PUPIL-TEACHERS.—The majority of the pupil-teachers take honourable positions at the annual examination in the prescribed literary course. In future a substantial number of the total marks awarded will be given for practical efficiency. No degree of literary attainment can fully compensate for lack of practical skill. A meed of praise is due to those young men and women that strive to make themselves not only apt students but also apt teachers.

INFANT CLASSES .---- In spite of all that has been written and rewritten in favour of natural and against unnatural methods of teaching infants, there is still ample scope for improvement in our schools. The finding of profitable employment for the infants taxes to the utmost the resources of the unaided teacher. It is truly pitiful to see the little ones sitting hour after hour with pencil and slate, struggling to make a few letters or figures till the brain is weary and the hand benumbed. So long as the requirements of the present syllabus have to be fulfilled, it is not easy, if, indeed, possible, to get over the difficulty altogether. It is otherwise where there is a teacher for the lower classes. Here natural methods may be expected; and, although the kindergarten with its gifts may be out of the question, teaching may be made to a large extent concrete and objective. With children, things charm, words repel. The plan of causing children to read sentences forwards and then backwards, and to repeat each word indefinitely, is surely an anachronism; yet it is not uncommon. A similar remark might be made with respect to the intonation which passes current as recitation. In this, as in all other infant studies, the watchword is, "Be natural." Reference might also be made to the too slavish adherence to lesson sheets which obtains in some of our infant schools. These sheets are a valuable adjunct when used as a means, but become a stumbling-block when regarded as the be-all and end-all of the reading-lesson. For natural exercises, it is sufficient to refer to the many excellent manuals published for the guidance of infant teachers. Such exercises, while cultivating the powers of observation and expression, are to be regarded as the handmaidens of the severer exercises which must follow. Mechanical methods of teaching singing should yield to rational methods. It is just as easy to treat this subject intelligently in the lower as in the upper classes; and such treatment will save much trouble afterwards. Even in the youngest classes a beginning should be made in voice-training and timeexercises. Teachers often complain that children will shout—exactly what is to be expected in the absence of thoughtful and systematic vocal drill. In selecting pieces for infant classes it would be well for the mistress to limit her choice to tunes of medium pitch-say, from C to D. Objectlessons may be referred to in passing. The golden rule of proceeding from the known to the unknown is not always observed here. Instead of studying the structure and habits of the bee, the butterfly, and the buttercup, children are let not unfrequently into the mysteries of the ostrich, the bear, and the bamboo. Before proceeding to remote and unfamiliar specimens, the teacher would find it profitable to take up and treat, as exhaustively as is possible with infants, one animal and one plant as a type of each kingdom.

Appended hereto is our report on the extra subjects studied at the Riverton District High School. We have, &c.,

The Secretary, Southland Education Board.

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JAMES HENDRY, B.A., GEO. D. BRAIK, M.A., Inspectors.

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