commence with a few minutes' exercise in mental problems bearing upon the particular branch to be taught. An experienced teacher could easily frame these questions at the time, but any painstaking person could have a few questions carefully prepared beforehand; or books on arithmetic are procurable (Cornwell and Fitch's *School Arithmetic*, for instance) every fresh example in which is preceded by a series of mental problems of a suitable kind. I believe also that the introduction of very simple cases of fractions into the arithmetic work of the Fourth and even of the Third Standard would be of great advantage, and would save much valuable time in the higher standards, while it would be still more beneficial in the case of children leaving school after passing the Fourth. Such examples as are to be found in the first part of Colenso's *Shilling Arithmetic* (Examples 19 and 20) are well suited to this stage of the scholar's progress. Perhaps part of the deficiency in this and other subjects must be laid to the account of irregularity of attendance, of which I shall speak further on.

GRAMMAR AND COMPOSITION.—These subjects showed a marked improvement this year. The composition was in many schools tolerably free from ungrammatical expressions and awkward constructions, and where it failed in the higher standards it was more frequently in quantity than in quality, a certain minimum number of lines being expected from each standard. The chief fault in the composition of the Third and Fourth Standards was the constant repetition of the same connective expression. If, for instance, the subject of the composition was a narrative, the words "and so" would occur at every stage; and if a descriptive piece, such as the making of bread, "and then" introduces every fresh process: *e.g.*, "The land is first ploughed, *and then* the seed is sown, *and then* the land is harrowed, *and then* it is rolled, *and then*," &c., to the end, which frequently calls forth the first and only full stop. I need scarcely say that this defect was not general in the classes referred to; on the contrary, some really very well-expressed letters were written by scholars in the Fourth Standard—letters which one would have been pleased to receive from one's own absent children. These were frequently addressed to some friend or relative of the writer living at a distance, and might possibly in some cases have been reproductions of letters actually sent to them.

GEOGRAPHY.—This has already been referred to as the subject in which little or no improvement upon last year's results was visible. The principal cause of failure was the very inferior map-drawing which prevails at some schools. The map-drawing of the Fifth Class at a certain school astonished me by its wretched character, as from the number of really well-drawn maps suspended from the walls of the class-room I was led to expect a very different result. I am therefore compelled to believe that the maps thus exhibited must have been drawn with some mechanical assistance such as tracing. Certainly there could not have been much practice in mapping from memory, or the results would have been better. At some schools, in the Fourth and Fifth Standards many of the maps of the North Island were quite unrecognisable from their outline, and questions bearing upon physical or mathematical geography were avoided, or the answers showed little comprehension of the subject. The question, "Why are the days in New Zealand shorter in July than they are in January?" was answered, with very few exceptions, by the bare statement that "January was summer and July winter." I am willing to admit that the time allowed for this work—one hour—may have been too short for some of the scholars, although many very creditable papers were produced under the same strict limitation of time. Next year I propose to extend the time for this subject in the two higher standards, when I hope more satisfactory work will be accomplished. If the Board's funds will permit I should like to furnish the larger schools with some raised maps. One head teacher has taken the trouble to prepare a rough substitute by means of a tray of sand, which can be made to assume any desired shape, in illustration of the geographical definitions. This is an example which might easily and advantageously be followed by others.

NEEDLEWORK.—On the whole I am disposed to think that sufficient attention is not paid to this subject at some schools. When it is regarded by the head teacher with indifference, if not with contempt, it is not likely that his assistants will perform this part of their duties with much enthusiasm. Great carelessness and want of knowledge is occasionally observable in the work even of the Sixth Standard girls. Complaints of an informal kind reach me about work being incorrectly fixed for the scholars, of garments being hemmed on the wrong side, &c.; and my own eyes, which are sufficiently trained to this kind of work to enable me to judge whether the requirements of the standards are being attempted, have detected cases of this kind. The sewing of the Fifth and Sixth Standards at the Hokitika School was far from satisfactory. As this is a subject by which "additional marks" may be earned I shall be far more exacting next year than I have been, and shall decline to make the allowance to girls permitted me by clause 22 of the new regulations, unless the school obtains at least half of the possible additional marks for this subject.

DRILL.—Military drill is not taught at present in any of our schools, nor can time be spared for more than a few of the simpler movements which are required in the ordinary course of school

work. Even these, however, are not understood at some schools, and the children in the lower classes are often in doubt as to their right or left hands. The infant classes of the largest schools are generally well exercised in the extension motions. As 100 minutes a week, on the average, are spent in the playground, I think all schools having more than one teacher might, by the aid of the "Schoolmaster's Drill Assistant," make their scholars tolerably perfect in the extension motions, facings, marching, and wheeling in file, the last being particularly useful in moving classes inside the schoolroom. The class drill given on pages 52-54 of the book named might also be introduced where it is not already practised. Full marks for drill will not be given unless at least so much as has now been recommended is fairly accomplished.

DRAWING has, of course, been generally taken up in Standard I. The schools south of Donoghue's were examined so early in the year that they could not be expected to do much, and, indeed, had not commenced the teaching of drawing. The whole of the first class at Rangiriri failed through not having made any attempt at drawing, though examined late in the year. The principal schools have been supplied with the plaster and wire models recommended by the Art Master to the Wellington Board. I have suggested that the latter should have calico covers made for them, when they could at once be made serviceable as solid models. These covers might be cut out by the teachers of sewing and made by the girls, so that the only cost would be that of the calico. Drawing as a class subject was taken up at only eight schools, and, as will be seen by Table 8, with only poor results at most of them. Kumara, Kanieri, Ross, and Donoghue's did well considering the circumstances. The drawing books at Kumara and Ross contain some very good specimens of freehand drawing. As soon as this subject becomes compulsory in Standard IV. it will be necessary to provide the instruments required for the geometrical drawing which commences in that class. I have already made inquiries as to the cost of these, with a view of supplying them to the teachers if the Board should decide to do so.

HOME WORK.—Much reference is made in reports from other districts to the subject of home lessons. Some Inspectors appear to regard them as a monstrous and unmitigated evil, while others speak of them in less condemnatory terms. Now, there is nothing more generally recognised by experienced teachers than the imperative necessity for the incessant and (to the teacher) wearisome revisal of past work. The very best method of teaching may be employed, comparatively speaking, fruitlessly, unless every stage of the work is again and again tested by means of frequent, careful, and systematic recapitulation. This is the case with every branch of instruction, and in every class, from the lowest to the highest; and, being so, I do not see how sufficient time can be found inside the ordinary school hours for the proper accomplishment of this most important work without the assistance afforded by means of home lessons, and for this kind of work they should be reserved. No attempt should be made to teach any fresh matter by means of home lessons. They should be employed for revisal work, and for that only. Then, provided that the quantity required be not excessive, I can see not only no objection to, but great advantages to be derived from, their judicious employment. If scholars are not mentally and physically capable of performing the work of the class in which they are placed they should be removed at all hazards to a lower one; but if they are, the mental strain produced by the four or five hours' school work during the day will not be so severe as to make an hour of such revision work a grievous burden to them, while it will have the advantage of removing them, for that time at least, from the influence of larrikinism, with which many would, but for such home work, probably be familiarizing themselves in the streets.

KOKATAHI.—By reference to the tables it will be seen that the results at the schools in this district are most unsatisfactory, though scarcely more so than I foresaw when the former Board, at the request of a deputation from the inhabitants of that district, rescinded a resolution by which they had decided, on my recommendation, to establish one central school, and, unwisely yielding to the pressure brought to bear upon them, consented to the erection of two schools, one at each end of the district. The consequence has been that the children have been deprived of the advantage which they would have derived from the instruction of a fully-qualified and efficient teacher for the last six or seven years. It may be, perhaps, urged that the inhabitants are the best judges of their own requirements, and if the consequences fell upon the parents only this plea might possibly be admitted; but, seeing that it is the rising generation which suffers in such a case, the ill-advised opposition of the parents should not have moved the Board from a position they had taken up after mature consideration, without very powerful reasons being advanced for the change. I therefore strongly urge upon the Board the necessity of doing what is still possible to remedy the existing state of affairs by making these two schools half-time schools under an efficient and certificated teacher. Of course I should very much prefer seeing a central school established, as then it would be possible to have a sewing mistress for the girls, and ultimately, as the school increases, a female assistant; but the existing buildings, if they could be removed, would not be suitable for the purpose, and I presume that the erection of a new building is scarcely within the Board's means at present. I have no hesitation in saying that the progress made by the children under the proposed arrangement would be very much more satisfactory than it can ever be under the present system. The circumstances, too, are peculiarly favourable to the half-time system. There is a cottage at each school; and, the industrial occupations of the parents requiring frequent assistance from their children, this could be given during the time that the school is not open, and the attendance at other times ought to be proportionately more regular. The distance between the two schools is not more than four miles, and there are no natural obstacles in the way except the creek, which is now bridged. It is not possible to mention the name of this district without making some reference to the scandal that has recently disgraced the locality and reflected discredit upon the teaching profession generally. Although the Board has been blamed by a section of the Press for not taking more vigorous action, I cannot see what more could have been done under the circumstances. As soon as certain facts became known through common rumour the teacher was suspended, and the School Committee

were instructed to hold an inquiry into the case. This they attempted to do, and for their failure the inhabitants themselves are to blame. The teacher was then summarily dismissed. The records of the proceedings in the Resident Magistrate's Court during the past few months are sufficient to show that the suspension and dismissal of the person referred to were imperatively necessary, and that it would probably have been perfectly useless, after the failure of the Committee, for the Board to attempt to make any further inquiry.

WORKING AVERAGE.—I have come to the conclusion, after several years' experience, that the present method of paying teachers of small schools by a capitation on the average attendance is open to grave objections. In the first place, it is the working average that is the basis of calculation, and there are two ways in which this is liable to abuse. Teachers may discourage the attendance of children living near the school, in unfavourable weather, so as to keep the attendance below half the roll number, owing to the unavoidable absence of those living at a distance; or if the number present be just at or above half the roll number he may omit to mark the attendance of a few children so as to bring the number below it, and thus be enabled to exclude that half-day from the calculation. Supposing such an error to have occurred (either accidentally or purposely), it is almost impossible to detect it. The roll number, however, is far more easily verified, and I believe it would be a great improvement if the teachers of such schools were paid either by a fixed salary or by a capitation on the roll number, which could be calculated at such a rate as to leave the amount payable about the same as it is at present. Of course, in the majority of cases there is little fear of a teacher descending to such dishonourable means of adding a few pounds to his annual income, but if there be only one chance in a hundred of an attempt to evade the regulations, it is better that the temptation to do so should be removed, especially considering the very small salaries received by the teachers of such schools. In two or three schools the number of days excluded from the working average has been suspiciously large, and in one of these I feel convinced that a true return was not made, as since the appointment of a new teacher the average attendance has fallen from twenty-five to nineteen.

Irregularity of attendance does not appear to have decreased, notwithstanding the amendment in that portion of the Act relating to compulsory attendance. Nor is this at all surprising. Any attempt to amend the compulsory clauses which throws the onus of enforcing them upon the local Committees must always result in failure. Moreover, in country districts the two-mile limit renders the compulsory clauses practically inoperative. In my opinion the only way to diminish irregularity of attendance is to repeal the compulsory clauses altogether, when, being no longer compulsory, primary education should also cease to be free in the present sense of that term. It is a trite observation that what people get for nothing they value at the same rate, and, paying nothing directly for the instruction of their children, parents seem to imagine that they are losing nothing by keeping them from school—ignoring the irreparable loss to the children. But if a special rate for educational purposes were raised, as was done in this district before the Act of 1877 came into force, parents would be less ready to lose the benefits which they had paid for in hard-earned money. As the large annual vote for education seems to meet with increasing opposition, it may yet be found necessary to adopt some kind of local or special taxation in aid of this object, and should this be done I believe a great improvement in the regularity of attendance would result.

PUPIL-TEACHERS' EXAMINATION.—In accordance with the resolution of the Board, the pupil-teachers of the Westland District were required to attend in Hokitika for examination, instead of being examined at their own schools during the standard examination, as has been the custom in past years. Twelve pupil-teachers presented themselves for examination—viz., one for admission to Class 1, who passed with credit; five for admission to Class 2, of whom four passed (three with credit) and one failed (this pupil-teacher has failed regularly at every alternate examination—that is, has taken two years to gain each step; consequently she has served her full time without reaching the second class); four were examined in the third class, of whom three passed with credit and one failed (Clause 13 of the Pupil-teachers' Regulations provides that pupil-teachers failing to advance one step annually may be dismissed; but, inasmuch as the failure in this case is, no doubt, partly due to the resignation of the head teacher in September last, and seeing that the pupil-teacher referred to shows considerable aptitude for the teaching profession, I recommend that she be allowed to remain in her present class for another year); in the fourth class two pupil-teachers were examined, and both passed. Through an unfortunate clerical error the papers on domestic economy were wrongly headed, and each class received a paper intended for the class below. This would be a considerable disadvantage to the candidates concerned, and I have therefore made an allowance which I believe will compensate for the error, although it has not affected the relative position of any of the candidates. One very gratifying feature was displayed through this mistake, and that is the high marks obtained by some of the candidates notwithstanding the error, which showed that the work of the past years had not been forgotten, as is too frequently the case, but had been carefully revised. The presence of all the pupil-teachers at the same time and place gave me an opportunity of comparing their exercise books for the past year, which are required by the regulations to be preserved throughout the year. Some of the pupil-teachers from the country had omitted to bring down their books, but most of them had done so. For quantity of work done, neatness of arrangement, carefulness in correction, and comprehensiveness, the books produced by the pupil-teachers at Kumara were conspicuous. Table 10 shows the performance of each pupil-teacher in all the subjects of the examination, with the total marks gained in each case. Although not mentioned in the regulations, I introduced this year in the paper on school method a question in connection with the making out of the quarterly returns, leaving it optional with the pupil-teachers to take or leave it. Several answered it correctly, and I purpose, with the approval of the Board, making this a feature in the pupil-teachers'

examinations, as it is of the first importance that they should be thoroughly familiar with the methods of furnishing the returns required by the department.

The Chairman, Education Board, Wellington.

I have, &c.,

JOHN SMITH, Inspector.

P.S.—The destruction of the Hokitika School by fire having necessitated the distribution of scholars amongst three separate buildings in different parts of the town, the work of the school has been carried on during the past year under very disadvantageous circumstances, and great allowances must therefore be made with regard to the results of this year's examination.

SUMMARY of RESULTS for the whole DISTRICT.

Standard Classes.			Presented.	Absent.	Excepted.	Failed.	Passed.	Average Age of those that passed.
								Yrs. mos.
S 7	...	...	50	...	...	...	...	...
S 6	...	...	75	11	1	21	42	13 8
S 5	...	...	162	25	3	42	92	13 0
S 4	...	...	230	27	7	37	159	12 6
S 3	...	...	286	26	12	59	189	11 6
S 2	...	...	252	25	7	49	171	10 0
S 1	...	...	239	17	4	44	174	8 9
P	...	...	598	...	...	...	...	...
Totals			1,892	131	34	252	827	*

* Mean of average age, 11·7.

SOUTH CANTERBURY.

SIR,—

Education Office, Timaru, 25th March, 1887.

I have the honour to present a general report on the schools of the Education District of South Canterbury.

Since my appointment in October I have examined all the schools in this district. There was not sufficient time to do this before the close of the year 1886, and it was therefore necessary to examine some of the schools in 1887. The schools had been inspected for the year by my predecessor, Dr. Anderson.

There are now forty-eight schools in this district, being an increase of three over the number for last year. There is also an increase of 208 in the number of scholars on the rolls at the date of examination. The numbers for this year are, 2,264 boys and 2,101 girls. Of these, 1,581, or 36·2 per cent., were in the preparatory classes; 2,752, or 63·04 per cent., were presented in the standard classes, and 32, or 7·3 per cent., had already passed the Sixth Standard.

The improvement which was noticed last year in the attendance at examination still continues. Of the 2,572 children in standard classes, 2,518, or 91·5 per cent., were present at examination, leaving a percentage of 8·5 of absentees. A child's absence from examination may very often be taken as equivalent to its expected failure in the standard, and where the percentage of absentees is high it may almost without exception be reckoned as an unfavourable item in estimating the character of a school.

The percentage of passes of those presented in standards is 65·91; of the 2,518 actually examined the percentage is 72·04. There are to be deducted from those examined eighty-three "exceptions"—*i.e.*, children whose failure in the examination is not to be regarded as affecting the character of the school, as they had not made half the possible attendances of the three quarters previous to that in which the examination was held. Deducting the "exceptions," we find the net percentage of passes just touches 75, which leaves 25 per cent. of failures; and this agrees with the result in column 16 of Appendix I. The net percentage of passes is not given in Appendix I., but it can be found for each school by subtracting the percentage of failures from 100. When this is done the percentage of passes resulting will be useful for comparison with that obtained by any school under the old regulations.

By the new regulations the percentage of passes is to be calculated on the total number of children on the rolls. Under this system 100 per cent. cannot be obtained by any district. Had every child presented in a standard passed the examination the percentage of passes would have been 63·04. For this district it is 41. Whatever purpose it may serve, it is useless as a means of comparing the efficiency of one school with that of any other; and yet people do so use it. On looking down column 14 of Appendix I., I come on two 32s, indicating an equal percentage gained by the schools numbered 29 and 30, notwithstanding the fact that No. 29 has a percentage of failures of 28 against the 0 of No. 30. I point out this one instance of comparison as a warning to those who take an interest in the schools to avoid this percentage altogether unless they are prepared to examine thoroughly into all the conditions that affect it. To a certain extent the figures in columns 15, 16, and 17 of Appendix I. are valuable for comparison. The following table shows the general results for each standard:—

Standards.	Presented.	Absent.	Excepted.	Failed.	Passed.	Percentage of Passes on Number Presented.	Percentage of Passes on Number Examined.	Percentage of Failures.	Average Age.	Number of Schools.
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)
Standard VI.	102	3	2	23	74	72.54	74.74	24.46	14—5	21
Standard V.	280	32	7	97	144	51.42	58.06	40.24	13—1	38
Standard IV.	450	37	14	177	222	49.33	53.75	44.36	12—4	42
Standard III.	678	77	32	215	354	52.22	58.90	37.78	11—1	46
Standard II.	645	47	14	63	521	80.77	87.12	10.78	9—11	47
Standard I.	597	38	14	46	499	83.58	89.26	8.44	8—8	47
Totals ...	2,752	234	83	621	1,814	65.91	72.04	25.50	*	48

* Mean average age, 11 years 7 months.

The percentage of passes on the number examined in all the standards has fallen very little below that of last year; but if the figures be compared standard by standard, it will be found that there has been a considerable falling off in the Third, Fourth, Fifth, and Sixth, for which the rise in the First and Second cannot be regarded as a compensation. As the examinations were not conducted under the same regulations as were in force in 1885, it would be unjust to conclude from this comparison that the teachers had been less earnest in their work than formerly. Improvement in these percentages must certainly be looked for, and this must come from better methods of instruction. The standard of passing was not fixed so high this year that any lowering of it is to be expected. I shall now make some comments on the various subjects of instruction.

READING.—I cannot say that I have been pleased with the reading I have heard in most of the schools. This statement may seem at variance with the fact that few failures have been marked in this subject; but there is often very little merit in reading which just reaches the passing limit. Very frequently in the First Standard, and occasionally in the Second, it was painful to listen to boys and girls of nine or ten years of age making a pause at every word in lessons which they had read so often that they could almost have gone through the same process with their eyes shut. There is some difficulty in getting children to read well: they require to be taught to do so. In a few schools the difficulty had been realised and overcome, and children of seven years were found reading in a pleasing and intelligent style. The tendency in the upper standards is towards too rapid reading, with the many faults that are almost inseparable from it. It is surely not too much to expect the pupils of all the standard classes to pay due regard to punctuation marks, and, in addition, to find them observing the voice-pauses which the sense demands, and which are necessary to make the reading intelligible to a listener. I am afraid that the repetition of verses is proving a hindrance to the cultivation of good reading, rather than the powerful aid it ought to be. It was not an uncommon thing to find the choice of pieces left to the pupils themselves, and the preparation a matter of home practice, and consequently of unchecked development of numerous faults. The pace was sometimes astonishing. In several schools there was a pleasing contrast to this, and the recitations were given with taste and expression. I should wish to press upon the teachers the importance of giving a large share of their time to the teaching of reading. Whatever may be wanting in the mental outfit of the child who is leaving school, let him at least have such facility in this art that it will be a pleasure to him to continue its exercise. In most schools I found the pupils fairly ready in their answering of the meanings of individual words, and this occurred more frequently in the Second and Third Standards than in the higher ones. In addition to this exercise, the scholars in the higher standards were subjected to the severer test of giving the meaning of phrases and sentences; but it was a rare thing to get good answering. It is an exercise that can be well done when the teacher is possessed of considerable tact in revealing to the pupils their own strength, and has encouraged them in using it. The difficulty is to get children to make the first attempt. With skilful leading they will soon come to combine their fragmentary answers into one whole statement. It is only when this stage of answering is reached that the teacher should be satisfied. A paragraph of the reading lesson gone into in this way is more beneficial than the hearing of synonyms of all the long words in a dozen lessons. It has an influence for good upon all the work of the school: it is an exercise in oral composition by which the written compositions should be greatly improved: even in arithmetic its effect will be apparent in the greater power which the pupil will have in reading into the meaning of his problems. I should like to find an intelligent acquaintance with the subject matter of the pieces for recitation included in their preparation. Even when the recitation was fairly well done, strange misconceptions of the meaning have occurred. On one occasion, after a class had recited "The Well of St. Keyne," I asked the reciter of the last verse what the wife had in the bottle she had taken to church. She hesitated, and then with a blush replied, "Spirits."

SPELLING.—Spelling in the First and Second Standards was often excellent, and it was a rare occurrence to find it very bad. Transcription, too, in the Second Standard was generally well done. Many of the Third Standard pupils failed badly in dictation, coming to grief in words that a First Standard boy would have been ashamed to spell wrongly. With more practice, and systematic correction of exercises of this kind, great improvement might be made. The Fourth Standard showed no better results. The same weakness was not so apparent in the Fifth and Sixth Standards, and some excellent dictation exercises were done, particularly in the larger schools.

WRITING.—In a few schools excellent specimens of writing were shown, but in general the writing in copy books did not possess much merit. To most schools credit is due for the care taken to keep the copy books clean. The examination papers were often neatly written, but in schools where the writing was poor in the copy books it degenerated into wretched scribbling on the day of examination. When bad writing is general in a school there is no need to go far for the cause. The teacher must take the blame upon himself. If children are really instructed in this branch, and the teacher insists on getting all written work neatly done, improvement is bound to come. In this, as in many other things, children are apt to do just what will suffice to get them along, and if the teacher is not strong enough to lead them up to his standard they will drag him down to theirs. Very much of the bad writing is due to insufficient instruction and supervision in the First and Second Standards. I have sometimes found slates unruled, and seldom have I found the slates of a class showing uniformity of ruling. The ruling of slates is a matter for the teacher to attend to, and he should be careful with it. At this stage no detail is to be accounted trivial. In two or three schools I had the opportunity of seeing the slate writing exceedingly well done.

ARITHMETIC.—In the great majority of the schools the results obtained in arithmetic have been very unsatisfactory, and I have so frequently directed attention to this subject in the examination reports that I am persuaded it would serve no good purpose to make further reference here to the weaknesses which were revealed at the examination; nor could any improvement be anticipated to result from the few suggestions which would reasonably be expected to come within the scope of this report. It will be my special duty to inquire fully into the subject during my visits of inspection.

GRAMMAR AND COMPOSITION.—Grammar is probably the hardest subject which the pupil has to face in his school course, and it is one which tests the teacher's skill in no ordinary degree. There are so many wrong ways of going about the teaching of this subject that I was prepared for a good deal of unintelligent answering; and I was not disappointed. One could count on the fingers of one hand the schools which did well in this subject. I shall reserve any remarks which I might feel inclined to make till I have had an opportunity of witnessing the methods which are adopted in teaching it. Composition was generally rather poor.

HISTORY.—This subject has received a fair share of the teacher's time during school hours, and the children have spent more of their home time in its preparation than was at all pleasant to them. Such, at least, is the conclusion I have come to in going through the written papers of the Fourth, Fifth, and Sixth Standards. I am certain that a greater benefit would be derived from this fascinating subject if the teacher took upon himself more of the home preparation, and relieved the children of a good deal of theirs. Some teachers had gone the length of putting the children of the Third Standard through the same weary mill-round which their unfortunate brothers and sisters of the high standards were treading. In one school a catechism of history was professed by the pupils of this standard, and the answers came glibly off the tongue in language the meaning of which the children did not know. In some cases the teachers had interpreted the requirements of the syllabus at this stage in a better spirit, and had made the lessons useful and attractive.

GEOGRAPHY.—In the majority of the schools I felt justified in giving very good marks for the geography of the Second Standard. There were, however, too frequent instances of teachers failing to make the most of the features of their own district as a means of leading children from the "known to the unknown." In the other standards the answering did not come up to my expectations except in two or three cases. Teachers might work a wonderful improvement in this subject if they made good use of the blackboard for the drawing of maps during the progress of the lessons. This should not prove too great a tax upon their time and skill, and they would be amply rewarded by the increased interest the children would take in their work, and the sure and rapid progress which would be secured. Map-drawing from memory was generally very good; and what the children can do well on paper should be well within the power of the schoolmaster to do on the blackboard. In this, as in history, the teacher's own preparation would lighten the labour of the scholar. The questions in physical geography were generally left unanswered, or answered badly.

DRAWING.—Instruction in drawing has been given in all the schools, and in some of them the efforts of the teachers have been attended with considerable success, while in others very little progress has been made. A few of the teachers had found it possible to give instruction in practical geometry in addition to freehand drawing. In one school a vigorous attempt had been made to satisfy the requirements of the syllabus for each standard; but it was found necessary to continue the work after school hours. The prospect of having drawing as it stands at present in the syllabus included in the pass subjects is not a pleasant one for teachers or pupils.

OBJECT LESSONS AND SCIENCE.—Very few instances occurred of teachers failing to give some instruction in object lessons. Most of the teachers were able to show books containing notes of lessons that had been given. These were generally pretty full and well arranged, but the number of lessons was often very small. In a majority of the schools the teachers have been engaged with the teaching of science during the year. In a few cases the instruction had been real, and in so far as it was so the pupils will be permanently benefited by it.

SEWING.—In nearly all the schools in which sewing was taught, satisfactory progress had been made, and in many schools excellent specimens of work were shown.

SINGING.—Good singing is not so common in the schools as I should wish. When the teacher has the ability he should look upon it as a pleasure rather than a task to train the children to sing well. In some schools the children had a little knowledge of music, but the songs had been mostly learned by ear.

On my visits to the schools the appearance of the rooms was all that could be desired, and the well-preserved furniture in very many instances gave evidence that this was not altogether the result of a special effort for the occasion. I have seldom had to find fault with a pupil for misbehaving in any way. In most of the schools I was satisfied with the order and discipline, and in all of them

the work of examining was made pleasant by the courtesy of the teachers and the cheerful obedience and good manners of the children.

I have, &c.,
JAS. GIBSON GOW, M.A., Inspector.

The Chairman, Education Board, South Canterbury.

APPENDIX.

EXTRACTS FROM REPORTS ON DISTRICT HIGH SCHOOLS.

I HAVE great pleasure in reporting favourably on the character of the work done in both schools. It will be seen from the table of marks given below that the pupils in the Waimate School are ahead of those in Temuka; but it would have been discreditable had it been otherwise, as there are fewer of them, and they are fortunate in having a more liberal provision made for the teaching of the higher subjects.

Special praise is due to the classes in algebra and Euclid in the Waimate School. Several of the pupils gained full marks in algebra; and from the appearance of the papers in Euclid it was evident that the teacher fully appreciated the value to beginners of correctly drawn figures and orderly arrangement of the parts of a proposition. The Temuka pupils would do well to pay more attention to this. The suggestions which were made last year for securing greater accuracy in Latin grammar must be repeated. Without perfect familiarity with the rudiments no real progress can be looked for. The girl who took the senior Latin paper at Waimate acquitted herself with great credit. In Temuka one girl was examined in French. Her translation of the prescribed work was correct, and in translation at sight she was almost as successful. Her pronunciation is not good.

Waimate District High School.—Table of Marks and Syllabus of Work.—December, 1886.

No.	Class.	No. of Pupils.	Average Mark per Cent.	Syllabus of Work done.
1	Euclid, senior ...	1	70	Books I., II., III., and IV.
2	Euclid, middle ...	1	70	Books I. and II.
3	Euclid, junior ...	2	30	Book I.
4	Algebra, senior ...	1	66	Todhunter—Chaps. I. to XXX.
5	Algebra, middle ...	1	91	Todhunter—Chaps. I. to XXII.
6	Algebra, junior ...	5	92	Todhunter—Chaps. I. to XIII.
7	Latin, senior ...	1	81	Appendix Principia Latina—Part I.; Principia Latina—Part II., pp. 60—120.
8	Latin, middle ...	3	49	Principia Latina—Part I. to end of exercises on verbs.
9	Latin, junior ...	2	68	Principia Latina—Part I. to end of exercises on active voice.

Temuka District High School.—Table of Marks and Syllabus of Work.—December, 1886.

No.	Class.	No. of Pupils.	Average Mark per Cent.	Syllabus of Work done.
1	Euclid, senior ...	2	48	Books I., II., III., and IV.
2	Euclid, junior ...	5	17	Book I.
3	Algebra, senior ...	1	60	Todhunter—Chaps. I. to XXX.
4	Algebra, junior ...	5	52	Todhunter—Chaps. I. to XIII.
5	Latin, senior ...	2	55	Principia Latina—Part I. to page 103.
6	Latin, middle ...	6	40	Principia Latina—Part I. to page 86.
7	Latin, junior ...	5	42	Principia Latina—Part I. to page 28.
8	French	1	67	Charles XII. (Voltaire)—61 pages.

NORTH CANTERBURY.

SIR,—

Christchurch, 28th March, 1887.

We have the honour to present our annual report on the schools of the North Canterbury District for the year 1886.

At the end of the year there were in operation 148 schools supported or subsidised by the Board. Of this number one aided school was brought into connection with the Board towards the end of the year, and another school, closed temporarily, had not yet been reopened when the Inspector was prepared to examine it. The remaining 146 were examined for standard classification; but in one of these, recently opened, the class and additional subjects had not progressed sufficiently to justify a numerical estimate. As in former years, it was found impossible to complete the series by the end of December; but, with an additional member on the staff, we hope to be able to do so in the future, as far, at least, as the circumstances of the schools will permit. The percentage of passes for the district, estimated on the roll-number of schools examined, is 38·61, the percentage of failures is 29·16, the percentage on class-subjects 44·6, and the average additional marks 54·2.

The tables inserted below give the summarised results in pass subjects. Table A shows the number of children, and Table B the proportions these numbers bear, in such a form as seems most instructive. More detailed information is contained in the appendices to this report. It must be noted that, in accordance with the new regulations, the word "presented" is used as the equivalent of "enrolled," whereas the term has hitherto been applied to the sum of passes and failures. The ages given are substantially the ages of the time of examination and not at the 1st July—that is, they are, on the average, taken two or three months later than in previous years.

TABLE A.—PASS SUBJECTS.

Classes.	Number presented, <i>i.e.</i> , enrolled.	Number Absent.	Number excepted.	Number failed.	Number passed.	Average Age of those that passed.
						Yrs. mos.
S 7	62	...	...	...	...	...
S 6	371	10	12	117	232	14 6
S 5	982	79	45	389	469	13 5
S 4	1,765	141	117	570	937	12 6
S 3	3,000	251	218	1,002	1,529	11 5
S 2	2,896	183	188	528	1,997	10 1
S 1	2,607	118	94	358	2,037	9 0
P	6,967	...	...	...	...	...
Totals ..	18,650	782	674	2,964	7,201	11 10*

* Mean of average age.

TABLE B.—PASS SUBJECTS.

Classes.	Number of Schools presenting.	Percentage presented, estimated on Total School Roll.	Percentage passed, estimated on Total School Roll.	—	S 6	S 5	S 4	S 3	S 2	S 1	Standards 6-1.
				(a) Proportion absent of class roll	2.69	8.94	7.99	8.37	6.32	4.52	6.73
				(b) Proportion excepted of class roll	3.23	4.58	6.63	7.27	6.49	3.61	5.80
S 7 ..	24	0.34	—	(c) Proportion failed of class roll	31.54	39.61	32.29	33.40	18.23	13.73	25.51
S 6 ..	78	1.99	1.24	(d) Proportion failed of sum of passes and failures	33.52	45.34	37.82	39.59	20.91	14.95	29.16
S 5 ..	109	5.27	2.51	(e) Proportion passed of class roll	62.51	47.76	53.09	50.97	68.96	78.12	61.97
S 4 ..	130	9.46	5.02	(f) Proportion passed of sum of passes and failures	66.48	54.66	62.13	60.41	79.09	85.05	70.84
S 3 ..	141	16.09	8.20								
S 2 ..	145	15.53	10.71								
S 1 ..	142	13.98	10.92								
P ..	146	37.36	—								
All schools	146	100	38.61								

It is impossible to base on these figures an accurate conclusion as to whether the education of the district has advanced or retrograded in the past year. We can only express our belief that much good work is done, and that, if the general condition is not all we should like to have it, the less successful teachers have erred more through misdirected effort than through neglect. In any comparison with the results of the preceding year there are the following disturbing elements—first, proportions are altered by the systematic purging of rolls immediately before the examinations; secondly, the number of the exceptions or disregarded cases of inability to pass a higher standard is not equivalent to the number represented under the previously-existing rule; and, thirdly, the conditions of passing are different. In illustration of these facts we may point out that the roll-number of the five largest schools, as shown on the examination schedules, is less by 411 than the return of the previous quarter, whereas in 1885 the corresponding difference is not appreciable. Again, in the same schools in 1885 282 children were represented, and in 1886 only 135 were excepted. In other words, there were in the former year 5 per cent. of disregarded cases as compared with the roll-number, and 9 per cent. as compared with the sum of passes and failures; while in the latter the corresponding proportions are 2.6 per cent. and 4 per cent. respectively. In regard to the conditions of passing it may be sufficient to state that, although a knowledge of history is no longer exacted for a pass from each individual, little latitude is allowed under the new regulations in respect of the remaining subjects. It is, speaking generally, no easier now to obtain a pass than before, and in cases where more dependence has been placed on the memory of the child than on the cultivation of his other faculties it is possibly a matter of greater difficulty. Arithmetic and grammar are elevated into more important positions relatively to the whole, and in these subjects skill and thought, as contradistinguished from accumulation of knowledge, constitute the main elements of success.

Before passing from these general considerations we wish to make a remark about the quality of the attendance. Time after time irregularity is given as the cause of non-success, and it is evident things are not as they should be when the average for the year amounts to only 76.41, or little more than three-fourths of the number enrolled.

In the following remarks on the separate subjects it must be understood that the criticisms refer to the majority of cases, and the suggestions are not intended as authoritative directions. The

teacher may rest satisfied that, if he produces good results in his own way, we shall do our best to appreciate his efforts. But those who have less opportunity of learning the prevailing views may find a few hints of some value to them.

READING.—A distinct attempt has been made throughout the district to improve this subject. It is now the exception to meet with a standard class that does not deserve the term "fair;" and, if good reading is rare and good comprehension still rarer, the advance already made encourages higher expectations of the future. It is a great pity that some better arrangement is not made about the reading books. In a few schools the lower standards read two books in the year; but in the vast majority the children of Standard I. repeat over and over again seventy or eighty pages of very simple matter till they know them by heart; and to Standard II. a somewhat similar remark is applicable. To obtain good reading and to cultivate a taste for reading we must provide our children with more variety. It is not always practicable to master two books within the year; but something might be done in the direction of our wishes by introducing into these classes books containing a greater amount of matter. It is, again, an excellent plan to adopt in each country school two entirely distinct sets of books for use in each alternate year. Those who fail have thus the encouragement of beginning new work, like their late class-fellows, and greater facility is given for grouping the pupils together with advantage. The same rule might readily be extended to the little book of exercises commonly used for practice in arithmetic. If the principle were once adopted, parents could hardly fail to recognise its advantages, and would gladly incur the slight additional expense.

SPELLING AND DICTATION.—A larger proportion of continuous dictation in the test exercises has been a feature of the last two series of examinations. In most cases the necessary practice has evidently been given, but the number of failures still made occasions some surprise. Transcription requires increased care. This is a matter in which the teacher must be satisfied with nothing short of complete accuracy.

WRITING.—There is no reason why almost every child in every elementary school should not become a fairly good writer. But before this result is reached much improvement must take place in the present treatment of the subject. Many teachers appear to think they have done their duty admirably if they have supervised the work and taken care that the copies are fairly imitated. No doubt this is a great thing, and it would be well if the merit were general. But something more is wanted. A free use of the blackboard in oral class instruction, and a consistent preservation of style in a suitable gradation of size from the earliest beginnings, are necessary. It is important that the child should know both the where and the why of a fault or a merit, that the writing in the earlier stages should be just of sufficient size to make correction easy and effective, that a common tendency to the premature use of advanced books should be checked, and that the pupil should at no stage of his progress have anything to unlearn. We have no wish to force on teachers any particular style of writing. They are frequently the best judges of what they can teach best, and any style that produces good writing throughout the school can scarcely fail to secure approval. For our own part, we think the true principles of teaching are embodied, though with some remaining imperfections, in the later editions of Vere Foster's series and—with a different interpretation and a less rigid adherence to rule—in the books issued by Marcus Ward and Co. Experience proves that these principles properly carried out produce good and facile writing at an earlier stage of the child's career, and are consequently of more general service to the community.

ARITHMETIC.—Attention was drawn last year to the prevalence of unit-counting in our schools. The practice is still common, as might be expected from the well-known difficulty of eradicating it; but the teachers are more generally alive to the defect, and for the most part are making efforts in the right direction. In the higher classes objections are frequently made that the questions set at examination are not "straightforward." It is true the exercises are not always such as can be worked by the direct application of a rule or formula. It is not desirable that they always should be such as require no thought on the part of the child. If more use were made of the system of reduction to the unit in the solution of problems there would be less heard of these objections, more particularly if the children were trained to set down the successive steps in the reasoning.

GRAMMAR.—The bulk of the failures are in grammar and arithmetic. In grammar more attention has been given to composition, which has made a corresponding advance; but in other respects the subject has not improved. The use of meaningless phrases as a substitute for the expression of thought, inability to appreciate simple word functions, ignorance of inflections, confusion of such distinctions as those of transitive and intransitive, active and passive, participle and verbal noun, indicative and subjunctive, and evidence of the severance of parsing from the analysis of the sentence come under the notice of the examiner far too frequently in classes where such faults are inexcusable. Success in these matters cannot be achieved without rousing into greater activity the thinking powers of the children. As some difference of practice exists in the matter of parsing it may not be out of place to give a brief sketch of our ideas in regard to it. In the Third Standard the children are required simply to write down lists of words to be selected; but we are entitled to expect evidence that they reason the thing out for themselves—that in teaching some such method of procedure has been adopted as is contained in Abbott's "How to tell the Parts of Speech." In oral examination, where such is practicable, some explanation of the ground of choice made should be forthcoming. That the children should, unaided, explain the functions of the words suitably in writing is more than we can expect of all at this stage; but in the next higher standard they ought to have gained a sufficient command over language and a sufficiently clear insight to enable them to do this with ease and certainty. The more definite the statement of the use the more credit is due, and the power should as far as possible be made to extend to the classes into which the parts of speech are divided. Thus, in the phrase "three little rabbits," it is better to say—"Three," an adjective of quantity [number]; it is joined to the noun 'rabbits,' and shows how many rabbits we mean: 'little,' a descriptive adjective; it is joined to the word 'rabbits,' and describes the rabbits: 'rabbits,' a common noun; it is the name of something, and belongs in common to several things of

the same sort" ("Mason's First Notions of Grammar," page 63)—than to say, "'Three,' an adjective, it tells how many rabbits; 'little,' an adjective, it tells what kind of rabbits; 'rabbits,' a noun, it is the name of something;" but we should have no ground of complaint if we got the latter answering. It is not a material point whether the classification is the most approved one or not, or whether the natural order of thought and of teaching is adopted in expressing the reason first and the conclusion last; the essential element is a sufficiently correct explanation of the use. We think it well that the parsing of Standard IV. should be confined to some such simple form as the above, with the explanation invariably attached, and that the inflections should be treated separately in a similar fashion. But elementary analysis must be taken from the very first, and no oral exercise in parsing should be conducted without a preliminary inquiry into the structure of the sentence. In the Fifth Standard all the previously-acquired knowledge of inflection and of sentence structure is combined with a more intimate knowledge of the verb, to make a more complete treatment, the reasons being now omitted for convenience; and, in analysis, the proper grouping of the parts of any simple sentence ought to be quite within the powers of the pupils. The study of clause functions and more difficult syntactical relationships constitutes, in this department, the further advance required from the Sixth Standard.

TABLE C.—CLASS SUBJECTS.

Subject.	Percentages.	Number of Schools obtaining 60 per cent. and upwards.	Number of Schools obtaining from 40 to 59 per cent.	Number of Schools obtaining from 20 to 39 per cent.	Number of Schools obtaining less than 20 per cent.	Number of Schools included in Estimate.
Drawing	41.5	24	52	56	13	145
History	46.5	47	44	39	11	141
Geography	55.6	67	46	27	5	145
Science, object lessons, &c ...	34.7	24	37	48	36	145
All subjects	44.6	24	68	46	7	145

The above table shows the existing condition of the class subjects. For the sake of convenience we may speak of drawing and geography as if they were wholly included in that group.

An increase in the attention given to drawing and the introduction of the subject throughout schools in which it had never been taught before make one of the features of the year. Freehand, however, is almost the only thing attempted, and for some time to come the instruction will probably be in substance confined to this.

No very material change has taken place in *History*. This remains very scrappy and meagre, and in the Third Standard often secures only a nominal mark. In a few cases only has advantage been taken of the rule by which the history and geography of Standard IV. and Standard V. may be taught and examined together.

Geography in the Second Standard shows great improvement. A fairly-intelligent apprehension of the meanings of the chief geographical terms and a knowledge of the leading features of the map of the world have been generally secured. A downward tendency is distinctly observable in the Fourth Standard, and on the whole the subject as taught in our schools is undeniably wanting in merit. Vagueness is the general characteristic of the answering—even in the highest class. An improvement in one direction at least would be made by following the practice of illustrating every lesson by the sketch of a river-basin, coast-line, &c., and accustoming the pupils to illustrate in a similar way. The habit of drawing little maps of this character, which require only a few minutes to produce, would be of infinitely more service than the execution of the elaborate productions sometimes exhibited, though these too have an occasional value.

Object Lessons and Science have been attempted in nearly every school, with the most widely-varying results. It is to be presumed that these subjects have been included in the syllabus in order to give occasion for lessons that shall train the children to habits of observation and stimulate their reasoning faculties. Children should be taught first to see facts for themselves, then to inquire into the causes of these facts, and lastly be led to recognise the general laws which underlie them. No information that does not rest upon such a basis, however useful it may be otherwise, can be properly regarded as satisfying the requisites of science teaching. For the purpose referred to object lessons and science teaching may be considered as one subject. In the object instruction the attention is devoted mainly to the training of the observation, which should be directed to such facts connected with familiar objects as would otherwise be unnoticed by children. To take the natural history lessons as an example, the points of likeness and difference existing between the various domestic animals serve the double purpose of making observation more systematic and of leading up to a simple classification, which is the next step in advance. The lessons in the reading books and the picture cards in use in most of the schools, though conveying what is not strictly matter of observation, afford opportunity for comparison of lesser known animals with better known ones already dealt with, and they have therefore an interest and a purpose closely akin to that of the legitimate object or science lesson. In regard to science lessons proper—where not only facts are noted, but causes are sought for and laws enunciated—it would probably be well in most cases if a few simple experiments were performed; but it should not be forgotten that the knowledge derived from carefully watching natural phenomena or carefully examining natural objects is for the most part just as useful for this purpose, when suited to the subject in hand. These considerations are, or should be, familiar to the minds of most teachers.

School museums have been found to give a wholesome stimulus to studies of this class, and children take an additional interest in them if objects collected by themselves occasionally form the

subjects of lessons. A teacher who takes up that branch which suits him best and devotes careful thought to preparing his lessons in such a way as to satisfy the conditions named can accomplish much even in one or two half-hour lessons a week. We heartily commend to those teachers who are not already acquainted with them the remarks of Mr. Inspector Fitch upon these subjects ("Lectures on Teaching," pp. 393 to 419).

TABLE D.—ADDITIONAL SUBJECTS.

Subject.	Average Mark of Schools submitting Subject.	Number of Schools obtaining Mark 15 and upwards.	Number of Schools obtaining Mark 10 to 14.	Number of Schools obtaining Mark 5 to 9.	Number of Schools obtaining Mark less than 5.	Number of Schools submitting Subject for Examination.
Repetition and recitation ...	11·9	28	86	28	...	142
Drill and exercises ...	10·2	32	48	31	19	130
Singing ...	11·1	36	35	33	8	112
Needlework ...	14·1	75	52	9	4	140
Subject-matter of reading lessons	11·4	31	71	33	9	144
Extra Drawing ...	6	...	2	1	2	5

The additional subjects have been indulgently treated. Wherever a moderate attempt has been made half marks have been granted. Sewing, as may be seen from the table, occupies the best position; and, although the quality falls far behind the English standard, the work, for the time that can be devoted to it, is efficiently performed.

We have, &c.,

L. B. WOOD, M.A.,
W. J. ANDERSON, LL.D.,
GEORGE HOBGEN, M.A.,

Inspectors.

The Chairman, North Canterbury Board of Education.

OTAGO.

1. MR. PETRIE'S REPORT.

SIR,—

Education Office, Dunedin, 31st March, 1887.

I have the honour to submit the following report for the year 1886:—

During the year I paid one or more visits of inspection to fifty-three schools, and examined sixty-seven. At nineteen of the largest of the latter I was assisted by Mr. Inspector Taylor. In the discharge of my duties I travelled 3,937 miles, and spent a total of 1,904½ hours in 292 days, or, on the average, 6½ hours daily. The following table shows at one view the statistics of examination for the year:—

Standard Classes.	Presented.	Absent.	Excepted.	Failed.	Passed.	Percentage of Passes.
P ...	8,268	...	...	...	...	...
S 1 ...	2,881	98	37	265	2,481	89
S 2 ...	2,960	109	103	499	2,240	79
S 3 ...	2,814	106	111	657	1,940	72
S 4 ...	2,254	103	65	534	1,552	72
S 5 ...	1,362	55	32	413	869	66
S 6 ...	693	12	12	160	509	75
S 7 ...	221	...	...	...	...	...
	21,460	483	360	2,528	9,600	...

Of the 21,460 pupils presented on the examination schedules, 12,971 were entered for examination in one or other of the standards, being 810 more than the corresponding number for last year. A total of 12,488 were present, and were examined in Standards I. to VI. Of these, 9,600 passed the standard for which they were presented, a result which gives 77 as the percentage of passes in standards. Last year, under the old regulations, the percentage of passes was also 77. The average percentage in class-subjects was 60, and the average of additional marks 61, the total attainable in the latter being 120.

In Standards I., II., V., and VI. there has been a slight decline in the percentage of passes. This result was not altogether unexpected, for under the new regulations the requirements for a pass have been made somewhat more stringent, though the number of subjects is in some cases reduced. It is now an instruction to Inspectors that "no reading that is not intelligent shall be allowed to count towards a pass," and they are directed to refuse a pass in the standard for very serious failure in one subject, and even for simple failure, if it be due to the pupil's negligence or to ineffective teaching. A fair interpretation of these instructions has led my colleagues and myself to fail a good many for reading and arithmetic, and on rare occasions for spelling and grammar also, who would have been allowed to pass last year. Thus, every one went down for the standard who

had not a single question in arithmetic correct, even when the rest of the work was of a satisfactory character. I am anxious that this point should be clearly understood, to prevent the hasty inference that the efficiency of the teaching in some of the standard classes is deteriorating because the percentage of passes in these is this year somewhat lower than it was last year. The fact is, the standard has changed in the interval, and, as things now stand, a slightly lower percentage need not—and in the present case does not—imply any decrease of general efficiency, and is even compatible with an increase.

The improvement in the work of the large and important classes in Standard IV. has been as gratifying to my colleagues and myself as it must be to all who wish well to our public schools. The percentage of marks for class-subjects (60) is fully as high as could be expected, and the average of additional marks is also satisfactory. Some have feared that ranking certain subjects of instruction as class-subjects would lead to neglect of them, and in certain districts a bonus is paid to teachers who gain more than half marks in class and additional subjects, to stimulate attention to them. So far, I have not observed any noteworthy neglect of the subjects so ranked, and in a great many schools the preparation of them has been quite as good as formerly.

I would draw special attention to the fact that, out of 12,488 pupils examined in standards, only 360, or less than 3 per cent., were excepted because of irregularity of attendance. A large number of pupils passed who would have been excepted on this ground had they failed. It will be interesting to notice whether the percentage of exceptions will increase in years to come. Hitherto in this district all who were presented had to take their chance of passing or of failing. I have always been strongly opposed to the recognition of a sort of purgatory where pupils who have neither passed nor failed can be shelved for an indefinite number of years. I hold that the official recognition of exceptions must exert a bad influence on teachers and on pupils too. It practically exempts teachers from responsibility in connection with all pupils who have made less than half attendances, and may tempt some to wink at or even promote irregularity. If a boy is dull and careless and likely to bring discredit on the school the temptation to wink at frequent absence may very well prove strong. I am confident that nine-tenths of the teachers in this district would prefer arrangements that would not expose them to such a temptation. The effect of the system of exceptions on pupils who attend irregularly is equally objectionable. It tends to encourage neglect of their education, when circumstances of health or fortune or character demand that they should receive special care and attention. In its every aspect it seems to me baneful and wrong. I trust and believe that the great majority of teachers will do their duty by the unfortunate children who are liable to be injuriously affected by it, and that they will themselves gain moral strength by scorning to yield to sordid temptations. But the trial is fraught with danger.

Throughout the year the examination reports have been made out according to the now prescribed form, and their interpretation has exercised the minds of members of School Committees and of others interested in education not a little. In considering them it has been found difficult, I believe, to see the wood for the trees. If a numerical estimate of the efficiency of schools is desirable, and I do not for a moment doubt that it is, it should be such as will show their comparative efficiency in a way that is simple and easy to interpret correctly. It may well be doubted if the present system of estimating efficiency possesses these important qualities.

The percentage of failures, taken in conjunction with the percentage for class-subjects and the additional marks, will afford a fair means of comparing school with school, bearing in mind the fact that the lower the percentage of failures the higher is the efficiency. To any one but an expert the percentage of passes is almost certain to be misleading. Contrary to what might be expected from the names, the percentage of passes stands in no direct relation to the percentage of failures, but is very largely influenced by a variable quantity—viz., the number of pupils not presented in standards, which is wholly ignored in determining the percentage of failures. To all outside the ranks of teachers and Inspectors the connection between these percentages must appear highly mysterious. Take the cases of the following schools:—

School.					Percentage of Failures.		Percentage of Passes.
(a.)	...	...	...	...	27	...	58
(b.)	...	...	...	...	10	...	58
(c.)	...	...	...	...	2	...	58

Here the same percentage of passes (58) appears alongside of percentages of failures ranging from 2 to 27. A layman may well ask what he is to make of these figures. An expert will tell him that the percentage of failures measures, in a rough-and-ready way, the efficiency of the schools; while the percentage of passes is, for this purpose, quite meaningless. From the latter he may infer that the proportion of pupils presented in standards has varied widely in the three schools, but only that, and nothing more. I sincerely regret the new departure made in this matter. It casts to the winds a feature that has proved a potent stimulus to improvement, and has with us served the objects which payments by results is designed to serve in some other colonies: I mean the practice of assigning a single number or percentage as a measure of the general efficiency of a school. Can we afford to discourage the spirit of competition, which was undoubtedly fostered by that simple expedient, which, whatever its faults, did vastly more good than harm?

Year by year the number of schools waxes larger and larger. It now takes more than six months of the Inspector's time to conduct the prescribed examinations in standards. About a month and a half are occupied with preparing questions for the standard, scholarship, and pupil-teachers' examinations, superintending the two latter and examining the answers, and in preparing the statistics for the year. Barely four months are thus left available for inspection, and it has become impossible in many cases to allow more than half a day to the inspection of a single school. For nearly eight months of every year the schools in this large district are practically

exempt from inspection, and this state of things cannot very well be avoided. The system now in force involves a great deal of labour on Inspectors, and recent changes have distinctly increased its amount, no doubt unintentionally. I am informed on the best authority that the labour of examining schools in our colony is three times as great as that required to examine similar schools in England or Scotland. I mention this to show that a superficial comparison of the numbers of pupils to each Inspector, in different countries and under different systems, is no real test of the amount or merit of the work done in examining schools.

The arrangements for training young teachers have received much careful consideration from my colleagues and myself during the year. We agreed in thinking that the arrangements for giving them practice in teaching, under favourable circumstances, could be much improved; and we had the honour to submit to the Board the proposals which have since been embodied in the new regulations of the Training College. I strongly advised the Board to make provision at the Training College for teaching up to the level of the C certificate, and I greatly regret that this has not been done. Hitherto the students in training have attended classes at the Otago University, with a view to qualifying for the C certificate. The results, however, have not been particularly satisfactory. The actual facts are not easy to ascertain; but I am sure I am within the mark in saying that during the last eight years not more than three students in training have taken a C certificate within three years of the time when they matriculated. With ordinary good fortune such a certificate might be taken the second year after matriculation. I need not inquire into the causes of the failure to secure for young teachers a fair measure of higher education. It will suffice to point out that the failure is conspicuous and indisputable. If the Training College here were equipped with such a staff as is allowed at a similar institution in Christchurch I am confident that the teaching could easily be made to include all the subjects required for a C certificate, and that within three years after the students entered the Training College five would gain a C certificate for one that does so under existing arrangements.

While the syllabus of instruction in the public schools was under consideration by the Education Department I ventured to recommend, in a private way, that the literary examination in school management, to which teachers are now subjected, should be supplemented by a practical test in teaching and managing a class in the presence of an expert, who would decide whether he should be admitted or rejected. I thought then, and I think now, that young teachers will continue to be satisfied with being able to talk or write about the teaching and management of classes so long as that is all that is exacted of them. It is vastly easier to do that than to do what every teacher needs to be able to do—namely, to maintain order and attention among his pupils with firmness and ease, and to teach them in such a way as to train and educate the powers of the mind. Who can wonder that, in these circumstances, a student should often be indifferent about the acquisition of practical skill in teaching and managing classes? The mere passing of a written examination opens to him the doors of the public schools, and lets him begin what now and then proves the sad and painful process of learning how to do the work he can write about so easily. I hold that incompetent teachers should be stopped at the threshold. They can be tested, and they should be tested, and those who are unfit should be shut out at once. If they are once admitted to classification their elimination will be indefinitely retarded, and much harm will be done in the process. To be sure, the Education Department claims that the issue of certificates depends only in part on passing an examination; but, so far as I know, the grounds on which such a claim rests are of the most meagre character. In the regulations mention is made of a testimonial signed by a school Inspector, or by the principal of a training institution, certifying to the candidate's fitness to teach and to exercise control. No Inspector in this district has ever been asked to give such a testimonial, and I believe, so far as Inspectors are concerned, this vital provision is a dead letter.

It is elsewhere provided that Inspectors shall annually assign efficiency marks to all teachers, these marks ranging from 2 to 10. I understand that the efficiency marks have been received as a substitute for the testimonial of fitness, the result being that any one, whether fit or unfit, can receive a certificate; for the Inspectors are not allowed to withhold marks altogether, but must assign 2, 4, 6, 8, or 10, according to their judgment of the teacher's efficiency, and even two marks suffice for the issue of a certificate. I am of opinion that the testimonial of fitness should be insisted on in the case of all candidates for the office of teacher, and I should like to see them received only from Inspectors; for, though principals of training institutions are doubtless quite as competent to judge of this matter, they are much more liable to be influenced by personal feelings towards those who are their own students, and on whose success in gaining certificates their own credit to a certain extent rests. Nothing would do more to foster the attainment of skill in teaching and exercising control than insisting upon a strict practical test of these qualities soon after the examination is held, and before a candidate can receive classification and be recognized as qualified to conduct any school. In case of rejection by one Inspector the candidate should have a second trial before another, and if he fails a second time he should be rejected finally. In Victoria such a test has been applied for years past, with most salutary effects. And who can doubt that this is the chief reason why, with a system of elementary education considerably inferior to ours, newly-trained teachers hailing from that colony are, at first, so much superior to the average of those trained here?

Every year it becomes more and more evident that some suitable provision for revising the classification of teachers is indispensable. As things now stand a teacher who has once gained high marks for efficiency can never have his status lowered, no matter how the quality of his work may deteriorate. In several cases, after careful and impartial consideration, my colleagues and myself have felt constrained to lower the efficiency marks assigned to teachers. If lower marks are thus assigned for two or three years in succession it seems to me most desirable that some means should be provided for reconsidering the classification of the teachers concerned. Why should not the Inspector-General of Schools be empowered to visit and, if he think fit, examine the schools of

those who are in this predicament; and, if his opinion agreed with that of the district Inspector, why should not the teachers' status be reduced? At present highly-classified teachers have far too little inducement to maintain their zeal and skill at the level which gained them their high classification.

I have in recent reports referred so fully to the management and teaching of the Board's schools that I refrain from entering on that topic on the present occasion. The teachers are, as a rule, most zealous and painstaking in the discharge of their onerous duties. If all would show the same zeal in striving to elevate their aims and improve their methods we should soon have little reason to complain of mechanical work and disappointing results. I will only add my dissent from the emphatic opinion expressed by an Inspector in a neighbouring district, to the effect that the public schools are mere cram-shops. I am sure that such a description of the Board's schools would be most unjust. The teaching is in many cases not by any means so intelligent as could be wished, but there is almost everywhere a fair leaven of intelligence, and in a considerable number of schools the work leaves little to be desired on this head. It is quite possible to expect from young children a higher measure of intelligence than is reasonable, and it may well be that Inspectors are prone to err on this side. If a just mean cannot be observed, that is the proper side to err on.

I have, &c.,

The Secretary, Otago Education Board.

D. PETRIE, M.A., Inspector.

2. MR. TAYLOR'S REPORT.

SIR,—

Education Office, Dunedin, 31st March, 1887.

I have the honour to submit my report for the year 1886.

During the year I inspected sixty-three schools, and examined eighty-one. At the examination of thirty-two of the latter I took part either with Mr. Petrie or Mr. Goyen. In the discharge of my duties I spent 1,912½ hours, and travelled 3,924 miles. Seeing that full information is given in tabulated form regarding the examination of each individual school in the district, I shall on this occasion merely refer shortly to some of the principal topics connected with inspection.

DISCIPLINE.—The discipline continues to be very satisfactory in a large majority of the schools. The number in which it can be said to be positively inferior is very small indeed. Not only are good order and control maintained, but in cases not a few the teachers have succeeded in infusing into their pupils a spirit of earnest work and hearty co-operation in the business of the school. When both teachers and pupils are animated with a desire to do their best and together put forth the necessary effort there can be little doubt about the results that will follow. It is certainly gratifying to see a large body of children march into school with briskness and precision of movement, take their places without noise and confusion, and at once set to work earnestly and diligently, every one knowing what to do, and no one interfering with a neighbour. This is no overdrawn picture, for a number of schools could be named answering, with varying shades of excellence, such a description; but they are only to be found where the teacher possesses the consummate art of commanding the respect, confidence, and ready obedience of the pupils. There are schools of an opposite type—but happily they are very rare—where noise, confusion, anarchy, and idleness seem to reign supreme, there being no master mind and will to which the pupils feel constrained to subject themselves.

MANNERS.—A considerable amount of attention is now paid to the manners and general behaviour of the pupils, both in and out of school, and one cannot help noticing a great improvement in both these respects. The pupils have become more respectful and less uncouth in their manners, and even show a degree of polish to which children in the same circumstances were formerly strangers. Although in many schools the efforts made to inculcate habits of politeness and to foster feelings of deference and respect for others have been productive of good results in the direction sought, still there are those the pupils of which, if not positively rude, exhibit very few traits of refinement; never allow, by any chance, "Yes, sir," or "No, sir," to escape their lips; never condescend on any occasion to raise their caps, and remain dumb and look amazed if one bids them "Good morning." It certainly rests with the teachers, where home influences are at fault, to train their pupils to habits of politeness and grace of manners, which are greater charms than fine dress and good looks. What can be accomplished in one school can be accomplished in all to a greater or less degree. A few lessons on manners given during the year, with attention to the practice of them, ought to have good effect.

METHODS.—Very great importance is attached to the employment of good methods of instruction, and consequently every effort is made to have those introduced and used that are reckoned the best fitted to train and develop the intelligence of the pupils. A certain result may perhaps be attained as soon by one method as another, and yet there may be a vast difference in the amount of profit derived by the pupils using the respective methods. One may have had his mental faculties so trained and exercised as to fit and strengthen him to pursue successfully an independent course; while the other, having reached his end in a measure blindfolded, carried as it were on the shoulders of rule and rote, is but little better fitted to trust to his own resources. That method is to be commended which, as Kingsley puts it, will teach a pupil the "art of learning, that will enable him to mine for himself, and make him strong to hunt and till for his own subsistence." Of course a child smart and attentive will learn by almost any method; but the dull and careless must be led by a way that will rouse and interest him, and by which he can proceed from one sure foothold to another. Sometimes the best of methods will fail of their due effect if the teacher does not press home his instructions and is not on the alert for inattentive pupils. Good methods of teaching are becoming every year more general. In quite a number of schools they are nearly all that could be desired, and in comparatively few are they positively wholly bad. The method of teaching beginners to read

is, in not a few instances, poorly fitted to accomplish the desired end quickly and intelligently. Infants are made to repeat and repeat over and over, after the teacher, words and sentences so often that they learn them by rote, and can read as well without the book as with it. A few pupils in a class profit by this kind of instruction, but the majority invariably make very slow and unsatisfactory progress, and remain quite unable to recognise the same or similar words in other combinations. As soon as children know their alphabet they should be taught to build words, and words into sentences,—on the blackboard, first of all, because there, with a little care, every child can see the process of word and sentence building going on, will feel interested in the operation, and can be easily trained to follow; and because, when the words are recognised at a glance, they can be marked off by the teacher into groups for intelligent reading. Then, when the sentence is thoroughly mastered on the board, the children can turn to their books and read the same sentence with comparative ease and pleasure. It may be necessary to state that the dull and careless should have most of the work to do in a lesson of this kind. In a short time, as the children advance, it may be needful to teach in this manner new and difficult words only. I have often been astonished to see teachers, when required to give a reading lesson, say, to Standard I., Standard II., or Standard III., for the first time, start them off to read at once, without the slightest preliminary preparation in the way of mastering the new words, which in most books are printed at the beginning or end of the lesson. The reading in such cases was halting, meaningless to the children, and of course devoid of anything like intelligent expression—and no wonder. In grammar an error of method is often committed by attempting to parse a word before its function or use in a sentence has been investigated. This is like putting the cart before the horse, and seriously prevents intelligent and rapid progress. But the first step in teaching a knowledge of the parts of speech is seldom taken at all, except, it may be, in some of the best schools, and that is the analysis of the sentence to be parsed. Analysis may seem a formidable word to use in connection with the grammar of Standard III. and Standard IV., and may be characterised as “profound trifling;” but really no sentence can be understood without analysis either conscious or unconscious. It is not at all necessary, of course, to go into elaborate details, and make use of such technical terms as “subject” and “predicate,” “attribute of subject” and “adjunct of predicate,” and so forth. All that is needed is to find out what is spoken about in a sentence, what is said about that thing, and, if necessary, what kind of a thing it is, and how, when, or where what is said about it took place. A child in Standard I. and lower could be taught to find out this much in ten minutes by going the right way about it, and he could not understand a short sentence without knowing this. The order of procedure, then, ought to be: First, analysis of sentence; second, function of words; and third, parts of speech. The methods employed in teaching arithmetic have considerably improved of late. Not only is the direct instruction given in this subject on the blackboard clear and reasoned out from first principles, but the work of the pupils at desk is, as a rule, methodically and intelligently set out, and they are often able to account for every step in the process they employ. Instances, however, are not wanting of inability on the part of the pupils to give an intelligent account of their work, and wherever rules, to the almost entire exclusion of first principles, are followed this is the case. Wherever pupils have a large amount of time to devote to arithmetic at desks they should be required to work out at least a large proportion of their sums by first principles, and the junior classes especially should be exercised to a much greater extent with the applications of arithmetic to every-day life, after they have become familiar with the more mechanical processes.

Before concluding this report I wish to make one or two remarks about reading and writing. Reading has for years been satisfactory as far as mere verbal accuracy is concerned, but it has taken a considerable amount of pressure to have it rendered with taste and natural expression. It is satisfactory to be able to state that the number of schools in which expressive and intelligent reading may be heard has of late been largely increased. At the same time, and at the risk of being charged with harping much on one string, I would urge further and more general improvement in this important subject. Grand elocutionary displays are not looked for—these should rather be discouraged, as being often unnatural—but merely reading with natural modulation of voice, as in ordinary everyday conversation. More than half the battle waged on behalf of intelligent reading would be won did teachers take the trouble of first discovering the emphatic word in a sentence, and then insisting on the necessity of their pupils giving emphasis to these and no others if their reading is to be at all intelligent. How often has one to listen to reading in which the words immediately preceding pauses are invariably made the emphatic ones! Such reading is extremely tiresome, and ought to be rejected as unworthy of a pass. Writing is almost uniformly good, and shows great care and attention on the part both of teachers and pupils. The only suggestion I have to make regarding it is that in the higher standards, such as Standard V. and Standard VI., greater rapidity in writing should be practised. In most schools the writing of these classes, though good, is often painfully slow, and somewhat wasteful of valuable time. Besides, when pupils leave school and enter upon the business of life comparatively rapid writing will become a necessity of their altered position. It would be well, then, that they should acquire by degrees facility in writing what is called a current hand, in order to be better fitted to meet the requirements of their changed circumstances; otherwise their handwriting will for a time, if not permanently, suffer considerable deterioration.

I have to state, in conclusion, that the schools of this district are on the whole well managed and taught, and that those in charge of them, though not all equally capable, are, with a very few doubtful exceptions, faithful and conscientious in the discharge of their very onerous duties.

I have, &c.,

The Secretary, Otago Education Board.

W. TAYLOR, Inspector.

[3. MR. GOYEN'S REPORT.

SIR,—

Education Office, Dunedin, 31st March, 1887.

I have the honour to present my general report for the year 1886.

During the year I inspected sixty-six and examined sixty-five schools. Many of these were large ones, and occupied me from one to several days. I also examined a portion of the work of the five district high schools, and made several visits to districts and schools to report upon applications for new schools and to select pupil-teachers. Most of the rest of my time was taken up in examining the papers of scholarship competitors and of pupil-teachers. In the discharge of my duties I travelled 3,630 miles, and worked 1,951 hours, an average of nearly nine hours a day for the school days of the year. But the school days are not an Inspector's days. I need hardly say that an Inspector gets but few holidays, and still fewer Saturdays. I worked 300 days during the year, and hence the average length of my working day was six and a half hours. It is a popular myth that an Inspector enjoys a kind of perennial holiday, spending most of his time in travelling leisurely from school to school, where he pillories the unfortunate children for an hour or two, then issues his fiat of passes and failures, and writes a report the character of which is determined more by the condition of his liver than by the quality of the pupils' answering. Popular myths possess a wonderful amount of vitality and invariably die hard; still, they do die, and to give this particular one a speedy quietus we now invite members of School Committees to be present during the examination of their schools, that they may see for themselves how it is conducted. These gentlemen invariably express their surprise at the vast quantity of work the Inspector has to do, and their appreciation of his kindly treatment of the children, and of his manifest effort to give them the fullest credit for what they do.

A year is too short a time for any very sensible improvement to manifest itself, so that I have very little to add to my former reports respecting the management of the Board's schools. Many of them are well conducted, and in most respects well taught, and not many deserve to be stigmatised as "cram-shops." To apply this term to all, or to most of them, as is often done, is a gross abuse of language; and I confess I have but little respect for the opinions of those who so describe them. In this district, at any rate, the teacher that adopts the cramming process is sure to come to grief; for no child can pass our tests who has not had at least a fair training in most of the subjects of examination. In resolutely setting their faces against everything that savours of "cram" Inspectors not infrequently incur a good deal of odium; but it is better that there should be complaints against us about the searching character of our questions than that the teaching should be allowed to degenerate into mere mechanical routine and "cram." It is an instruction to Inspectors "to bear always in mind the importance of discouraging what is merely mechanical and superficial, and fostering all that shows enthusiasm for real education and tends to the increase of mental activity;"—and this is the spirit in which we conduct our examinations and inspections. It would be easy to make things pleasant all round, and to live in a kind of fools' paradise; but it is our duty to see to it that the children get, at the lowest, a fair training for the enormous amount of money their parents are spending annually to have them educated.

Our methods of teaching are every year improving, not by leaps and bounds, it is true, but slowly and surely, nevertheless. I seldom revisit a school without finding some improvement effected in the quality of the instruction; and, though highly conscious that a good deal yet remains to be done to bring the methods up to one's ideal of what is excellent, I think that there is a very fair amount of good work being accomplished in the bulk of our schools. In a large service like the Board's there are sure to be found some indolent, incompetent, and dissatisfied teachers; but the majority of them are as eager to improve their methods and management and to impart a sound intellectual training to their pupils as the Board is desirous that they should do so. I refrain from particularising the faults in methods observed during the year. On the whole not much good is done by giving them great prominence in every general report; but I have endeavoured to remedy them wherever and whenever I have observed them. I have frequently had to complain of the untidiness of the schools and the school-grounds, and the condition of the out-offices. Even many of the teachers that give lessons in sanitary science daily violate the cardinal precepts thereof. The tone of the schools continues to be good, but the manners of the children are susceptible of large improvement.

The Secretary, Otago Education Board.

I have, &c.,

P. GOYEN, Inspector.

AUCKLAND.

1. MR. O'SULLIVAN'S REPORT.

SIR,—

Auckland, March, 1887.

I have the honour to submit this report for the year ended 31st December, 1886. The number of primary schools in the education district, and the attendance of pupils, are given in the following table:—

Quarter ending	Number of Schools.	Roll Number.			Average Attendance.		
		M.	F.	Total.	M.	F.	Total.
March	233	10,629	10,033	20,662	8,652	8,075	16,727
June	236	10,566	9,919	20,485	8,636	7,907	16,343
September	241	10,529	9,866	20,395	8,554	7,808	16,362
December	239	10,561	9,908	20,469	8,565	7,866	16,431

I examined all the schools in the northern division of the district, and inspected all but a few.

I do not think the teaching in the schools of this district is improving. The system that was built up with such care is crumbling. Certificates that they have done certain things are signed with a light heart by several teachers when they have done none of these things. In fact a general laxity is being produced. This will not seem surprising when it is known that the same system which produced such disastrous effects in North Canterbury is in full blast here. An assistant teacher who has passed no examination of any kind has been appointed to a school whose efficiency depends to a great extent on the efficiency of the assistant. A headmaster has been appointed to a rather important school who never taught an hour in his life, and who, in perhaps a sanguine spirit, is supposed to impart to a pupil-teacher the mystery which he never learned himself. While this is done, a good and tried teacher is sent with his family into what I can call nothing but penal servitude, to teach two miserable half-time schools, and to live, with a delicate family, in what is little better than a sentry-box built for a single person. To a man of culture and refinement this existence must be one long agony.

A grievous mistake has been made in getting rid of teachers who were admirably suited for the work they were doing. One case I know intimately. The girl I speak of was the best teacher of a First Standard that I have ever met. I made this known in the office, and I expressed my opinion that on no account whatever should this young lady's services be dispensed with. Notwithstanding this I found, to my horror, lately that she had been dismissed, ostensibly on the ground that she did not pass an examination or come up for an examination, or something of the sort. Surely this is red-tape run mad! This is not like the case of an assistant who has to take part in the general work of a school. Great hardship has been wrought by the choice of pupil-teachers to go to the country. I know of at least two cases where girls, the main support of their families, were sent away. It is to be hoped that there were no others in the like position. One girl, I know, was sent away deliberately against my remonstrance.

The Minister of Education points out how the books in the school libraries could, if properly selected, be made a powerful means of teaching geography and history. It would perhaps be thought that the Inspectors, who have to see that the teaching of these subjects is properly carried on, would be consulted on the choice of library books. It is not so. The lists sent by the Committees are carelessly secluded from the Inspectors' profane gaze. I believe this is done without the sanction of the Board. The consequence, however, is that the libraries are full of the works of Mrs. Henry Wood, *et hoc genus omne*.

Probationers are persons thought likely to be useful teachers, and who are employed temporarily on trial. On their appointment the Inspectors are never consulted. The advice of a person who cannot by any possibility have the slightest knowledge on the subject is alone taken.

I myself instituted the sending, periodically, of reports by head-teachers of their assistants and pupil-teachers, and also the sending of reports by teachers when taking charge of schools. It was decided some time ago that these reports should be sent to the Board. It is almost essential that these reports should be seen by the Inspectors, on account of the information they contain. I presume the Board meant that they should see them. I asked, some time ago, why these reports were not sent to the Inspectors. I was told, almost insolently, that there was no resolution of the Board to that effect.

Instructions are issued concerning pupil-teachers. About these the Inspectors are not consulted; they are not even informed of them. They know nothing of them till they see them in the schools. This is an excellent way—however it is intended—to bring Inspectors into contempt.

If I consulted my own inclinations I might perhaps, for peace' sake, say nothing of these matters; but then I should be selfishly sacrificing, to my own ease, the system that cost so much to build up. It was built up with great labour and travail; but the cement which gave it solidity was the confidence of the public in its perfect impartiality. I would be wrong if I stood by, with arms folded, to see it, so to speak, "hawked at and killed" in this clumsy fashion.

I am obliged to mention the way inefficient teachers are too often dealt with. Inspector after Inspector reports that a teacher is worse than useless,—is doing much harm; yet, year after year, that teacher is kept on. I would point out that this is a mistaken leniency. Two years are ample to find out whether a teacher is likely to be useful. To keep him longer, till he has grown old and unfit for other work, and then to dismiss him when it can no longer be avoided, seems to be but a cruel kindness. I have never known any good to come of re-employing teachers—as is sometimes done—who have been dismissed.

I think it would be well if the Board, when considering about building schools, should get information that would prevent them from incurring needless expense. I have noticed two schools lately, one in the course of building, which appear to me not to be required. I have saved the Board thousands of pounds by preventing them from entering into unnecessary expenditure.

I become every day more and more convinced that the teaching of reading and of recitation must take the place which the hearing of reading and recitation has held so long all the world over. If a child learns to really read a few sentences in a month he has done good work. He may gabble over pages for years without doing so much. He should be trained to read slowly. Till he has learned to read slowly he is not fit to learn to read. An English teacher tells me of Inspectors' performances when examining a reading-class at home. A child gabbles over a sentence as fast as he can go. If he makes no glaring mistakes in pronunciation he passes; and so the class is rattled through—no heed to distinctness, no heed to modulation, no heed to the meaning of what is read. Is it wonderful there should be so many bad readers when so much energy is bestowed on teaching people how not to read? Children come to school not to go through a reading-book, but to learn to read. I once read of a man who had a son with much musical ability. He placed him with an eminent teacher of music. After a time the father came to

complain that his son was not learning opera and other things. "I have not taught him these things," answered the teacher; "but I have taught him music! Your son can now play anything." So it is with reading. It seems to me little short of idiotic to insist on pupils "going through" (as it is well called) a book in a certain space of time in school, when their doing so destroys their chance of learning to read. They might be encouraged to read these books at home; and at times at school fairly long portions might be read; but everything should be subservient to the teaching of reading. We want music, not opera; reading, not reading-books. Much harm is done by foolish talk about fluent reading. "Fluency," when turned into the vernacular, means "gabble." I find a pernicious practice in some schools of putting pupils from the third reading-book into the fifth. This is done for the purpose of saving the teacher's time. The time that can be saved must be very small, and a grievous injury is inflicted on the pupils which no teacher has a right to inflict. I am sometimes told that an Inspector has advised this proceeding; I cannot believe it: an Inspector who would give such advice is not fit to be an Inspector.

Geography has suffered by the recent change, by which it is no longer a pass subject in the Fourth Standard. This has made many teachers consider the subject as of little account. Evil, too, has been wrought by putting off the teaching of physical geography to the Fifth Standard. If this latter change were not a serious matter it would be a ludicrous one enough to provoke inextinguishable laughter.

In nineteen cases out of twenty vigilance will produce good discipline. I have had to remind teachers before that "order is kept, not with the cane, not with the voice, but with the eye." It is only teachers who cannot exercise vigilance who question this. There is one thing that is destructive of discipline—inadequate corporal punishment. If a child is punished in a fashion that sends him away laughing a grievous injury is done to discipline. Children themselves see this. I once asked a little girl of my acquaintance how it was they were so badly behaved at her school. The answer came, quick as lightning, "He doesn't hit hard enough." I am aware that in this matter teachers are far less to blame than parents, whose foolish indulgence is raising up a plentiful crop of larrikins.

The arithmetic prescribed by the new standard regulations for Standards I. and II. is not by any means sufficiently attended to. It is the most important part of the arithmetic prescribed for these standards.

I notice that many a young teacher is apt to change for the worse. He begins in all humility; thinks he can never do well enough; he has now the spirit of the clerk in Chaucer: "Gladly would he learn, and gladly teach." While this spirit animates him he does well. After a time, "We have changed all that!" He becomes conceited; he does not want to learn now; he would rather lay down the law. And so he goes on from bad to worse. It may be safely said that when a man ceases to learn he should cease to teach.

I notice that in some schools where the teachers are somewhat illiterate there is a tendency to rely on arithmetic, and the parsing that consists in pointing out the parts of speech. You will find the latter process fairly well done, while the composition is defective and full of vulgarisms. In such a school, if there are any Standard V. pupils you will not find them present. Teachers who have to resort to these expedients should not be teachers.

A practice is creeping into the schools which I consider pernicious—that is, the giving of impositions. This generally takes the shape of the writing-out by the pupils of a word or words a great number of times. Now, the least evil of this is that it injures the handwriting. It injures the pupils' health by shortening their time for recreation. It annoys and irritates. In a late number of the *Australasian* is told the story of a girl who is thought to have put an end to herself because of the worry of these impositions. People are not alive enough to the cruelty of these "humane" punishments.

I regret to say that in many places parents are unwilling to pay for the books and stationery of their children. They think the books should be given to them for nothing. In other words, they want to be paid for sending their children to school. Many teachers have complained to me that they have suffered from this kind of thing, especially those that were too conscientious to allow their pupils to go without books, as I fear some teachers have done. Committees should arouse themselves to put a stop to these things.

I have, &c.,

RICHARD J. O'SULLIVAN, Inspector.

The Chairman, Board of Education, Auckland.

2. MR. FIDLER'S REPORT.

SIR,—

Auckland, 17th May, 1887.

In compliance with the terms of the Board's resolution of the 13th May, I have the honour to submit my report for the year ending the 31st December, 1886.

During last year I examined eighty-five schools, that is, all in the southern district, except the aided school, Taupo. I inspected sixty-one in special visits, besides six very small ones, which I inspected on the day of examination. The following is the summary of results for the southern district;—

Standard Classes.				Presented.	Absent.	Excepted.	Failed.	Passed.	Average Age of those that passed.*
S 7 ...	...	...	...	21	...	...	...	...	...
S 6 ...	...	...	...	133	6	8	36	83	15.1
S 5 ...	...	...	...	292	26	22	100	144	13.1
S 4 ...	...	...	...	577	40	35	147	355	13.8
S 3 ...	...	...	...	932	74	53	263	542	12.1
S 2 ...	...	...	...	1,068	70	56	227	715	10.2
S 1 ...	...	...	...	958	72	45	138	703	8.9
P. ...	...	...	...	2,121	...	...	...	...	...
Totals ...				6,102	288	219	911	2,542	...

* Mean of average age, 12.3.

One-third of the schools visited were doing very good work; in somewhat more than a third the work was, on the whole, of a satisfactory character; and in the rest the character of the work varied from very mediocre to very poor. Of the causes operating in these last I speak later on.

In submitting the above table I must say that I have not "sacrificed to the Moloch, results;" that the standard regulations have been strictly followed; and that no scholar has been allowed to pass who was not likely to overtake with ease the work of the next standard. When children are allowed to pass too easily, not only is it seriously injurious to them to have to cope with work for which they have not been adequately prepared by thoroughness in the groundwork, but it would be a great injustice to teachers of classes were those promoted not well up to the work of the standard passed. I have sought to find what portion of the children's knowledge has become "definite and solid," knowing that the only "results" worth having are those based upon such examination.

When the number of important subjects required for a "pass"* is considered, and also the strictness with which this has been granted, and it is seen from the above table that seven out of ten of the children examined for a "pass" in this (southern) district have shown sufficient proficiency to be promoted to a higher standard, it is evident that good work has been done in such subjects in a great number of the schools here reported on. I must point out that many of the schools from which these results have been obtained are country schools, each having a number of classes in charge of one teacher.

With regard to the "class" subjects (drawing, history, geography in II. and IV., elementary science, and object-lessons), I have to report that the geography was on the whole well taught in these standards, and that elementary science (elementary chemistry, physics, physiology) is receiving much more attention than it used to receive some few years ago, and is now being taught successfully in a number of the large schools and not a few of the smaller ones. A number of the teachers have provided simple appliances themselves, and others have obtained apparatus with money raised by entertainments, &c. I have generally found in the schools a science syllabus for the current year, but not the three years' programme required by section 19 of the Department's regulations, and have therefore asked the Board to cause to be issued to those in charge of schools a circular letter drawing attention to this defect. The greater number of the schools visited had an average of under 150 scholars. The Board's resolution that two half-hours each week should be devoted to laws of health is causing the teachers in some schools to neglect the Department's regulation referred to altogether, and in others to pay insufficient attention to it, while in others the Board's resolution is neglected, and the teachers carry out to the best of their ability the Department's regulation. I have pointed out that it is impossible in such schools to carry out the regulation and the resolution—such is the number of subjects already on the syllabus—and have recommended a change in the latter. In a memorandum which I intend to lay before the Board shortly, dealing with the school hours, the home work, and the teaching of elementary science in the town schools, it will be my duty to show that the resolution is producing in them effects similar to those in the smaller schools. In schools, except the half-time ones, where health only has been taken, and the teacher has not endeavoured to carry out the Department's regulation, I have been able to accord very few marks for the teaching of elementary science. I have, however, brought the matter before the Board in my report for 1885. If it is desired that certain subjects should have a more prominent place than is assigned them by the standard regulations, I think it would be well to try to move the Department in the matter, but not to encrust the standard regulations with additions. It is very important that everything should be done to facilitate the proper teaching of the elements of physics, chemistry, physiology, and the Department has made express provision for this, but the resolution referred to is calculated to impede the teaching of the two first named. In some of the schools health is the only elementary science taken up, and in others very little science beyond it is attempted.

There is a decided improvement in the general character of the object-lessons given. I have devoted a good deal of time to inquiring into the character of these lessons, and have frequently given them at visits of inspection. The Inspector's duty is to suggest, exemplify, and explain, as well as to criticize and report. In small schools this duty is most important.

* Reading, writing, arithmetic, spelling, are pass subjects in *all* standards; grammar and composition in Standards III. to VI.; geography in III., V., and VI.; drawing in I. (In future years drawing will be a pass subject in higher standards.)

Drawing and history are the class subjects in which least marks have been given. The former has been well taught in about twenty-five schools, but in the majority—especially in the small schools—the results have been very poor. Here, however, there is a gradual improvement, which the new standard regulations have done much to bring about.

History has been well taught in many of the large schools and in some of the small ones; but in some of the schools, including one or two of the larger ones, I have found that the children have taken in unassimilated and indigestible matter, and I have had reason to think that it would have been better if the teachers referred to had not wasted their efforts in attempting to teach it. The Minister of Education said in one of his speeches, "I have listened to a history lesson which consisted in dictating short passages that were answers to probable questions. The teacher evidently had no grasp of his subject himself and could not impart any to his pupils." I regret to say that I have had a similar painful experience, and that in several schools some of my questions were met with evidently prepared "answers," which were not the result of a grasp of the subject, but a piece of mischievous memory-work. The time when most of our larger country schools will have graduates in them or teachers able to impart higher instruction to those in the district who need it, however devoutly to be wished, is yet to come. About a quarter of the teachers in charge of the schools visited had a certificate higher than E, and it cannot be expected that a large proportion of those with attainments indicated by this certificate, however well they may handle many of the subjects of primary instruction, will take up very successfully a subject which, to be taught with anything like good effect corresponding to effort, must be skilfully treated by those who have a grasp of the subject themselves. Still there is no separate syllabus of instruction for large and small schools, and as some of the teachers in the latter take up the subject with success, and a gradual improvement in the teaching power is to be expected, I am glad that the subject is in the syllabus of instruction. What can be done in the meantime is by inspection and by vigilance at examination to get better modes of treatment introduced, and to condemn vigorously those which are mischievous.

In all, saving very few, of the schools visited the "class" subjects have not been shirked, though they have been taught with varied success. Judging *à priori*, the tendency to give undue attention to "pass" subjects, with the corresponding tendency to give insufficient attention to "class" subjects, would be found most in schools near to one another where competition for "results" would be likely to secure undue attention to the subjects on which the passing in standards depended. By careful inspection and strict examination I have endeavoured to check this tendency to neglect the class subjects in the few schools where I have recognised its existence.

The "additional" subjects are recitation, drill, singing, needlework, subject-matter of reading lessons, extra drawing. With the way in which the first three of these are being attended to I am, on the whole, satisfied. In some of the schools that have adopted my suggestions to teach the scholars to recite suitable pieces of prose as well as of poetry there has been a marked improvement in this subject. To needlework insufficient time is given. In a large number of schools the "subject-matter of reading lessons" has not been well treated. In my report for 1885 I stated that, in the higher standards, I frequently found that "the children could read a large portion of their reading-book fluently without having any idea of the drift of the lesson, as the explanation they had been accustomed to was simply the substitution of one word for another, with little or no attempt to bring them into communion with the thoughts and feelings of the writers." The mechanical work only has been done in too many cases, but I consider that want of time has been the chief cause why more attention has not been given to the subject-matter of the reading lesson. The necessity of making time for the proper treatment of the two subjects just spoken of will be shortly brought before the Board in the memorandum referred to.

As a rule the primer classes are being well taught. In a few instances, however, I have noticed that when the staff has consisted of a head-master, mistress, and pupil-teacher, an unskilful pupil-teacher has been put in charge of these classes, and in such cases I have had to correct the mistake of putting the untrained to teach the lower classes, and of concentrating the teaching power on the standard classes.

I now speak particularly of the schools where the work was very mediocre or very poor. A statement of the condition of each of these schools is in the Board's books, and exact copies of the examination reports have, in the usual course, been sent to the Committees. Besides this, in five cases, where the deficiencies were very serious, special reports were sent to the Board recommending that some action should be taken; and in six other cases the Board's attention was called by special report, without recommendation of immediate action, as causes beyond the control of those in charge had contributed greatly to the unsatisfactory results. In some of the schools classified as very mediocre the results were attributable to irregular attendance, in others to changes of teachers, in others to want of energy in certificated teachers who could have done better, in others to the want of skill of those who were doing their best to give satisfaction, or to a combination of some of the causes named. Regularity of attendance, however, often depends upon the way in which a school is conducted. All except three of the schools here spoken of were inspected as well as examined. Some of the schools classed as very mediocre were in charge of certificated teachers from the training college, and I regret to have to say that in them either the work or the discipline was not what was to have been expected in schools conducted by those who were supposed to have gone through a thorough course of training in the art of teaching.

The supply of good male teachers from within the province is insufficient. I think that by advertising only to a very limited extent the Board has lost opportunities of securing trained and skilful teachers for positions which, under the circumstances, have been filled by others with less skill. I noticed in a telegraphic report the other day that it is computed that above four hundred certificated teachers in this colony were out of employment in December, 1886.

Seeing how many small schools there are in the Auckland Provincial District, I think that there should be, in connection with the training college, a model country school—that is, that there

should be thirty or forty children of different standards put under the charge of a skilful teacher, who should conduct the classes thus put under him as a small school. Here the students should at certain times see such a school engaged in work, and should in turn take part in conducting it under the direction of the teacher in charge, so that, besides deriving a knowledge of teaching from books, lectures, and the teaching of classes in a town school, they would become thoroughly acquainted with the best methods of conducting a country school. Without some such provision many sent to the charge of small schools will have to grope their way experimentally. Some years ago there was a school of this kind. It has ceased to exist, but should be re-instituted, care being taken that a skilful teacher is put in charge. There would be some difficulties attending its institution, but not serious ones. I recommended in a former report that no probationer should be put in charge of the smallest school without having had at least six months' practical work in town; some of this time, at least, should be spent by such in the proposed model school before being sent out. Many of those now in charge of the smaller country schools, who lack skill rather than energy, would willingly seek to get their holidays so arranged that they could, for a time, come to see such a school carried on.

Of the discipline in the schools visited I can, in the great majority of cases, report favourably. Much really good work is being done in the greater number of these schools, and they are gradually working more and more towards the thorough overtaking of the subjects—pass, class, and additional—set forth in the syllabus of instruction. The movement is, on the whole, one of progress. There are still some important remediable defects. The means of remedying most of them have been suggested or discussed in the reports, annual and special, furnished by the Board's Inspectors. To some of these defects I have here adverted.

The Chairman, Board of Education, Auckland.

I have, &c.,

WM. FIDLER, M.A., Inspector.

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