

MILITARY DRILL is taught at Stafford, Kumara, and Ross only, being especially good at the first-named two. At all schools excepting the very smallest there is sufficient practice of ordinary class drill to insure promptness of movement and orderly entrance and dismissal.

NEEDLEWORK.—The form of teaching needlework is gone through at all schools having female assistants or sewing mistresses, but at three only does it appear to be taught in a satisfactory manner. These are Kanieri, Stafford, and Woodstock. The sewing at most of the other schools is, generally speaking, either inferior in quality, or the full requirements of the programme are not complied with. I hear frequent complaints of the great length of time occupied in completing pieces of work, and of parents being compelled to unpick and refix work that has been badly done or improperly “fixed” at school. Excepting the three named, no school has received more than half the marks allowed for this subject. I should be glad if I could believe that want of time is the only cause of this shortcoming, but I fear, seeing that the work is well done at some schools, where, owing to the smaller staffs, the time is even more limited, that there must be somewhere a want of interest, not to say zeal, in this part of the school routine, which results in a somewhat perfunctory performance of it. At Hokitika, where the sewing is certainly below the average quality, it seems a pity that the Committee should have thought it advisable to shorten the weekly school time by two and a half hours. In view of the almost universal outcry for technical education, I think the time has arrived when the claims of the girls should be considered. Now that there is scarcely a cottage in the land without its sewing machine, the programme for sewing might be amended by confining the work to such operations as cannot be performed by that useful implement—*e.g.*, mending, patching, darning, &c., for the junior classes, and by introducing dressmaking (including all kinds of garments). It is a well-known fact that in even the poorest families much money is spent annually in paying for the making of the clothing of the children and their parents, which might be just as well and far more economically made at home, where there are girls in the family. Dressmakers are now so plentiful that there should be no difficulty in obtaining the services of a thoroughly competent person to attend at all the principal schools within easy distance of any given centre, on certain fixed mornings or afternoons, to give instruction to the elder girls and female pupil-teachers in the mysteries of measuring, cutting out, and fitting on. The sewing might very well be divided into three classes for plain work, mending, &c., under the charge of the ordinary teachers, with an advanced class to be instructed by the visiting mistress in the subject before mentioned. At the larger schools the addition of a sewing machine to the school apparatus would be attended with great advantage, and might be the means of removing one of the causes of complaint mentioned above; and expertness in the use of this now universal piece of domestic mechanism would be of practical value to the girls in after life.

PUPIL-TEACHERS.—It has been pointed out to me by the friends of several pupil-teachers that their examination, if held at the usual time, would virtually deprive them of the benefits of the greater part of their holidays, since they felt obliged to continue their studies up to the day of examination, whilst some might also desire to sit for the E certificate, which they could not do if the two examinations were held simultaneously. To meet this reasonable objection I fixed upon an earlier date, and I believe that the change has given general satisfaction. Three pupil-teachers were examined for admission to the first class, and all passed with credit. Eight passed the examination for the second class, three with credit. Four were entered for the third class and passed, two of them gaining credit marks. Two came up for the fourth class, one passing and one failing. In addition to the ordinary compulsory subjects of the examination the pupil-teachers of the Hokitika School took up Latin as an optional subject; but the result was not equal to last year's work at the same school. The pupil-teachers at Stafford also entered for Latin, but, judging from the very meagre results, the time occupied would have been better employed by one of the two in a more thorough attention to arithmetic, in which subject she was very weak. The performances of the pupil-teachers, as will be seen by the table attached, were on the whole very satisfactory. The pupil-teachers' exercise books were inspected during the examination, and I noticed considerable improvement in most of those that gave occasion last year for some adverse criticism. There was only one pupil-teacher whose books called for severe censure, some of the exercises being written in so hasty and slovenly a style as to be barely legible, particularly those on algebra, which I had the utmost difficulty in deciphering. I took an opportunity of privately speaking to the writer on the subject, and I hope there will be no cause for complaint on this head at the next examination.

I have been informed that certain pupil-teachers have been compelled to obtain and pay for assistance in their studies from a teacher outside their own school. This course, if necessary to enable the pupil-teachers to succeed at their examination, may be a very prudent one so far as the interests of the pupil-teachers are concerned, but it is attended by a great disadvantage—namely, that it has the effect of screening the alleged incapacity of the head teacher, who is paid by the Board for giving the instruction demanded by the Regulations. It is, of course, quite impossible to distinguish between the results of this dual instruction; consequently, whether entitled to it or not, the credit of success or the discredit of failure can only be assigned to the person responsible to the Board. The following passage, extracted from my report for the year ending the 31st December, 1882, has a direct bearing upon this matter: “For reasons into which I entered very fully in a letter to your Board in May, 1881, I consider that certain conditions should be complied with before the Board burdens itself with the responsibility and expense of training up young persons for the office of teacher. One of these conditions is that the head teacher of the school be thoroughly competent, not only to teach, but to train in good methods of teaching, the pupil-teachers committed to his charge. Another should be that the school itself be sufficiently large to afford ample opportunity for the practice of every branch of instruction required under the Standard Regulations, and that the person proposed for appointment be not merely the most suitable that can be selected from amongst the scholars, but absolutely fit for the position. These desiderata might be secured by some such regulations as the following: (1.) No head teacher to be intrusted with the teaching or training of pupil-teachers whose certificate is of a lower class than D. (2.) That no school