

1890.
NEW ZEALAND.

EDUCATION: REPORTS OF INSPECTORS OF SCHOOLS.

[In continuation of E.—1B, 1889.]

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.

SIR,—

Auckland, 7th February, 1890.

We have the honour to present a report on the schools in the Auckland Education District for the year 1889.

During the year 234 schools have been examined in standards. There have been 114 inspection reports presented; of these, twenty-seven relate to schools which were examined and inspected on the same day. Thirteen schools have been specially reported as unsatisfactory.

The tabulated statement required by the Education Department is attached to this report. This statement shows that the percentage of passes has increased from 43·8 to 45·1, and that of failures has decreased from 21·4 to 19. The mean of the average age of passing is somewhat lower than last year. While an improvement is thus shown on the whole, we find that the work in Standard IV. and Standard VI. shows signs of deterioration.

Owing to circumstances with which the Board is already acquainted, it has been found impossible to visit the schools in the Bay of Plenty district. There are also a few small schools to which no visit, either of inspection or examination, has been paid during the year.

The recent action of the Board in sending to take charge of country schools female teachers who have already had experience in the town and larger schools, has been attended with good results. We believe that female teachers are specially fitted for this work, and we take this opportunity of bearing testimony to the care, zeal, and intelligence with which some of these schools are taught when under the control of ladies.

With regard to the syllabus prescribed by the regulations, about which there has been much discussion, we are of opinion that frequent changes in the programme of instruction should be avoided. At the same time, we fully recognise the difficulties under which teachers and scholars labour in small and half-time schools. The regulations make no special provision for schools of this class, and it appears somewhat inconsistent to expect the full requirements of the syllabus to be carried out to the same extent in small schools as in a large one. The attempt to carry out the syllabus in its entirety frequently results in nothing being well done. We therefore consider that the most judicious alteration would be in the direction of giving the Inspectors discretionary power to allow the omission of some of the class and additional subjects.

With regard to the several subjects of instruction we beg to offer the following remarks:—

READING.—Instances of really good reading are few and far between. The principal defects are want of expression and inflection. While fair reading, as regards pronunciation and attention to stops, is found in the lower classes, in the higher classes a want of appreciation of the meaning of the passage read, as well as a very meagre knowledge of the meaning of words not in ordinary use, is very common.

WRITING.—The reputation for good handwriting which this district has in former years enjoyed is likely to be somewhat endangered unless more care is given to the subject. The writing is certainly not so good as it was. We attribute this to the want of vigilance during the writing lesson, and to the fact that careless writing in exercise books is taken as a matter of course by some teachers.

SPELLING.—More failures have been caused during the past year by bad spelling than by any other subject. Not only in the special test imposed, but also in composition papers and exercise books, even common and easy words are frequently misspelt. Although frequent reference has been made in previous reports to the want of care shown in the correction of transcription exercises, undoubtedly the best and readiest means of teaching spelling, yet we have been unable to see any improvement.

ARITHMETIC.—This subject continues to be well taught as far as the mechanical operations incidental to commercial rules are concerned. Problem work and mental arithmetic—the mathematics of the elementary school—appear too often neglected, the latter almost invariably so. We have endeavoured to impress upon teachers the immense value of beginning fresh processes in arithmetic mentally. Not only is the knowledge more likely to remain than by the use of formulæ, but the pupil has the inestimable advantage of training which the proper study of arithmetic gives.

GRAMMAR AND COMPOSITION.—These subjects are, on the whole, fairly well taught. We consider that more attention should be paid to analysis of sentences. As to composition, much of the work shown by Standard V. and Standard VI. is poor, the most common faults being a want of due arrangement of ideas and of a proper division of the subject-matter into paragraphs and sentences.

GEOGRAPHY.—As regards map geography, fair knowledge is generally shown, with the exception of that of New Zealand and Australia. The mathematical part of this subject does not seem to be taught, save in rare instances, in a sufficiently intelligent manner: too much reliance is placed on book work, and the subject is, generally speaking, dealt with too mechanically.

DRAWING.—There has been a decided improvement in freehand drawing, and more attention has been paid to mechanical and geometrical drawing. In model drawing very little has been done. One great hindrance to progress in geometrical drawing is the difficulty experienced by teachers in getting parents to pay for or supply the necessary instruments.

CLASS AND ADDITIONAL SUBJECTS.—In the larger schools class and additional subjects receive their due share of attention. The teaching of elementary science in schools where suitable apparatus has been provided is satisfactory; but in small schools, with few exceptions, the science taught is confined to the laws of health and perhaps a few lessons (not experimental) in physics. Teachers have to a great extent neglected to observe the regulation which requires them to prepare a programme showing the distribution of work in elementary science over a three years' course. This programme will in future be rigidly demanded.

We can speak in high terms generally of the discipline, tone, and behaviour of the children in the schools under notice.

In closing this report we wish to record our opinion that the schools in the Auckland Education District are in the main efficiently taught, and that the character of the instruction is steadily improving.

We have, &c.,

JOHN S. GOODWIN,
WALTER HENRY AIRY, B.A.,
JAMES C. DICKINSON,
RICHARD CROWE, } Inspectors.

The Chairman, Board of Education, Auckland.

SUMMARY OF RESULTS FOR THE WHOLE DISTRICT.

Classes.	Presented.	Absent.	Excepted.	Failed.	Passed.	Average Age of those that passed.	
						Yrs.	mos.
Above Standard VI. ...	82	...	...	...	...	...	...
Standard VI. ...	552	24	19	139	370	14	7
" V. ...	1,450	111	81	502	756	13	6
" IV. ...	2,319	112	118	612	1,477	12	7
" III. ...	3,055	187	193	592	2,083	11	5
" II. ...	3,058	123	164	400	2,371	10	4
" I. ...	2,887	141	122	218	2,406	9	2
Preparatory ...	7,578	...	...	...	...	...	...
Totals ...	20,981	698	697	2,463	9,463	*	

* Mean of average age, 11 years 11 months.

TARANAKI.

SIR,—

Education Office, New Plymouth, 30th January, 1890.

I have the honour to submit my report on the schools of this district for the year ending the 31st December, 1889.

Thirty-nine schools were open during the last quarter of the year. All, save Tarata, at which there were no pupils ready for examination, have been inspected and examined on different dates. About three thousand miles are travelled, chiefly by road, in making these visits. I have also undertaken journeys in connection with special work, as well as given extra attention to schools in a few instances. Two examinations were conducted by me during the year in awarding the Board's scholarships. The results of the first were shown in last year's printed report, but, the latter not having taken place until March, the usual table could not be given. It is, however, printed in this year's appendix. As the examination for the current year has been delayed by the proposed changes in the regulations, it may be impossible to insert the annual table in its place. Hopes are entertained that the increased travelling allowance will induce a larger and better class of candi-

dates to come forward for these examinations. A large majority of the successful candidates of past years by no means represent the scholars in the standards which qualify for the examination.

Several applications for new schools have been before the Board during the year, and, as this question is yearly requiring greater need for the fullest consideration, I desire to draw attention to one or more points relative to the subject. Already a decrease in the attendance at a few of the old-established schools, whose position when erected suited the isolated settlement of the time, is beginning to show itself. This, I believe, will ultimately lead to the removal of one or more of these buildings to other sites now more centrally and conveniently situated. Unfortunately there is also a tendency among parents to withdraw pupils to other schools recently erected or proposed for erection, as is seen in the names of settlers appearing on several petitions for new schools in different but contiguous districts. In localities where a few children reside at a distance from schools in operation it is desirable that better provision should be made for their entry on school life at as early a date as the means of the Board can allow. And, further, I suggest, as a preliminary step in some cases, the introduction of the aided school to supply this want before the creation of new districts and erection of schools therein. Such schools have been for years working in a most satisfactory manner in various education districts throughout the colony. Certainly, it is true that their introduction would entail some little monetary contribution from the settlers in aiding the capitation allowance (which could further be assisted by the Board to a slight extent), but the advantage of having a school at work in the district would more than repay the trifling personal effort.

At present accommodation is, with two exceptions, very satisfactory. The two are Okato and Waiongona. Both buildings are much overcrowded and ill adapted. Should the attendance continue new buildings appear to be the only remedy; meanwhile the children suffer, though it is satisfactory to know that the school work has been carried on without serious inconvenience. Although there is ample room at Courtenay Street, the isolation of the infant department affects the working and organization of the Central School. I hope the Board will not lose sight of the importance of having both departments of the school under the same roof. The changes now being undertaken at Waitara will lead to far better and more satisfactory conditions at that place. This has proved to be the case at Inglewood, where similar changes were made a few years ago. While referring to this subject I entreat for the consideration and grant of a liberal increase in the salaries of the assistants engaged in these schools. Satisfactory results can only be obtained in large schools when important trusts are committed to competent and experienced persons.

The class of buildings now erected at Oaonui, Tarata, Eltham Road, and other places meets with general approval from teachers and the public. In every case ample provision is made for future enlargement at a minimum of expense. These buildings are commodious, well arranged, and successfully ventilated. Several of the school grounds in different parts of the district are tidily kept and well looked after by the School Committees; and teachers also have contributed by labour and money to make or improve the gardens attached to their residences. At one I was shown a model beehive which could be taken into the school for object lessons, when the imprisoned bees could be seen at their busy work without dread or injury to the youngest child. Still, there are teachers who take little or no interest in the improvement of their surroundings; likewise a few allow this indulgence to extend to their dress, which disposition, I am, sorry to say, has been forced upon my observation by a like inclination amongst their pupils.

The mean of ages for the district is slightly raised—from 12·2 to 12·3; but the advanced ages at which a considerable number of children enter school, especially in new districts, is to a great extent one of the chief causes of this increase. I call attention to the fact that I have, in a few cases, passed children through the lowest standard at ages between fourteen and fifteen years. The ages at which children are passing the standards in the best schools of the district will, however, on an examination of Table 3, be seen to be lower than in former years.

For examination 2,553 scholars were presented, of which number 994 were classed as preparatory. Both the absent and the excepted numbers are slightly in excess of last year's return. The failures and passes are improved. The "percentage of failures" is 25·4; but the "percentage of passes" shows a slight fall—to 39·1. The latter is caused by the increased number in the preparatory classes, and the lesser number than usual presented in Standard I. The actual number of passes is 999, or 25 more than that of the preceding year. Deducting 248, the number of passes in the Central and West Infants' Schools, gives an increase of 61 passes to be credited to the country schools. I give this information because the Central School returns have been lowered by the indifferent results of one class and the partial failure of another; otherwise the school would have returned a greater number of passes than at any former examination.

Class subjects show improvement to the extent of 5 per cent. They are, in general, liberally treated. Drawing for the first time in Standard V. has received fair treatment. Evidently teachers are realising the advantage of early preparation and practice of methods. I now entertain hopes that in this standard more than satisfactory work will be done during the present year, when the subject will be treated as a pass one. I wish a similar assurance could be expressed regarding Standard VI. The schools are but poorly equipped with apparatus for teaching advanced drawing. The cost of good models and objects is altogether beyond the yearly allowance made for apparatus in this district. Still, this difficulty could be got over if the Education Department supplied all necessary apparatus for drawing and science teaching at a price which it could be sold for by importing largely. Many teachers would purchase for themselves but that the high prices, owing to heavy charges on such unseizable goods, prevent tradesmen keeping them in stock.

The percentage on additional subjects is about 2 per cent. lower. I attribute the falling off to the treatment of recitation, which was poorer than usual, and rather uneven; also to the lower marks awarded for sewing, almost every reduction being made in schools relying on outside aid for

instruction in this subject. On the one hand, where female teachers are carrying on school work without help, the work is reported as varying from good to excellent; on the other hand, where this outside assistance is required, the sewing has not been so favourably reported upon. Midhirst, Rahotté, and Warea are, however, notable exceptions, deserving special mention.

Thus far I have dealt with the required annual returns, which may indicate the progress of learning in this district, yet can give but a vague estimate of its true character. The annual percentages given in each school report are at times greatly misleading, especially when gratifying results follow the advent of a new teacher, or after the unsuccessful efforts of a standard, whose scholars manage to make a pass in the following year. The work in this district has now reached a stage from which little further progress will be made until its backward schools are placed under efficient instruction. If the position now reached is to be maintained and improved, your larger schools demand the appointment of trained and experienced assistants to undertake the work of the preparatory classes and lower standards; likewise the smaller schools would benefit by the employment of certificated female teachers where males are now engaged.

I have endeavoured to give through the medium of marks my own opinion of the quality of the instruction. In 1886 the percentage of these marks was 58 per cent.; the year following it rose to 59 per cent.; last year it had reached 62 per cent.; and for the year now under review a further advance to 64 per cent. has been made. In awarding the marks, ten is taken as the maximum for each subject; six as the passing number for boys and girls; but in the case of girls, when the sewing in the school has been reported as satisfactory by the award of twelve marks by the Ladies' Sewing Committee, five marks are accepted as the pass in all subjects except reading.

READING.—Although this subject gives a very high percentage of passes, it is by no means so efficiently taught as I desire it to be. There are very few schools in which it is well taught; indeed, excellence is rare: still, when the numerous difficulties under which teachers have to labour are considered, it appears to receive a fair share of each day's attention, judged by its slow but gradual improvement. In tone it is good, fluent, and fairly well articulated, but still fails in modulation and expression. In the bush districts scholars have but little spare time to read; besides, their stock of books is limited to their text ones, and perhaps a prize or an occasional loan of one from a more fortunate individual. Can nothing be done in the interests of these young people? Can they not read in school? Teachers might, with outside assistance, strive to start a library in their schools. Little money is required in these days of cheap editions of good books. Begun with the class that children will read, a variety of good reading matter could be added as funds permitted. The books could be used by teacher and pupils in class, when their freshness, either captivating or arousing the scholars, is certain to be a powerful stimulant in encouraging them to cultivate a love for reading. I am aware that there are a few public libraries in the district; but their volumes are not the class for youthful readers, neither are they suitable to interest nor encourage a child to read. I have a strong leaning to the use of unseen passages within standard limits for testing reading on examination day. Perhaps at the next revision of the syllabus this system of test may be permitted; meanwhile natural phrasing, the frequent use of the blackboard by printing easy words thereon, an intelligent explanation of passages read (not merely the giving of synonyms), and the cultivation of a good style are the main points likely to improve this subject.

SPELLING.—This is becoming a strong subject. There are only a few schools where unsatisfactory results are obtained. Good methods, if faithfully used, cannot fail in giving good results. Class failures are a sure sign of laziness on the teacher's part. I direct attention to a careful preparation of words pronounced nearly alike as the weakest point in the instruction of this subject.

ARITHMETIC.—The instruction in this subject is now progressing very satisfactorily. The mental papers were answered in much less time and more successfully than at last year's examinations. Too much prominence cannot be given to mental arithmetic—its practical application is so helpful in working questions accurately, while it aids in acquiring intelligent methods of working problems. Teachers will find the advanced work of standards much easier to teach if it be well taught in the lower classes. Practice and reduction were well done; so also was the usual tradesman's bill. Standard V. in a few schools had been poorly prepared. The too liberal use of test cards without teaching had something to do with such wholesale failures. Test cards are very beneficial when used at the right time. The work of Standards V. and VI. was much above any former year's efforts. The papers generally were carefully worked and done in good time. The percentage of passes in this subject was 70 per cent.

DRAWING.—I continue to test the drawing from figures on the blackboard on examination day, with results that are fairly creditable. To secure breadth of treatment, the paper used is ruled with large squares. Its use is allowed as far as Standard III. From this year's experience I conclude that the change to a single central line purposely traced, to obtain a figure of definite height, has removed any fear of equally creditable work not being procured from Standard IV. The model and geometrical tests were encouraging and frequently praiseworthy.

WRITING.—This is another strong subject in the majority of schools. At a few of these, however, an award of marks made on the day's slate and paper work of the higher standards would effect a revolution in the habit of careless ciphering and writing.

GRAMMAR.—This subject, which includes composition, is decidedly the weakest one. In Standard III. the grammar tests were frequently uneven. Parsing in Standards IV., V., and VI. was above former averages. The same remarks apply to the inflection and analysis of Standards V. and VI.; but Standard IV. had been badly prepared. Greater importance must be given to collective instruction and supervision in the teaching of composition. Success lies in systematic teaching, suitable exercises, and sufficient practice. The teaching should begin in Standard II., with complete sentences in ordinary class questioning. The object lesson gives an excellent opportunity for laying a good foundation. But the help of a scheme of synthetic exercises, prepared by myself, with practical aid wherever necessary at inspection visit, ought to be productive of improved

results by next examination, when the tests will be adapted to the plan of instruction. A list of subjects for the senior classes, if arranged for given dates, allows time for collecting information in the form of notes by each pupil. Teachers would do well to try this plan, enforcing the latter part. The punctuation was frequently omitted by pupils of the lower standards.

GEOGRAPHY.—This subject is also weak. Many classes had been very badly prepared in the spelling of local names. The class subject work was as satisfactory as that of any preceding year. Mapping could not be called a success, as the maps were generally poorly outlined; but the places asked for were often correctly indicated, and the facts stated with a fair degree of accuracy. Physical geography was the weakest part of the subject, the questions being often unanswered.

Military drill and singing are at a low ebb. The first is, however, well represented at the Central School and at Tikorangi, where the company movements were highly creditable.

In connection with needlework, I should like to see "Dress Cutting-out" an essential part of its programme. Now that the girls are showing an interest in geometrical drawing, there is no hindrance to their successful treatment of a system like that of Mrs. N. Greenfell's, published by Longmans, Green, and Co. It presents no difficulty, so that the system could be acquired in a few lessons.

I am again able to report most favourably on the discipline and behaviour of the pupils. With two or three exceptions, the tone also of all the schools continues to be highly satisfactory.

I have, &c.,

The Chairman, Board of Education, Taranaki.

WILLIAM MURRAY, Inspector.

SUMMARY OF RESULTS FOR THE WHOLE DISTRICT.

Classes.	Presented.	Absent.	Excepted.	Failed.	Passed.	Average Age of those that passed.
Above Standard VI. ...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Standard VI. ...	29	2	2	5	20	14.8
" V. ...	130	13	3	48	66	14.2
" IV. ...	237	22	14	66	135	12.8
" III. ...	416	37	39	127	213	11.9
" II. ...	412	30	22	72	288	10.5
" I. ...	335	26	10	22	277	9.4
Preparatory ...	994	...	...	...	...	...
Totals ...	2,553	130	90	340	999	*

* Mean of average age, 12.3 years.

WANGANUI.

SIR,—

Education Board Office, Wanganui, 25th March, 1890.

I have the honour to submit my sixth annual report on primary education in the Wanganui District.

WORK OF THE YEAR.—During the year I examined all the schools open for twelve months at the time I was in their neighbourhood—viz., eighty—and I paid seventy-nine visits of inspection. The time given to the examination of each school varied from one day to five days, except in the case of one small infants' school, which was examined in four hours. The examination generally began at 9 a.m., and ended at 5 p.m. or 6 p.m., according to the time of year. At inspection visits, or what are commonly known by the objectionable term of "surprise visits," from half a day to a day was spent at each school, according to its size, its state of efficiency, and the time at my disposal. To teachers new to the district I endeavoured to give as much time as possible at these visits, and also to familiarise them with our methods and style of work by leaving with them corrected examination papers worked at some of my other schools, and also samples of examination cards. No doubt these papers and cards proved of advantage, for children may not do themselves full justice when the style of the Inspector's examination is quite different from their teacher's. Of the eighty schools twenty-two were examined between March and June, while the examination of the remaining fifty-eight went on almost daily (a few days were spent in inspection visits) from the 22nd July to the 20th December. The majority of schools were inspected between January and July. And here I may say that, as nearly every school day between the pupil-teachers' examination in June and the midsummer holidays has its allotted examination on my time table, all new schools of the future must be examined in the earlier half of the year. I make this explanation because some Committees and teachers of lately-opened schools were surprised that their examinations could not take place in some particular month. After the examination of each school the schedules and my report were posted during the week to the Board's Secretary, and at the same time duplicate copies were sent to the teachers through the Chairmen of their Committees. On these schedules the work done was valued as carefully as at a competitive examination, and from fifty to a hundred marks were obtainable by each pupil in each subject. Such a method of appraising the papers enables the teacher to see at a glance in what subjects his pupils are strong

or in what weak, or why a pupil is refused a pass; but it gives the examiner a great deal of extra night work. The inspection reports also were written in duplicate, one copy being sent, through his Committee, to the teacher interested, and the other to the Board. A considerable amount of time was necessarily spent in drawing out the thirty-odd examination papers required for the pupil-teachers and the candidates for scholarships, as well as several sets of cards for the standard examinations. The paper work of the pupils was corrected and valued during the school days at night, and on Saturdays also.

During the first week of the midwinter holidays of the schools I examined the pupil-teachers of the district. The work of the first and second classes was on the whole good: in the third, or lowest, class it was rather weak; but perhaps this might be expected, as many of the candidates had not long passed the examination for Standard VI., and, though there is not much difference in the *kind* of work (literature excepted) required at both examinations, the *amount* to be done in a given time is very different. In arithmetic I still found candidates weak in vulgar and decimal fractions (not so much in working them as in ability to give definitions and to explain processes), while inaccurate working in the simple money-rules was very common in problems and bills of parcels. There is, however, no doubt that the pupil-teachers have very much advanced during the last few years, not only in scholastic attainments, but also in teaching-ability. With regard to the latter several of the present assistants and sole teachers who are doing good work have only recently completed their time as pupil-teachers; while advancement in the former is clearly shown, apart from the Board's examination, by the certificate examination of the Education Department. Thus, of pupil-teachers not yet out of their time one has matriculated and also holds a D certificate, and five have partial E certificates, and one a full E; while of those that have recently completed their pupil-teacher course one has matriculated, three hold D certificates, one obtained a partial D at the last examination, and eleven have full E and four partial E certificates. Again, last year nine "special mentions" in drawing, experimental science, geography, history, arithmetic, and algebra were obtained by pupil-teachers; and this year a pupil-teacher gained the first prize in experimental science. These results must be very gratifying to all concerned—to the Board, to the pupil-teachers themselves and their parents, to the principal teachers who taught the candidates, but more especially to me who have examined them so often, and who have seen so many of them through their apprenticeship, and some of them through the highest standards. On the other hand, some of those who were out of their time six years ago have not yet succeeded in obtaining any certificate.

NUMBER OF SCHOOLS. ATTENDANCE.—At the close of the school year eighty-four schools were in active operation, having an average weekly roll number of 7,345, and a strict average attendance of 5,510, or 75 per cent. Of these eighty-four schools two were "half time" (since made full time), and eleven "aided," with an attendance of under twenty; while all were officered by 163 teachers, made up as follows: 33 head teachers, 50 sole teachers in charge of schools, 27 assistant teachers, and 53 pupil-teachers (12 males and 41 females). The roll number of pupils shows an increase of 326 for the year, while the percentage of attendance to roll number has remained stationary. The average attendance for the whole year (5,435.5) as a percentage of the mean of the average weekly roll of four quarters (7,315) was 74.4. This is lower than in any other of the thirteen districts for 1888, except Taranaki (73.9). The average for the colony was 79.3, and Otago headed the list with 83.8, Auckland being second with 80.9.

EXAMINATION IN STANDARDS.—Of the eighty-four schools in operation at the end of the school year eighty had been open for twelve months or over, and each of these was examined in standards. The new schools at Kapuni, Kaupokonui, Bird Road, Kairanga, and Birmingham were examined for the first time this year; and Linton, Fitzherbert, Mangawhero, and Upper Wangaehu will be taken in the autumn. On the days appointed for the examination there were 7,089 children (3,706 boys and 3,383 girls) on the school rolls, of whom 4,413, or 62 per cent., were presented for promotion in the six standards, 2,644 were in the preparatory classes, and 32 had already passed Standard VI. Of the 4,413 presented for promotion, 4,211, or 95.4 per cent., attended and were examined, 202 were absent, 296 were excepted, 997 failed, and 2,918 passed the requirements and were promoted. The percentage of failures was 25.47.

The following table (Table A) gives a condensed summary of the examination results during the past year; Table B shows the results in each standard, and also the average age of the children; and Table C (not printed) gives every information with regard to individual schools.

TABLE A.

1. Presented in Standards I. to VI. inclusive	...	...	...	4,413
2. Preparatory class	...	...	...	2,644
3. Class above Standard VI.	...	...	...	32
4. Number on rolls on days of examination	...	...	...	7,089
5. Percentage of roll number presented in Standards I. to VI. inclusive	...	...	...	62.25
6. Examined in Standards I. to VI. inclusive	...	...	...	4,211
7. Absent	"	"	...	202
8. Excepted	"	"	...	296
9. Failed	"	"	...	997
10. Passed	"	"	...	2,918
11. Percentage of passes, calculated on roll number (4)	...	...	...	41.16
12. Percentage of failures	...	...	...	25.47
13. Percentage of passes on number examined in standards (6)	...	...	...	69.29
14. Percentage of passes on number examined in standards, omitting exceptions	...	...	...	74.53

TABLE B.

No. of Schools examined in each Standard.	Classes.	Presented.	Absent.	Excepted.	Failed.	Passed.	Average Age of those that passed.		Percentage of Failures in Standards.
							Yrs.	mos.	
18	Above Stand. VI.	32	...	9	...	...	...	...	...
48	Standard VI. ...	162	6	20	50	97	14	2	34.0
60	" V. ...	352	20	20	123	189	13	8	39.4
76	" IV. ...	701	47	44	245	365	12	9	40.1
77	" III. ...	1,095	57	70	297	671	11	9	30.7
76	" II. ...	1,093	50	90	164	789	10	5	17.2
78	" I. ...	1,010	22	63	118	807	9	3	12.8
No. of schools examined in one or more standards, 80.		4,445	202	296	997	2,918	*		25.47

* Mean of average age, 12 years.

The number of children presented shows an increase for the year of 357, and it is pleasing to find such a high percentage of those presented attending at the examination. This percentage has increased yearly for the past six years, and has risen from 92.1 in 1884 to 95.4 in 1889. At the majority of schools the children appear to thoroughly enjoy the examination. The number of excepted pupils is rather high, but for this the new flax industry is largely responsible, and also the progress of settlement in the back country, for a number of children from outside came into the district who had not received nearly a year's tuition from the time they passed their last standards until my examination. The percentage of failures is higher than in the previous year by 2.8.

Table B plainly shows how comparatively few children remain at school long enough to reach the higher standards. Thus, while over 1,000 children were presented in each of the lower three classes, Standard I., Standard II., and Standard III., the number dropped from 1,095 in Standard III. to 701 in Standard IV., to 352 in Standard V., and to 162 in Standard VI.

With regard to the percentages of passes for the year, Standard III. shows an improvement of nearly 4 per cent., and Standard I. and Standard II. are much the same in both years. In the upper three standards, however, there was a great falling off; and this, perhaps, was to be expected, partly because drawing was during last year for the first time a pass subject in Standard IV., and partly because the upper standards in *small schools* can, I am convinced, do really well under the present regulations only every second year, and 1888 was their good year. This opinion is partly borne out by the fact that, of the fifty failures in Standard VI., twenty-five happened at schools officered by only one teacher, while at nine large schools only seventeen pupils failed out of seventy-five examined. There is no doubt that teachers in sole charge of schools are at a great disadvantage with respect to teaching the upper standards; still, if pupils attended more regularly, so much difficulty would not be found in meeting the requirements of the syllabus. Taking all circumstances into consideration, however, I venture the opinion that it would be well if the arithmetic of these standards were lightened. In Standard IV. fewer measures might be required, but I would have mensuration taught, the measurements to be given in only one and the same denomination, as chains or yards. In Standard VI. the time devoted to stocks, present worth, and banker's discount (in the last two I never set questions) might far better be employed in *graving* in boys' minds rules such as mensuration and decimals that have been merely *tinkled with a brush*, so to speak, and in making them thoroughly accurate in ordinary money computations in buying and selling, paying wages, clearing and fencing land, &c., for in sums of this description I find it merely a question of amount of figuring required as regards pupils going wrong in their working. As an example of the way in which rules are slurred over without being digested I may say that I have found pupil-teachers who could wrestle with such a sum as "A bill for £400 was drawn on the 23rd April, to be paid six months after date: if this was discounted on the 4th July at 4 per cent., what was the banker's discount?" quite unable to calculate rough discount at 5 per cent. on a shop bill.

But another cause has militated in no small degree against the success of the district in the past year. An unusually large number of schools were closed for some time owing to illnesses, promotions, or transfers of head teachers and assistants; and at these schools I did not expect, and did not receive, good results. With a view to guarding against such closing of schools in future the Board recently appointed a "relieving teacher." I believe that there is room for two such teachers, especially if they are given fixed appointments shortly after they enter the service. Again, several of our pupil-teachers have been promoted to the rank of assistants, or to take sole charge of schools, and it has sometimes been found difficult to fill their places; for, while in some parts of the district—notably Wanganui and Hawera—pupil-teachers are to be found readily enough, in others it is not easy to get them. In this respect some relief would probably be obtained if pupil-teachers asked to live away from home were offered £10 per annum extra salary. If something of the kind is not done we shall shortly have in the country schools a certain number of very inferior pupil-teachers.

The following table shows the percentage of passes in each of the compulsory pass subjects in all classes. Reading and spelling might well be stronger in nearly all standards. Writing is excellent throughout, and occupies the place of honour with 94.4 per cent. of passes; while grammar, with composition, is lowest with 64.9. Arithmetic has 74 per cent. for all classes, but I should like to find it stronger in all standards from II. to VI. Geography has 74 per cent., and is strongest in Standard III. Drawing has 89 per cent., and came out in Standard IV. better than I expected, with a percentage of 82.

TABLE D.

Subject	Reading.		Dictation and Spelling.		Writing.		Arithmetic.		Grammar and Composition.		Geography.		Drawing.		
	Number examined.	Per Cent. passed.	Number examined.	Per Cent. passed.	Number examined.	Per Cent. passed.	Number examined.	Per Cent. passed.	Number examined.	Per Cent. passed.	Number examined.	Per Cent. passed.	Number examined.	Per Cent. passed.	
Standard VI.	156	94.2	156	86.5	156	96.1	156	67.3	156	57.0	156	70.5	...	...
" V.	332	86.1	332	73.5	332	96.4	332	62.7	332	66.2	332	62.9	...	...
" IV.	654	86.5	654	68.2	654	92.2	654	59.5	654	59.2	...	...	654	82.1
" III.	1,038	84.4	1,038	69.9	1,038	93.4	1,038	72.4	1,038	69.4	1,038	78.2	1,038	90.9	
" II.	1,043	83.8	1,043	82.4	1,043	95.2	1,043	77.0	...	...	...	...	1,043	90.3
" I.	988	82.7	988	85.5	988	94.0	988	87.2	...	...	...	...	988	92.0
Totals	1889	4,211	84.7	4,211	77.3	4,211	94.4	4,211	74.0	2,180	64.9	1,526	74.1	3,723	89.3
	1888	4,086	84.1	4,086	79.4	4,086	93.9	4,086	73.8	2,043	65.9	1,459	76.2	3,016	93.0

Possible number of passes in subjects, 24,273; actual number of passes in subjects, 19,784; percentage of passes in subjects, 81.5.

INSTRUCTION.—Preparatory Classes.—The children in these classes are those who are not considered by the teachers sufficiently advanced for presentation in Standard I., and they numbered 2,644, or 37.3 per cent. of the number on the rolls on the days of the examination. The attainments of these children varied very much, not only in different small schools of about the same size, but also in different large schools. In one of the large schools the infants' mistress asked me to give the first division of her pupils addition sums of five columns five figures deep, and after doing so I found that, out of a class of thirty, all but two found the correct answer and wrote it in words, while the figuring was very fine. This first division also could write the tables without error to 12 times, while the second division could write to 7 times. These were the most advanced children presented to me, but at some other large schools the work was really good. Spelling often was very fine, especially when children were taught mainly by the phonic method. Indeed, this subject was not infrequently better in the P. class than in Standard I. In the small schools the work varied very much. Reading generally was so poor that teachers would have, after the examination, to form the future First Standard from pupils whose attainments in reading consisted in ability merely to recognise a few disconnected words on cards. In this subject more attention should be paid to the proper grouping of words in phrases. Children also should be thoroughly trained in the short and long vowel sounds, and in the functions of the consonants. Counting generally was very fair, but there is much room for improvement in the manner in which the ball frame is used. Writing often was very good, but at many of the small schools children are asked to form too many letters in one lesson, and they are left too much to themselves, the consequence being scribbling, with little or no attention to lines. It is very important that there should be a well advanced primer class if a good First Standard is to be obtained the following year. A reading book might well be used—Nelson's Queen Infants' Reader and Queen Primers for choice—for then children would probably pick up something at home as well as in school; and little ones generally take some interest in a book, especially if it is well illustrated. On account of the necessarily very varied attainments of these preparatory classes the teacher of a small school is placed at a great disadvantage as compared with the teacher of a larger school. In the latter school the children enter the class preparing for Standard I. well grounded in their work, while in the former they are little more advanced than what are technically known as "infants."

Standard Classes.—In Reading I find, on comparing the percentages for the two years, a considerable improvement this year in Standard III., a marked decline in Standard V., and very similar results in the other standards. The misuse of the aspirate is becoming very common in this district. At several schools children read in such a low tone that it was a matter of great difficulty to hear what they were reading, even though the passages treated were well known to me. With a view to obtain improvement in this respect, I have for some considerable time recommended teachers to place their pupils standing at the back of the desks during the reading lessons. The explanation of the subject-matter of the reading lessons is still in a great many schools very poor. This lack of comprehension on the part of the pupils is in a great measure due to weak teaching and to a bad style of questioning. Thus, instead of requiring pupils to give in their own words in full statements the meanings of phrases, of clauses, or of sentences, as recommended year after year, too much attention is given to single words such as are found at the end of the lesson, and which a pupil would probably be quite unable to embody in sentences if asked to do so.

Again, I have often at inspection visits heard teachers put the very objectionable questions found in the reader, to which the pupil would reply in the exact words of the book:—*e.g.*,—Teacher: "What did George say?" Pupil: "I cannot tell a lie, father; I did it." This kind of work is worse than useless, for it in no way improves the pupil's comprehension of the passage read, while it tends to make him read by rote.

Spelling, for some reason or another, continues to be a weak subject in this district. The test given is by no means severe, for in dictation I invariably select a passage free from any puzzling words, and this is dictated by the teacher of the school, and is read in all three times, while the separate words given are of the very commonest. Many of the errors found were the result of sheer carelessness (it is surprising how few pupils look over their papers), but I frequently noticed even pupils in the upper standards unable to divide a word into its syllables, to recognise vowel sounds, or to spell such common terminations of abstract nouns and of adjectives as -ion, -ble, -ous, &c. Spelling would improve, I think, if reading were taught more by the phonic method in the lower classes, and if pupils were practised in recognising the powers of letters. Too much is told to the children in the upper standards. For example, in reading lessons I often heard a teacher tell a boy at once a word not known, and I found even Standard IV. pupils unable to distinguish consonants from vowels, and not aware that every syllable must have a vowel in it. When in oral spelling a pupil makes a mistake, and another pupil spells the word correctly, the teacher should take care that the substituted letters are well emphasized, and that the correct spelling is impressed upon the class in other ways, as by calling on another pupil to answer, by writing the word on the blackboard, &c.

Writing, I am pleased to be able to say, is a very strong subject in this district, except at a few schools. Of this I felt especially convinced after seeing school work from all parts of the colony at the New Zealand Exhibition. Even in Standard II. and Standard III. I have received at several schools writing on foolscap almost perfect as regards attention to style. In school more attention might be paid to such details as the manner of holding the pen, the position of the body, and the pushing upwards on the desk of the copybook before the bottom line is written. The examination papers at most schools were written very neatly indeed. I should like to hear of some teachers entering their pupils' work for Vere Foster's national competition.

In *Arithmetic* the percentage of passes for all classes is 74. Standard III. showed an improvement of over 10 per cent.; but in Standards IV., V., and VI. the percentages have materially declined, partly owing to the reasons already stated. In Standard VI. too much time is frittered away in teaching rules that probably a boy will never have anything to do with hereafter, but which, if occasion should require, he would be able to master in a few days supposing him to have been well "grounded" at school. The finding of areas when the measurements are given in chains and links might receive more attention in this standard, and the sums should be worked by the decimal method, not by vulgar fractions. In Standard V. pupils broke down most frequently in fractions, and, strange to say, in this rule a problem was oftener worked correctly than a little sum involving merely addition and subtraction. In Standard IV. reduction and other sums in weights and measures were the great trouble, and in practice dividing into the wrong line was very common. Also I noticed that pupils frequently confused lineal measure and square measure. In Standards III. and II. pupils often failed in sums through laziness in comprehending the wording of the questions, so that they worked multiplication for division, and *vice versa*. In Standard III. errors were very frequent, as usual, in simple long division and in simple long multiplication, those in the former rule generally being in the subtraction; but I confess I was surprised to find addition of money very often inaccurate. In the money sums I frequently noticed that the errors were due to calculating ten pence to the shilling—that is, confusing abstract and concrete numbers. In Standard I. the slate work generally was very good in schools of any pretensions whatever, and in many the sums were exceedingly well put down. In oral work in Standard III. I found that teachers in many schools had forgotten to teach long measure. In Standards I. and II. the aliquot parts and relative lengths required by the syllabus should receive more attention, for I found that they were generally learned by rote. Thus, at school after school my height was guessed at from 2ft. to 12ft. I have asked teachers to make this work as practical as possible, and to mark various lengths and heights plainly upon the school wall. When a few pupils have been measured against the wall before their classfellows no one in the class will ever be likely to make a senseless mistake with regard to height.

Failures in arithmetic in the upper standards are not, in my opinion (and, I believe, in the opinion of most teachers also), due to the difficulty of the examination cards, for there are on every card sufficient plain and direct questions to enable a pupil to pass by answering them alone. In addition to these questions there are, of course, one or two more difficult, in the nature of problems (so called), which are given with a view to discover the smartest children in the class, and to test the range of the teaching, and which all are not expected to answer. I very carefully avoid setting any sums which may be thought "catches," or sums that involve remainders and large fractions, while the pupils are warned against making mistakes by the printing on the cards of certain words in bold type. At the same time sums are worded in such a manner as to discourage rote work. For example, in Standard II., "Find the difference between 684,074 and 78,450," not "Subtract 78,450 from 684,074."

One of the chief ways to improve the arithmetic in the upper classes would be, it appears to me, to give more *viva voce* teaching, with a plentiful use of the blackboard. Pupils should receive a great deal of practice in simply stating how certain sums are to be solved: thus, "Given selling price and buying price, find profit or loss," the answer "Profit = selling price - buying price;" "Loss = buying price - selling price," should come at once. Or, again, "Area of floor = length \times breadth;" "Length of carpet = area of floor \div breadth of carpet;" "Area of walls = twice height \times sum of length and breadth." In working these sums the writing for any line should be

put on the slate before the figures. And even in schools officered by only one teacher no difficulty need be found in giving this oral teaching if only the method recommended at inspection visits be followed; but I have frequently seen teachers giving only general supervision, and not always that, while all the classes were working arithmetic in desks.

Inaccuracy, due more to a bad tone in a class than anything else, was a frequent cause of failure in the upper standards, and it was found most frequently in division and subtraction.

The frequent use of examination cards is a mistake. These would be all very well at stated periods, when pupils have mastered all the rules for the year, but they appear to be used constantly, and even before some of the rules treated on them have been taught. Cards with five sums in *one* rule, as practice or interest, could be used with advantage. Revisal of back rules should be regularly kept up.

At many schools the figuring and arrangement on papers was exceedingly nice—indeed, at some the figuring and the double underscoring of answers would have done credit to a book-keeper.

Grammar, with Composition, showed an improvement in Standard III. In Standard IV. there was still a great deal of guesswork in judging the parts of speech, and inflections were not well known. In Standard V. and Standard VI. some fine work was sent in at several large schools, but at the small schools the subject was seldom well treated. In the latter it is difficult to give grammar as much oral teaching as its importance demands. Analysis improves steadily every year.

There is a tendency to sneer at grammar, and to propose that it should be struck out of the pass subjects, generally on the ground that many who know nothing of the grammar of any language can speak and write grammatically. Admitting this statement to be true (which I do not) people talking like this completely ignore the value of grammar as an educative subject. Hear Matthew Arnold. In his report for the year 1861 he says, "But I confess that I should be very sorry if this subject (grammar) should be discontinued, or allowed to decline. With the tendency to verbiage and to general and inexact answering to which all persons of imperfect knowledge are, when examined, so prone, it is a great thing to find for their examinations a subject-matter which is *exact*; every answer on which must be right or wrong, and no answer on which can have any value if it keeps to vague generalities. Arithmetic as well as grammar has the merit of being an examination subject of this kind. But grammar has an advantage even over arithmetic, in that it is not only exact—it not only compels the pupil examined in it to show himself clearly right or wrong, as knowing the rule or as ignorant of it—but it also compels him, even more than arithmetic, to give the measure of his common sense by his mode of selecting and applying, in particular instances, the rule when he knows it." Again, in his report for 1878 I find, "Lastly, the teacher should use grammar as a very simple logic, affording the means of opening a child's understanding a little, and of planting the beginnings of clear and accurate thinking." Once again, in his report for 1880 he says, "I attach great importance to grammar as leading the children to reflect and reason, as a very simple sort of logic, more effective than arithmetic as a logical training, because it operates with concretes, or words, instead of with abstracts, or figures." It will thus be seen that we have the greatest educationist of the century placing grammar before arithmetic as a means for cultivating the intellectual powers of children, and that his opinion is unaltered through twenty years.

In *Geography* the positions of places of importance were generally readily known, but there was a great deal of inaccurate statement with regard to rivers and the commercial towns on their banks. Mathematical and physical geography were very poor. I am loth to say that it is due to lack of proper teaching that at school after school pupils could not, for instance, state what latitude is (often would not attempt an answer), or what are the principal causes affecting climate (latitude and altitude almost invariably omitted), but that they could not do so is a fact. I am inclined to the opinion that sheer laziness to think is responsible in a large measure for poor papers in geography. Mapping was very variable—excellent in some schools, very poor in others. In almost all schools where this branch of geography was good the maps were drawn with guiding lines, so that the various parts were fairly in proportion. Teachers might even go still further, and, now that in drawing scale-drawing is compulsory, teach their pupils to draw maps accurately to scale. It appears to me of the highest importance that a pupil should have some idea of the size of the country which he is drawing, and that, when a map is placed before him and a scale in his hand, he should be able to find the distance from one place to another.

Pronunciation of names in the colony should receive more attention from several teachers. For instance, that "-ang" in Wanganui, Tauranga, &c., is pronounced by them like -ang in "hang," seems very curious.

Drawing in the lower three standards was generally good. At some schools I was sorry to see that the teachers had absolutely ruled lines in the *freehand* copies, and got their pupils to draw over these lines. In the style of keeping the books I found considerable improvement this year. It is to be regretted that in the new Order in Council with respect to drawing the work in the lower standards is limited to freehand. It appears to me that children also should get practice in the use of the ruler, as a preparatory introduction to future practical geometry, and with a view to obtain mechanical accuracy. All drawing-books at Home recently issued to meet the requirements of the new code require the pupils in the lower standards to draw the copies first freehand and then with pencil and ruler.

At the schools examined in the earlier half of the year I found that several teachers seemed unaware that model and geometrical drawing are compulsory in Standard IV., though the syllabus was issued in 1885; later on, however, I received some very nice work in geometry, but model drawing was generally weak. At some schools the spelling of words in the enunciations of problems was shocking, such clearly showing an utter lack of supervision. One might forgive such a word as "parallel" being occasionally misspelled, but what can be said in excuse for the spelling

of "circle" and "angle" in two or three different incorrect ways in the same book, and by pupil after pupil?

Some of the books sanctioned by the department were responsible for the misconception with regard to the drawing required for Standard IV. Thus, in one series of books the part devoted to model drawing consists of *flat examples* which the pupils are supposed to copy, and the teachers thought that work of this kind would be sufficient. But the syllabus requires that the drawing shall be from *actual objects*, and of course nothing short of this can be considered model drawing.

During the year Mr. David Blair, art examiner under the department, established drawing classes at three different centres. These classes were fairly well attended by the teachers, especially by the pupil-teachers, and many showed considerable aptitude for the work, and found that drawing—in so far as becoming proficient enough in it to teach the requirements of the syllabus is concerned—was not such a formidable subject as it at first appeared. With the number of subjects in the syllabus, to get sufficient time to give pupils enough practice in drawing now appears to be the greatest difficulty.

Class Subjects.—*Geography* is a class-subject in Standard II. and Standard IV. The teaching of the former class was on the whole good, and the paper work in the latter very fair, with the exception of mapping and the spelling of proper names.—*History* every year is disappointing, and the quality of the work varies very much at different schools. Undoubtedly I get more absurd answering in history, not only from pupils but also from pupil-teachers, than in any other subject; and in the paper work the spelling and composition are often very bad.—In *Science* very little was ever thoroughly understood.—In *Object-lessons* there was considerable improvement shown at those schools where "form" had been fully treated. Lessons on animals, it appears to me, still take up too much time in the standard classes. The chief weakness, however, in these so-called object-lessons is that teachers endeavour to give too much of what is known as useful information, and they neglect to cultivate the minds of the children by leading them to observe for themselves. Thus, while examining a class on an object-lesson given during the year on a piece of blackboard chalk, I found the pupils brimming over with information concerning the chalk cliffs of Dover, but they were unable to explain, after the facts were shown by experiment, why chalk leaves a white mark on a rough surface, and will not do so on a polished one; they could not state clearly the difference in shape between the object and a pure cylinder; and in their answers they confused shape, size, and general appearance. Hold an ebony ruler and a piece of chalk before a class, and ask what is the difference in *shape* between the two, and the answer, "One is white, the other is black," comes at once. Partly with a view to check this kind of answering I recommended the giving of object-lessons on form.—*Recitation* in a few schools is very fine, but in far too many are pupils allowed to gabble away in a most hurtful manner, and it is nothing unusual to find not only words slurred over but also words put in which make the lines absolute nonsense. Frequently, too, nothing is understood of the subject-matter of the lines. When there are not any really fine pieces in the reading book I would recommend teachers to give their pupils some pieces found elsewhere to transcribe in exercise books and learn. In the highest classes it would be found of great advantage to get the pupils to learn a passage from one of Shakespeare's plays, each pupil taking a different character when reciting.—*Needlework* is very well taught at the majority of schools where female assistants are employed.

With regard to these class subjects I am still of opinion that some should be compulsory and some optional in the smaller schools, so that a teacher who has all, or nearly all, classes to instruct may be able to give more time than he can at present to the absolutely essential subjects. As to history, the more I examine it in Standard III. the more I am convinced that it should be omitted from the work of that class. As a prescribed subject in Standard IV. also it might disappear from the syllabus in the case of small schools, provided that the use of an historical reader, in addition to the ordinary reader, were required. That only one reading book is prescribed for each standard appears to me a blot on the syllabus.

ORGANIZATION AND METHODS OF INSTRUCTION.—Speaking generally, these improve year by year. There is, naturally enough in such a large district, with several bush schools, no small amount of weak and ill-directed teaching, and a *more earnest desire to become acquainted with better methods might be shown*; but the majority of teachers put a great deal of energy into their work, and discharge their duties faithfully and honestly. I would ask all teachers to follow the example of those who take notes of the difficulties they encounter during the year, and consult with me on my inspection visits with regard to these difficulties. The revisal of back work is too often neglected, or it is left until shortly before the annual examination, in place of being evenly distributed throughout the whole year. I would strongly recommend teachers to prepare their lessons carefully beforehand, and to use note books; otherwise it is difficult to give interesting connected lessons. And no one need think such preparation beneath his dignity: for, as Inspector Petrie pointed out in one of his reports, even the great Dr. Arnold, of Rugby, never neglected to study and prepare notes on every lesson he gave in Roman history, notwithstanding his most intimate acquaintance with the subject; and when asked why he did so he answered, "I want my boys to drink out of a running stream rather than out of a stagnant pool."

In small schools where all the classes are taught by one teacher the work of organization is a difficult one, and the teacher has to resort to a great deal of ingenuity, and to every expedient which his daily experience suggests, to keep all the classes constantly employed. As one of the objects of an Inspector's report is to offer some suggestions for the guidance of teachers in the district, I shall venture the following with regard to the management of these small schools: In the first place the teacher should carefully apportion the time he means to give to the respective classes; he should see that each class receives a due share of his attention, and that, when he is not with it, it is kept fully employed by a monitor, or with slate or exercise-book work. I do not mean that a

regular monitor should be employed, but that the teacher should select a pupil, perhaps a different one each day, to give out, say, dictation, and that the position of trust should be granted as a reward for good conduct and diligence. On my recommendation several teachers during the year put this plan into practice with signal success. Monitors should be as carefully instructed in the duties required of them as pupil-teachers, and they may be regularly employed for ringing bells, for putting pupils into line, for opening and closing windows, for giving out ink, books, pens, &c., and for looking after maps. When a pupil gives out dictation he should himself write the passage as he dictates it, and all the work written should be seen by the teacher. All "learning lessons" in school and "silent work" at desk should be avoided as only other names for idleness.

Monitors are largely used in Victoria, and in a recent report of the Inspector-General and the principal of the Training College of that colony on the efficiency of the school systems of New South Wales, South Australia, and Victoria, the alleged greater efficiency of the small schools in Victoria is attributed "to the use of monitors, by which the constant employment of all classes is much facilitated."

In the largest schools in this district there is no doubt that some headmasters think they have done their duty if they have taught their own special classes well, while others are very careful to direct the efforts of their subordinates, and require them to keep books showing the matter, &c., of the lessons given. During the last examination of several of these large schools I received very fine or good work in all classes but one, and this one—generally Standard IV. or Standard III.—broke down badly in arithmetic, grammar, or spelling, and sometimes in all three. With a view to prevent a recurrence of such an undesirable experience, the Board issued a circular to all headmasters informing them that they were held responsible for the work of their subordinates. This ruling was deemed by some teachers a harsh one, on the old time-worn plea that, as teachers had no say in the appointment of their subordinates, they could not fairly be held responsible for their work. As far as pupil-teachers are concerned this plea does not hold ground, for no scholar is appointed a pupil-teacher without a certificate from his headmaster, and many pupil-teachers were not only taught in their school days, but were also trained by the masters under whom they are now serving. With regard to assistants, surely there are none so incompetent as to be unable to carry out instructions from an efficient organizing headmaster; and, if there are any such, ought not the headmaster to have sufficient moral courage to report them to the Board? As a matter of fact, however, in the case of the schools that led to the notice being forwarded, all the teachers, with, perhaps, one exception, whose classes broke down were quite competent to do their work well, and failed merely through their efforts not being properly directed, and through neglect of proper supervisal of the pupils' back work.

The style of questioning a class is still often very faulty at many schools, and on this I have written a great deal on the inspection reports forwarded to the teachers. The importance of the subject shall be my excuse for referring to it at some length here. Collective questioning is still too much employed. As a means of testing the effectiveness of the instruction it is nearly useless, and, besides, it is very misleading in its results. One or two smart children supply the answer required, at the first suggestion of which the rest of the class join in. Indiscriminate answering, too, is very prejudicial to intellectual work. For instance, the teacher puts a question to, say, a class of twenty, and before the words are well out of his mouth two or three pupils call out an answer which is not a statement, and this calling out generally develops, before the lesson is over, into shouting. Now, if a teacher wishes to really educate his pupils, can anything more absurd be imagined than this style? A smart boy merely tells, in a badly-expressed manner, what he already knows; no one has time to think, and so in a short time the slow pupils (who are probably the most intelligent) get discouraged and will not try to answer. This style of answering, too, is prejudicial to good order, and the majority of teachers who allow it give questions requiring merely "Yes" or "No" for answer. The style of questioning I would recommend is this: The question should be put generally to the class, when all who know the answer would, unbidden, hold up the right hands, then the teacher, after giving all a reasonable time, would name the pupil to answer. He should not name the pupil immediately after the question is put, else thought is prevented, and the slow pupils are discouraged and will not try. The forward children should be restrained, while the retiring, timid ones should be encouraged. In all intellectual work, as distinguished from mere memory work, full statements should be required in answers. In a class trained in this manner one would see, after the question is put generally, some pupils hold their hands up at once; others put their hands partly up in a doubting manner, then lower them in disappointment, and finally throw them up in triumph; others with contracted brows, and staring, thoughtful eyes, and presently the brows would clear, and up would go the hands. Then the teacher would name a pupil to answer; and if such pupil were of the second or third named class, how proud he would look if, after all his mental trouble, he had given a good answer! Again, other pupils should be encouraged to improve upon the wording of the first answer, or to express the answer in another way. In indiscriminate answering, on the other hand, how disappointed the thoughtful pupils must feel if, just as light is beginning to dawn on their minds, a sharp but probably thoughtless boy calls out the answer! Can anything be more pleasing to find in a school than a class trained in the manner recommended? Surely such a class is being educated in the highest sense of the word. At the risk of being wearisome (to many teachers by whom the method recommended is invariably adopted) I have now pointed out what appears to me to be the best method of handling a class in oral work, and I trust, therefore, that I shall not have, at future inspection visits, the disagreeable duty of frequently finding fault in this direction with some teachers.

Many teachers might be more particular about their position when they are engaged in oral teaching. There is a tendency to lean against the front row of desks, and so lose sight of some pupils; and I have seen even headmasters teaching while sitting across a desk, or standing with one foot on a form. Walking about, too, is very common, and by this the attention of pupils is

distracted. The teacher should stand erect and steadily on one spot, with the blackboard at his left hand. As a lesson proceeds an abstract of it should be placed on the blackboard.

The registers generally are neatly and correctly kept. The filling in of dates is sometimes omitted or put off too long. There is a strange idea prevalent amongst some teachers that when a quarter ends on a Monday the attendances of that day should be counted with those of the following quarter. The log-books are not well kept, as the most of them show merely entries with regard to the weather, the attendances, and the punishments given. Sometimes I found entries of offensive messages sent by unreasonable parents through their children. Now, though these messages are very annoying, a teacher may, by resenting them, considerably weaken his usefulness in a country district. I would therefore recommend him to exercise a little forbearance, and by so doing he may make a firm friend of one who under different treatment would become an inveterate enemy. But, as entries of such messages are found year after year in the log-books of the same schools, and at these schools only, may not the assumption of superiority by the teachers have somewhat to do with the sending of such messages? I have frequently recommended teachers to enter in their log-books the result of their own periodical examinations, remarks on the progress of classes in various subjects, weaknesses found, and suchlike. On my late visit to New South Wales I found that teachers there are required to keep programmes of work to be done and statements of lessons given. Of this the Inspector-General of Victoria writes as follows: "We think the practice has several advantages. The necessity for arranging the course of instruction for three or six months beforehand prevents too much time being spent over part of the work, and compels the teacher to weigh the importance of the different portions to be dealt with, so as to assign to each its proper number of lessons. The lesson-books enable the headmaster to judge to some extent of the character of the work done by assistants and pupil-teachers, help the Inspector in forming his judgment on the school, and, *where there is a change of teachers, show the new-comer exactly what his class or the several classes have been taught, and how it is proposed to complete their instruction.*" The italics are mine. In many schools in this district, when a change of teachers takes place, the incoming teacher has little or nothing to tell him what the various classes have been taught, whereas if some such book as the one mentioned above were kept, or if the entries in the log-book were of the kind recommended, he would easily know where to take up the thread of the teaching.

The following useful rules with regard to organization are laid down by the regulations in New South Wales, and I would recommend them to the careful consideration of the headmasters in this district: "1. When a subordinate teacher relinquishes the charge of a class or section it should be examined by the head of the department in the presence of the outgoing teacher and his successor. A record of the condition of the class or section should be entered in the lesson register, and be attested by the signatures of all the persons concerned. 2. The head teacher will devote a portion of his time weekly to the instruction of each class in his department. 3. He will examine each class in his department at least once a month, and will record the results, note the defects, and enter suggestions for their remedy in a book kept for the purpose. Such entries should be signed by himself and the teacher of the class.

MANNERS, DISCIPLINE, AND ORDER.—The manners of the children at most schools I found very pleasing, both during working hours and on the streets and roads. The discipline generally is satisfactory, especially in the marching of pupils to their places and in dismissing them. Class movements at changes of lessons I should like to see conducted more quietly and methodically. A tendency to rough play in the grounds should be stopped, and the pupils should not be allowed to romp in the corridors of the building. I am always very glad to see play sheds erected, if for no other reason than to stop this romping. It is very important that pupils should be got to look upon their schoolrooms with a certain amount of affectionate reverence, if I may so describe the feeling, and to understand that as soon as the outside doors are passed all frivolity must cease, and the serious work of the day begin. But the using of the building for play out of school hours is opposed to all this, and is prejudicial to good order during the first half-hours of the school sittings.

The attention and behaviour of the pupils under examination was all that could be desired at a great many schools, but I must confess that this year I discovered, through my clerk, that talking with a view to obtain assistance was more prevalent than I hitherto imagined.

The carriage of the pupils might be much improved by some setting-up drill, but for this it is difficult to find time at the small schools. During the year I frequently remarked how many children in the upper classes, especially girls, stood with one shoulder much higher than the other, and with contracted chests, and how few could walk nicely through a room. The almost universal habit of lolling during standing lessons against any wall, table, or desk that happens to be near should be rigidly stopped.

CLASSIFICATION OF ASSISTANT TEACHERS.—During the year I suggested to the Board that all assistants should be graded as of the first rank, of the second rank, or of the third rank, according to their teaching ability, their certificates, and their length of service. The Board agreed with the suggestion, and proceeded to carry it out, but in a manner quite at variance with my intention. Thus, the Board classified the assistants according to their schools: if there was only one assistant at a school, he or she was appointed first; if more assistants than one, they were classified in order of merit. Now, in any one large school considered by itself this might work well enough, or it might not if two assistants had equal claims to be first; but, taking all the schools with assistants into consideration, the anomaly was presented of having a teacher first assistant at a small school who was inferior in every respect to one who was only third assistant at a large school. My chief reason for desiring the grading of assistants was to encourage them in their work by the hope of promotion; and, according to my intended plan, they would have been graded according to their deserts, quite irrespective of the schools at which they served. Thus, according to my plan, a pupil-teacher on being promoted assistant would be graded of the third class, and as soon as he

was deemed deserving he would be raised a class. Once he reached the first class he would, as long as he was an assistant, always be of that class, unless the Board saw fit to reduce him for gross misconduct or for neglect of duty—most improbable contingencies. Under this plan there might be two assistants of the same class at one school. I trust that the Board will kindly give some more consideration to this matter, for under the present system anomalies will be continually occurring.

BUILDINGS AND PLAYGROUNDS.—Most of the buildings are in good repair, and several have been improved during the year. A very few, built some twenty-five years ago, in which aided schools are held, are in a bad way. Two aided schools are conducted in private houses, and two in buildings belonging to public bodies. And here I may say that it is undoubtedly false economy not to supply the absolutely necessary furniture and apparatus to such schools as these. Smoking chimneys are a perfect nuisance in certain parts of the district. There is a small fortune awaiting the man who will erect chimneys in the most convenient position in a school building, and yet successfully guarantee them not to smoke. The Board's regulation with regard to the ventilation of schools is often neglected. Frequently I notice when passing the schools, or on my special visits to them, all the windows closed on fine, warm days; and many teachers do not flush the rooms with fresh air before the school sittings and during the recess.

Many Committees have done a great deal to improve their playgrounds by gravelling and planting, and in bush districts by clearing, laying down in grass, and fencing the land. The usual plan adopted is, the Committees collect some money from the settlers, and the Board supplements the amount with pound for pound. The money so collected throughout the district during the year amounted, I am sure, to no inconsiderable sum. Strange to say, it is in the bush settlements and at the small schools that most is done in this way (one Committee of a school with an average of about forty-five planted several rows of trees along three sides of a playground of eight acres), and yet in some of the towns the playgrounds present, to put it in the mildest form, a far from nice appearance. At many of the small schools unsightly broken swings are to be seen. With their dangling ropes swaying in the wind they may serve to remind the criminally-inclined tramp of the extreme penalty of the law, but they are not calculated to impress others with the idea that the governing bodies take much interest in their school.

Before closing this report I beg to thank the Board for their kindness in granting me leave of absence of sufficient length to enable me to visit not only some of the other districts in this colony and the Exhibition at Dunedin, but also Australia. I trust that I may be able to turn the experience gained to the benefit of the Board's schools. From what I saw during my trip I am convinced that the teachers of this district, taken as a body, are doing as good work as their brethren in the neighbouring districts and colonies. At several places the superiority in style of our slate and paper work was forcibly presented to my mind.

I regret that the district was almost unrepresented at the Exhibition. For myself, being engaged daily at the standard examinations during the last five months of the year, I could not attend to this matter, and with regard to others who should have interested themselves it appears to have been the old story, "What was everybody's business was nobody's business."

I cannot speak in too grateful a manner of the kindness shown to me by all connected with the Education Departments of Victoria and New South Wales. The Ministers of Education, the Secretaries of the departments, and the Inspectors did all in their power, though I was in no way accredited to them, to make me thoroughly familiar with the educational systems of their colonies. All Acts and documents bearing upon these systems were freely given to me, I was conducted over the Training Colleges, and I took advantage of a pass on the railways to visit schools here and there from Ballarat in the south to Bathurst in the north. At all public institutions the same kindness was extended to me by the officials, no trouble taken to give me information being deemed too great.

I have, &c.,

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

The Chairman, Board of Education, Wanganui.

WELLINGTON.

SIR,—

Wellington, 25th February, 1890.

I have the honour to present my sixteenth annual report on the working condition of the primary State schools of the Wellington District.

During the past year 10,460 children, in seventy-two schools, have been examined by me. At the time of my visit two very small aided schools at Kaiwhata and Otahua, which were in operation last year, were closed; and the Courtenay Place and Thorndon Infants' Schools were absorbed into main schools. On the other hand, the large new Clyde Quay School, Wellington, was in operation, with 527 children on the books; and three other new schools were opened—at Shannon, Paraparamu, and Hastwell. Also an aided one at Bideford was reopened after being closed six years.

In standard work the following table shows results, as compared with those of last year:—

	S. I.	S. II.	S. III.	S. IV.	S. V.	S. VI.
1888. Number below S. I., 3,467; above S. VI., 91. Passed ..	1,602	1,133	1,074	799	550	216
1889. Number below S. I., 3,256; above S. VI., 74. Passed ..	1,347	1,548	1,039	943	684	351

The total of the passes in standards in 1888 was 5,374, and in 1889 it was 5,912. There is a highly satisfactory increase in the numbers passed in the higher standards, and an equally satisfactory decrease in the numbers returned in and below Standard I. Thus it is shown that the standard of classification throughout the district is rising fast.

After going carefully through my reports on each of the schools I am pleased to find that a classification of them under the heads "Progressive," "Stationary," and "Declining" shows that

a great improvement in their working condition has been made in the past year. The result thus appears:—

				Progressive.	Stationary.	Declining.	Total.
1888	...	...	...	22	29	20	71
1889	...	...	...	34	27	11	72

Of the eleven weak schools ten made more than 25 per cent. of failures, and the work of the other was of an exceptional character. The weak schools include two with about 100 pupils each, three with from 60 to 70, and six small ones. All the city schools, and most of the large ones in the country, are more or less in a satisfactory condition; and the work of eight out of the ten largest in Class A, Appendix [table not reprinted], is decidedly of a progressive order.

The class work of the year presents several new features. A programme has been issued in four branches of elementary science—chemistry, physics, physiology, and botany; and many schools have begun to work more systematically in one or more branches of the syllabus. I hope soon to see every school well provided with necessary apparatus and illustration where such are not at present provided.

Another feature of the year is the introduction of modelling in clay by classes in infant departments. I am much pleased with what has been done in the Mount Cook Infants' School and in a few other schools, and I hope to find another year that this work is more generally taken up in all preparatory classes.

Geometrical drawing was required for the first time in Standard IV.; and it is delightful to find that practical geometry is a popular and interesting subject with both teachers and scholars. The work has been satisfactorily taken up, and generally by Standards V., VI., and the class above Standard VI., as well. The higher standards of the large schools are for the most part much ahead of the syllabus, and have done a great deal of work in advanced freehand, scale drawing, and drawing from objects.

This year, also, for the first time all the upper standard needlework of the girls in the city schools was brought together in the Willis Street School, and examined by a committee of ladies chosen by the several School Committees. They report that the work generally is good, that of the Mount Cook Girls' School on the whole being the best. But the work of Standard V. in this school was pronounced better than that of the higher classes, some garments being exceedingly well made. The Terrace School specimens of work sent in, and the knitting of the Te Aro School were commended. The Committee suggest that all darning should be on white material.

Another feature of the year is the increased importance given to mental work in arithmetic; and the examination was made orally instead of by questions written on the blackboard. Several new school libraries have been started this year; and I observe with satisfaction a first attempt made in the Te Aro School to substitute a more rational elementary science syllabus in junior classes for the more commonplace object-lesson work, which is seldom philosophically treated.

The introduction of Swedish drill, and the more extended use of Indian clubs, by the drill instructor, M. de Mey, have been attended with commendable results.

The best schools produced excellent class work this year in certain classes. Many large standard classes passed very creditably, and some without a single failure. I am impressed with the fact that more of the class-teachers are aiming at a higher standard of excellence in their work, and it must be gratifying to many of them to find that their efforts have been crowned with success. On this point, however, I may observe that a teacher of fair average ability, who is thoughtful and painstaking, never fails to produce fairly satisfactory work. From adverse circumstances there may come, once in a way, a bad year; but such a teacher will never suffer disaster. As for an Inspector giving a bad result to a deserving teacher under the present system, it is simply impossible, the examination tests being uniform and evenly applied in all schools alike.

I have now to point out a few defects. It is important that more attention should be paid in many cases to neatness in written work and to the cultivation of more legible handwriting. In too many cases the letters are not round and bold enough to be legible, and the words are generally too close together.

Mental arithmetic is of greater value than many teachers give to it; and I believe one great means of success in teaching arithmetic is to obtain facility in dealing with numbers mentally, before rules are dealt with.

The children who are passing in large numbers from the city infants' schools into the main schools are not sufficiently well grounded in reading; and I think much more time and attention should be given in these schools to the teaching intelligently of fluent and expressive reading. One cause of the weakness is that the books used are nearly always too difficult; and little children are groping in a Standard I. reader who cannot read in a primer with anything like ease and expression, and they are unable to get along in the easiest unseen narrative. Another cause is the want of time given for sufficient practice on the part of each pupil. Almost every alternate lesson in an infants' department should be a reading lesson in one form or another.

I have ascertained that there are 903 children who, having passed a standard last year, have left school during the year without remaining to pass the next higher standard. Of this number 57 had passed an examination in a class above Standard VI., 142 had passed Standard VI., 209 Standard V., 181 Standard IV., 158 Standard III., 70 Standard II., and 96 Standard I. It is only an approximate return, as some children come and go from one district to another. Still, the return fairly shows the output of the schools; and, in round numbers, it may be said that of 900 standard children who leave school in the year, 400 remained long enough to pass Standards V., or VI., but there are 320 who leave before they have passed Standard IV. This, of course, is unsatisfactory so far as the 320 are concerned; but there is something very satisfactory and promising in the general outlook.

There are a few changes which I think desirable, and chiefly with the object of making the school work more interesting, attractive, intellectual, and generally less burdensome to both teachers and pupils. Again and again have I noted that school life is not bright enough for young folks. Boys and girls are not in danger of being overworked, as many suppose, but of being overbored by the wearisome dulness of much of their daily occupation. Amongst the dull work of a school which damps a pupil's taste for learning I may instance the writing of pages in a copy-book, long spelling or dictation exercises, home work, object-lessons given without the object, reading over and over again the same narrative, much freehand drawing, a great deal of geography and English history as often taught by getting it up from books, long-continued work in the same processes of arithmetic, much transcription, and the dry details of formal grammar. To these we may add the amazing difficulty (for which our schools are not responsible) presented to a boy's mind by the variety of coins, and weights and measures, and rules and methods in arithmetic, which the introduction of a decimal system would sweep away, and not only make the teaching of arithmetic a simpler and more rational instruction, but also save annually thousands of pounds to the State on education alone. On the other hand, class singing, experimental science, object and geometrical drawing, the cultivation of observation, mental arithmetic, reading to the class by the teacher, open-air exercises, stories from English history or full descriptions of stirring events, and the cultivation of the habit of easy and correct speaking, may always be made interesting and useful. I do not mean to say that all school work can be made positively palatable to all children, but I am quite sure that much of the wearisome bitterness of learning can be done away with, and that school life can be made thoroughly enjoyable. Nay, it is so now in some places, and I can point to classes from which children cannot be induced to stay away. They love their teachers and they love their work. Again, a fact which bears out much of what has been said is this: that in certain schools, on certain days, when a popular science or geometrical drawing lesson is to be given, or a potter's wheel or a magic lantern exhibited, or when the teacher is to read a description of the taking of Gibraltar or a passage from "Sandford and Merton," no pupils are absent. The time was when it used to be stated, and generally admitted, that the work of schools was excusably weak because the attendance was irregular; whereas now it is known that as is the teaching so is the attendance. Not long ago the head teacher of one of the city schools told me that he had one teacher of his staff who showed much less aptitude for teaching than the others, and that on any day there were more children absent from that one class than from all the other classes put together. This year we have the striking result of two of the largest and best schools in the district presenting for examination every child on the books, though the examination lasted a week in each case—a result which I need hardly say does not arise from mere accident or good fortune, but from the pleasant unities of action which animate and sustain the whole life of the school.

The sum of £50, which the Board placed in my hands for purchasing in England illustrations and material for school use, has served a good purpose. Many head teachers have taken great pride in the wall-furnishing of the class rooms, and there is generally a marked improvement in the upkeep of many schools. I should like to see now an effort made to provide more suitable material for science lessons, and to put up convenient cabinets for holding the collections made.

In addition to the annual examination of all the schools I have found time to pay a visit of inspection to thirty-two out of the seventy-two. The work of preparation for school examination, of setting papers, of examining returns and collecting information, of writing reports and correspondence, of the planning and arrangements for furnishing schools, of the examination of pupil-teachers, and of attending to many incidental matters which come before me, necessarily takes up some of my time; and it is now quite clear to me that the increased work would be better for closer inspection and fuller direction. The examination work alone of 10,460 children is a great strain upon one Inspector, and I feel that it will be impossible to overtake the increased work of another year. Besides, if the more useful work of supervision, direction, assistance, and inspection is entered into, there is full occupation now for an Assistant Inspector; and, if I am relieved from much of the standard examination work, I hope to be able to examine the class work more fully, to supervise pupil-teachers' instruction, to assist in further improving the up-keep of schools, to give more frequent and sometimes more prolonged inspection of weak schools, and to give more thought and study to other matters pertaining to the efficiency of the system.

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

I have, &c.,

ROBERT LEE.

SUMMARY OF RESULTS FOR THE WHOLE DISTRICT.

Standard Classes.	Presented.	Absent.	Excepted.	Failed.	Passed.	Average Age of those that passed.	
						Yrs.	mos.
Above Standard VI. ...	91	...	...	...	...	...	...
Standard VI. ...	458	12	17	78	351	13	11
" V. ...	769	15	15	55	684	12	10
" IV. ...	1,194	39	48	164	943	12	0
" III. ...	1,402	48	90	225	1,039	11	0
" II. ...	1,840	73	80	139	1,548	9	9
" I. ...	1,450	54	21	28	1,347	8	6
Preparatory ...	3,256	...	...	...	...	...	...
Totals ...	10,460	241	271	689	5,912	*	*

* Mean of average age of Standard I. to Standard VI., 11 years 4 months.

HAWKE'S BAY.

SIR,—

Education Office, Napier, 31st January, 1890.

I have the honour to submit to you a summary report on the condition of the public schools in this education district for the year ending 31st December, 1889. At the close of the year 47 schools, containing 5,991 pupils, were in operation, with an average attendance amounting to 4,850. The teaching staff consisted of 47 head teachers, 42 assistants, and 63 pupil-teachers. Sixty-six teachers hold certificates of competency from the Government, and eight have what is known as a "partial pass," which means that they have passed in some portion of the subjects required for the Class E certificate. Nine of the teachers having charge of schools do not yet hold certificates of competency from the Government.

ACCOMMODATION.—The school accommodation, including the buildings that are hired by the Board, is estimated at 50,900 square feet, which, if equally distributed over the district according to the school attendance, would be sufficient for 5,090 children. This, however, it would be impossible to do, as the varying conditions of population may sometimes cause an excess of school places in one or more districts. In going over the list of schools, I find that there is ample accommodation in all the smaller districts where buildings have been erected by the Board. Of the remaining schools, eight of them have their full complement of pupils, and fifteen others have to hire rooms, or occupy buildings that are too small for the present attendance. The school additions which were carried out at Woodville, Makatoku, Napier, Port Ahuriri, and Danevirke in the early part of the year have proved of much service to those districts; but, as will be pointed out further on, the work in several cases was sadly thrown back, just as it is now at Matamau, Makauri, Kumeroa, and Patutahi, where the need of accommodation is urgent, and as it would have been at Napier and Gisborne had not hired rooms for school purposes been obtainable in those places. The state of the older school buildings is fair considering that so little has been done for years past to keep them in anything like repair. The policy so closely allied to "Penny wise and pound foolish" has so long been adopted with respect to these and to the residences that I marvel so few repairs are really urgent. The buildings that have been erected within the last five years are in very good order and repair, and their internal arrangements are a great improvement on those found in the earlier buildings erected by the Board. The separation of class rooms by wide divisional passages, the sloping floor for desks in place of the raised tiers, and the erection of separate playsheds provide conveniences which add greatly to effective discipline and management. As for the teachers' residences, the few provided are mostly too small for their occupants, and in cases where teachers have to hire houses they find it a difficult matter in the country districts to obtain proper accommodation within walking distance of their schools. Some of the teachers in consequence suffer hardships and undergo privations which ought not to be permitted to exist among a body of men engaged in the work of education. The schools at Kumeroa, Maunga-atua, Ashley Clinton, Matamau, Te Onga Onga, Blackburn, Napier, Frasertown, Ormond, Patutahi, Makauri, and Te Karaka are each without a residence, and some of those belonging to the Board require either to be enlarged or repaired.

INSPECTION AND EXAMINATION.—During the year all the schools were duly inspected and examined according to regulation, and a report was sent to each Committee concerned, referring in detail to the condition of the school under its control. The examination of the pupil-teachers and of the Gisborne District High School took place in the middle of December, but the marking of the papers was not concluded until early in January, in consequence of other pressing duties requiring my attention. In my last year's report reference was made to a change which it had been found necessary to make in the date of the standard examination of certain schools. Most of the schools in the southern part of the district are now examined in March and April, and I am inclined to think it would be advantageous to all concerned if the examination in standards of all the schools to the south of Waipukurau could be arranged to take place about the same period of the year. The number of pupils whose names were entered on the examination schedules, and returned as attending school at the date of the standard examination, was 5,691, or 114 more than were returned as attending for the corresponding period of the previous year. The presentations in standards, however, were only six more than in 1888. The table appended gives in a concise form the number of children presented, passed, and failed in the standards for the year under notice. The corresponding numbers for the previous year were: On the roll, 5,577; absent, 118; excepted, 147; failed, 889; passed, 2,566.

Put in the form of percentages, the standard results of the year were—(a) Presented in standards, 3,739, or 65·7 per cent. of the roll number; (b) passed in proportion to the presentations, 2,867, or 76·5 per cent.; (c) passed in proportion to the whole number attending school, 50·3 per cent.; (d) proportion of pupils in the preparatory classes, 1,952, or 34·3 per cent.

A comparison of the standard results in the table [not reprinted] which is appended to this report presents some curious facts well worthy of careful consideration. Of the forty-seven schools in the district seven of them obtained 60 per cent. or more of passes in the standard examination, twelve obtained passes varying between 50 and 60 per cent., eleven others passed between 40 and 50 per cent., and seventeen fell below 40 per cent., two of them falling even as low as 23 per cent. In the class subjects also the same table shows a wide range in the relative efficiency of the schools in the same subjects of examination. One school only reached above the mark "Good," ten schools varied in marks between "Very fair" and "Good," fifteen between "Fair" and "Very fair," and twenty-one schools failed to obtain the mark "Fair," which in the standard examination is the mark required to qualify for a pass. Although these facts may appear to some as presenting a not very satisfactory state of affairs, I am of the opinion that they are very encouraging, and promise well for the future, and show that, notwithstanding the vast amount of work to be done in the pass and class subjects under the regulations, fair headway has been made by most of the schools, and very commendable by a few.

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE.—An encouraging feature in the work of the past year was the fewness of pupils who absented themselves from the standard examination. During the year several cases were brought under my notice of pupils who had not absented themselves from school once in three years, and in one instance a boy had not been absent for a period of seven years. Considering the character of the roads and bush tracks which are to be found in some of the outlying districts, and the long distances many of the pupils have to walk, it appears to me that the absence from examination of only sixty-six pupils out of the whole number presented in standards is creditable alike to the children, their parents, and teachers. As showing the strong desire of some parents to have their children taught, I would mention that when examining at the Blackburn district school a few weeks ago my attention was called by the lady teacher to three boys and a girl who travelled eight miles every morning to the school, and who were usually in time for the opening. Assuming the school to be opened only two hundred days in a year, the distance those young people would travel to and from school in the course of a year might be roughly represented by a line drawn from Cape Maria Van Dieman in the north of New Zealand to the Bluff Harbour in the south, thence to Sydney, and back again to the starting place—a journey worthy of the most devoted pilgrims who worship at the education shrine set up by the State. Very few complaints have come under my notice with reference to the irregularity of children at school. Woodville still occupies the unenviable position of having the worst attendance in the district, whilst Gisborne has the best. I have not heard whether the compulsory clause has been or is to be enforced in the former district, but it seems to me that something in this direction is much wanted. The Chairman of the School Committee at Ormond proceeded against several parents a few months since, and it would seem that the Resident Magistrate of the district taught them a wholesome lesson as to their parental duties. I have not heard of any other instances where School Committees have deemed it necessary to summon parents under section 7 of the Education Act Amendment Act, although notices to parents of children who are in default are now in general use. But, even without the enforcement of the compulsory clause, the signs are many that the school attendance is improving, and that the parents take a much livelier interest in the education of their children than they seemed to do a few years ago. As pointed out in my last year's report, the abolition of what was known as the "working average" has been a very effective means of improving the regularity of children at school, and, although complaints were made at the time by teachers and Committees of the hardship likely to ensue, especially to the smaller schools, I am convinced that the course adopted by the central department has been of beneficial service as well to the eventual interests of teachers as to the cause of education. The regularity of children in this district in 1887, when the "working average" rule was in operation, was 78·3 for every 100 children returned as attending school. In 1888 the "working average" rule was abolished, and the regularity improved to 78·7 per cent., whilst for the year under notice the regularity shows still further improvement, more than eighty pupils having attended school throughout the year for every hundred pupils whose names were entered on the school rolls.

ORGANIZATION.—My last general report dealt in some detail with the standard and additional subjects as they are now taught in the schools. Little change has taken place since that report was published, as with one or two exceptions the same teachers are at work, and in a great measure the same plans and methods are being followed in the preparation of the children in the district in order to meet departmental requirements. In most of the larger schools trained and experienced teachers are in charge, but in no two could it be said that the type of the work is the same. Each school has an individuality of its own, and the mark of that individuality is characteristic of the mind, the capacity, and the power of the master or mistress in charge, as the case may be. That old though wise saying, "As the teacher so the school," often presents itself to my mind when visiting the schools for inspection purposes, as one sees at this time what may be termed the inner life of the school—its spirit, its motives for action, its ideals, both mental and moral. Of necessity teachers have different views of school keeping; nor would I have it otherwise in a district where the social and industrial aspects of life are so varying and marked.

SCHOOL ARRANGEMENTS.—As to the internal arrangements of the schools, I have to report that most of them are in a praiseworthy condition. The apparatus and appliances are mostly in commendable order, and are sufficient for ordinary purposes of instruction. Comparatively little scientific apparatus is to be found at present, nor will such apparatus be necessary, at least in the country schools, until the standard requirements shall have been curtailed in other directions. The cleanliness of the schoolrooms, the neatness and careful arrangement of the school grounds, and the erection of divisional fences separating the boys' and girls' offices, appear to receive the careful attention of Committees, and the exceptions are few where these phases of school administration are not satisfactory. The influence for good which clean and well-arranged buildings, grounds, and schoolrooms have upon the public taste is very great, and I could wish that teachers generally interested themselves more in these phases of school keeping. Where teachers take a pride in making their schools attractive by means of pictures and the many devices by which effects are produced by contrasts, I always find an improved tone among the children, for the results correspond to the ideals of their instructors and their surroundings. One unacquainted with the characteristics of different teachers is unable to fully comprehend the wide gulf which separates schools from each other in what may be termed the moral aspects of school life. Among some few it would almost seem that a good percentage of standard passes constitutes the "be all and end all" of their desires, but this is only what must be expected so long as the public are taught to look upon percentages and standard results as the highest phases of school keeping and training. But, after all, education is only a growth in the social development of a people, and when annual standard examinations—those drawbacks to true education—have become things of the past, percentages will cease to harass the true teacher, and a higher life, more cultured and more human, will pervade the working of our schools. I am often surprised at the amount of real good done by

those Committees where the members interest themselves in the welfare of the schools in their respective districts. They certainly occasion at times a little friction in the educational machinery, but this is only a passing weakness, such as may be anticipated in all new schemes of government, and which experience will set right. Hundreds of pounds outside of the ordinary grants made by the Board are annually collected by Committees throughout this education district to carry out improvements to the school buildings and their surroundings, and altogether it may be said that they form an important lever in the work of education.

CHARACTER OF PREPARATORY WORK.—With regard to the general character of the preparatory work, it is pleasing to find such a fine tone existing in a growing number of the junior departments, where all the work of the preparatory classes is done. In previous reports reference was made to the improved character of the teaching, and to the earnestness, and I might say to the steadfastness, of the teachers in charge of those classes. Good manners and good behaviour are to be found in the majority of departments, and the demand for higher attainments has been met in the most cheerful manner by those lady teachers who have in their hands the making or marring of the higher instruction of the schools. In a number of cases the results were equal to my most sanguine expectations, and I am able to report that the infant departments at Napier, Gisborne, Hastings, Waipukurau, Waipawa, Matawhero, Danevirke, are in admirable working order, whilst others like Norsewood, Woodville, Port Ahuriri, Napier (Hastings Street), Clive, Meanee, Wairoa, and Taradale are promising well for the future. The rooms occupied by the preparatory classes are made cheerful and attractive by means of telling pictures, and the appliances for teaching are specially adapted to the wants of young children. No definite syllabus of instruction is authorised for the departments, but the teaching nevertheless is systematic and intelligent, and is based on a course which each teacher prepares at the beginning of the school year. During the year a new form of instruction has been introduced into the Gisborne, Napier, and Waipawa preparatory classes, which I hope to see adopted shortly in every school in my district. I refer to the use of scissors for cutting out shapes similar to those which are found in the drawing books. In reality the "cutting out" and drawing lessons have been amalgamated, one-half of the class using scissors to cut out the figure which is drawn by the teacher upon the blackboard, whilst the other children draw the figure in their books. The process is reversed when the next drawing and "cutting out" lesson comes round, the drawing pupils taking the places of the "cutting out" pupils of the day before, and *vice versa*. Although this form of instruction has only been introduced, at my special desire, about eight months, its success is very marked, and no other lesson, the mistress of the Gisborne School informed me, is more popular with the children. I was very much struck with the intelligence displayed by the pupils in the upper preparatory class at this school, who were delighted to show me how to change in a few minutes, and with scientific accuracy, any piece of paper into an oblong, a square, an equilateral triangle, a right-angled triangle, and a circle, and could cut out the shapes of pinafores with rapidity and good finish, such as would astonish many mothers of families. Now that drawing is made to occupy such a prominent place in the work of the schools, I hope to see this form of instruction fully developed, and made compulsory for all the pupils in the lower departments.

SCHOOL DISCIPLINE.—The table to which reference has several times been made already, contains my summary as to the condition of the schools, under the heading "Order and Discipline." In that table six schools have gained the mark "Excellent," and twenty-two others are classed between "Excellent" and "Good." This may be set down as satisfactory; but it seems to me that teachers do not pay sufficient attention to physical training. At play time it is seldom one sees a teacher among the children playing at their games and influencing them in those forms of competition which are the prelude to the higher competition in the business of life. A good gymnast, cricketer, or drill, or, indeed, one fond of games of any kind, will soon make his influence felt for good in the playground; and to me it is distressing, as one visits the schools, to find gymnastic apparatus out of order, calisthenic rods unused, and indifference manifested such as marks out those who deem a "standard pass" the only element worthy of attention in the bringing up of children. Gisborne, Waipawa, and Waipukurau stand out pre-eminent among the schools for the excellence of their calisthenic, gymnastic, or military training.

SCHOOL RECORDS.—I have little to complain of with regard to the way in which the school records are kept, the class, admission, and summary registers being in most cases neatly and correctly entered as required by the rules laid down. The standard lesson books which the Board requires to be kept in each school were spoken of approvingly by the principal teachers, and, although there is some little trouble attached to keeping them, I find the pupil-teachers have come to look upon them as indispensable for systematic teaching, and they were certainly kept by the teachers of Napier, Port Ahuriri, Waipawa, Waipukurau, Hastings, and Wairoa schools in a most exemplary manner. It is difficult to test whether the standard pass cards are annually entered up in the case of those pupils who pass the annual examination, but I have no reason to suppose that the duty of entering the passes is overlooked by any of the teachers who are responsible for this work.

The general condition and efficiency of the schools throughout the district will be gathered from the following brief description of the work in each county. [Not reprinted.]

I have, &c.,

The Chairman, Board of Education, Napier.

H. HILL, Inspector of Schools.

SUMMARY OF RESULTS FOR THE WHOLE DISTRICT.

Classes.	Presented.	Absent.	Excepted.	Failed.	Passed.	Average Age of those that passed.
Above Standard VI. ...	31	...	...	...	...	...
Standard VI. ...	152	1	3	22	126	14·2
" V. ...	321	9	7	97	208	13·5
" IV. ...	543	16	19	118	390	12·5
" III. ...	781	20	35	176	550	11·6
" II. ...	902	12	36	119	735	10·5
" I. ...	1,009	8	34	109	858	8·6
Preparatory ...	1,952	...	...	...	...	...
Totals ...	5,691	66	134	641	2,867	*

* Mean of average age, 11·9 years.

MARLBOROUGH.

SIR,—

Blenheim, 17th March, 1890.

I beg to lay before you my annual report on the public schools of the District of Marlborough for the educational year ending March, 1890.

I have examined thirty-one schools, with a roll number of 1,826, and an attendance of 1,659 on examination day. The quality of the work done in the several schools was so very unequal this year as to make it no easy matter to give any general estimate of the results that would not be so limited by exceptions as to be almost worthless. In several of the smaller schools every pupil succeeded in meeting the demands of the regulations, but in some of the larger establishments the percentage of children who were clearly unequal to the required minimum varied from 30 to 100 per cent. *Prima facie* it may be fairly assumed that any school which shows a proportion of backward children equalling even the lower of these two numbers is not in a satisfactory state. But extenuating circumstances certainly exist in several instances, and are invariably recorded in my detailed estimate of each school. Where the report is silent on this head it may safely be taken for granted that it is because there is really nothing to be said. Comparatively little help towards a correct general estimate of last year's work is contributed by the fact that the percentage of failures recorded amounts to less than 15 per cent. Much indifferent work is necessarily allowed to pass muster in any standard examination. All who have studied the subject know that the difference between really good writing and such indifferent stuff as is not quite bad enough to reject is enormous, and the same rule applies to reading. A boy's work may also be very poor all round, and yet the examiner may not be able to put his hand on the exact weak spot that would justify him in rejecting the candidate.

I shall again follow the practical course of detailing what, if any, improvement has been made during the past twelve months in the several subjects prescribed for the syllabus, reserving the more special application of my remarks for the subjoined detailed estimate of the state of each school when it was last examined.

READING.—Although something has been done to make the reading more what it ought to be, there is still a wide gap, even in many of the best schools, between the present attainment of the children at nine years old and the measure of attainment which was laid down by me two years ago as being no more than could be compassed by well-taught children of that age of average capacity. Comparatively few of our nine-year-old scholars, even yet, could comply with my test that they should read fluently and intelligently, at sight, an easy narrative that they had not previously studied. With less than this as the outcome of four years' schooling I shall not be satisfied, nor ought the public to be satisfied. It is notorious, however, that in almost every class there is a certain residuum, varying from 5 to 10 per cent. of the whole, whom no amount or species of culture will force up to the level that I have indicated; but the incapacity of these dullards must not be made a pretext for keeping back the whole class. This would indeed be nothing short of inflicting a grievous injustice on the great majority of those who are teachable. The parents of very backward children may fairly be called on to do their part by practising their offspring at home in reading. The whole burden of their stupidity ought not to be cast upon the teacher, nor ought he to be called upon to waste on their behalf an excessive amount of time and pains that might be more profitably bestowed upon the more capable. Even a costly system of State education cannot entirely relieve parents of their responsibilities in this respect. Half an hour's home reading—not home lessons—steadily pursued, would at the end of a few months wonderfully lessen the percentage of bad readers. It is taken for granted that, after so many years of a public-school system, the number of those who are unable to help their children so far as a lesson in elementary reading goes is comparatively small.

SPELLING.—I regret that I can discover no improvement whatever either in the methods of teaching this important subject or in the results. The same well-worn mistakes were all continually repeated this year, and in very few schools is the list of words habitually misspelt (which I recommended to be made out) to be found. Even the scholars in the highest classes, where correct spelling may naturally be looked for, are very deficient in that respect, inasmuch that they frequently exceed my liberal allowance of three mistakes in half a dozen lines of dictation, taken from the reading book in use. So far from lowering my requirements in order to meet the short-

comings of the scholars, I intend using a stricter test next year, the application of which will probably land in disaster those who persist in using the old-fashioned methods that are demonstrably a failure.

WRITING.—There is a moderate improvement in the copybooks this year, though the number of schools in which I can speak of the handwriting in terms of unqualified approval does not, even yet, exceed half a dozen. The old rule-of-thumb methods are still generally practised, to the exclusion of either blackboard teaching or the simultaneous lesson. The attempt to teach children to sit properly when they are writing, or even to hold their pens rightly, would seem to have been tacitly abandoned by common consent, as being a “counsel of perfection.”

ARITHMETIC.—This subject is more thoroughly taught than any other in the school course. The methods followed are usually good, and the success with which the scholars grapple with the problems set them shows that they have been trained to think out questions for themselves, and that they have got quite beyond the stage of mere rote-work.

GRAMMAR AND COMPOSITION.—Few, even of the more advanced scholars, can answer satisfactorily questions involving some knowledge of syntax, apparently thinking that they have done enough when they have analysed and parsed a simple sentence. An alteration in the customary form of examination paper will be necessary, so that some knowledge of idioms and contractions will be made a future condition of success. In letter-writing insufficient attention is being paid to the proper forms of address and subscription—both important matters.

GEOGRAPHY.—Although I have formerly referred to geography as a subordinate branch of an education, it must not be inferred that it can be allowed to drop almost out of sight. Dreading to bring back the practice of those not very distant times when the unfortunate children wasted many hours, that might have been better employed, in committing to memory the names of the counties and county towns of Great Britain and Ireland, I have usually restricted the scope of my examinations to general questions. But the sorry answers that have been given this year by many of the older pupils, when they were required to “name the six Great Powers,” or to say “what States compose the German Empire,” do not create a very favourable impression as to the quality of the teaching given.

HISTORY does not seem to be sufficiently brought into connection with the kindred subject, geography. Questions as to the historical importance of several well-known places are too often left unanswered, the force of association having evidently not been brought into play. Instead of the stiff and wholly uninteresting methods of teaching history usually pursued, it would be far better if history and geography were largely taught concurrently. Each would wonderfully help the other.

DRAWING is very fairly taught in the majority of schools—exceedingly well taught in a few.

NEEDLEWORK—in judging which I have availed myself, whenever it was possible, of the willingly-rendered help of lady examiners—appears to get quite its due share of attention as a rule, although in a few schools the time allowed for teaching it is obviously too short.

I am still very favourably impressed with the general tone and discipline of the Marlborough schools. Without an approach to harshness, the scholars are usually trained to habits of prompt and cheerful obedience, and appear to retain those mingled feelings of respect and liking for their teachers without which no school can be said to be in a healthy state.

The matter of supplying the children cheaply and regularly with books through the agency of the Board has advanced another step. A small supply of books has arrived from England, and is now being distributed as far as it will go. But unless a periodical and ample supply is kept up it would have been better if this system had never been begun, regularity of supply being the very essence of the plan.

The multiplicity of subjects included in our school course has for years afforded our teachers a stock complaint, and a stock excuse for all shortcomings. But a compendious way of getting over this difficulty has lately been widely adopted, which cannot be tolerated. Many—indeed, it may be fairly said nearly all—the Marlborough teachers are beginning to treat the syllabus in an eclectic fashion, simply omitting such portions as they, in their wisdom, may deem it comparatively useless, or, it may be, inconvenient, to teach. Singing by note, for instance, now so generally and efficiently taught in other districts, has here almost dropped out of the school course. Drill is in most cases either taught very imperfectly or not at all. Elementary science, though clearly a part of the work prescribed for the Fourth Standard, has been quietly abandoned in that numerous and important class. History is being gradually elbowed out in a similar way. All this is founded on a preposterous misconception of the powers and duties of teachers. It ought not, by this time, to be necessary to point out that it does not rest with either teachers or Inspectors to pick and choose in this easy-going fashion. Whatever one's private opinion may be as to the comparative usefulness of any or all of the foregoing subjects, they are all included in the public-school course, as laid down in the Education Act, and the necessity for teaching them has been reaffirmed in the regulations of 1885, issued by the department. I wish it to be distinctly understood that none of these things can be omitted in future with impunity unless some better reason for leaving them out can be given than the indolence and the incapacity of the teacher. I see no justification for putting the children of Marlborough in a worse position in these respects than the children of other districts. Excellent school buildings, well-appointed and of ample dimensions, have been built in every direction, and a staff of teachers has been provided on a scale which, relatively to the number of children to be taught in each school, and compared with what is allowed elsewhere, may well be termed liberal. Of no teacher in the Marlborough District can it be truthfully said that he is at all overtaxed, or overburdened with numbers.

I am fully aware that in several portions of this report I have expressed myself with unwonted plainness. This I have done advisedly, and after due consideration. Every one of the faults that I have pointed out has already been pointed out in former reports. And, more than that, the remedy has been pointed out as well. There has been no vague fault-finding. No unreasonable demands

have been made upon the teachers. Whatever I have asked for—and more—has been complied with in some of our schools, and there is no reason why it should be shirked in the rest. “What man has done man can do.” And I am not altogether without hope that by dint of sharp and continual reminders I shall eventually bring it to pass that those who persist in doing their work in a slipshod and perfunctory fashion will either amend their ways or quit the service. The public clearly has a right to the best services procurable for its money, and I reckon confidently on the loyal support of the Board in my endeavours to bring about a better state of things.

I subjoin my usual estimate of the state of each school when it was last examined. [Not reprinted.]

The Chairman, Marlborough Education Board.

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.	
						Yrs.	mos.
Above Standard VI. ...	20	...	...	...	...	...	...
Standard VI. ...	70	5	3	16	46	14	0
“ V. ...	149	9	11	26	103	13	1
“ IV. ...	202	20	15	43	124	12	0
“ III. ...	245	14	14	43	174	11	1
“ II. ...	270	4	15	46	205	10	2
“ I. ...	202	11	7	34	150	9	1
Preparatory ...	668	...	...	...	...	...	...
Totals ...	1,826	63	65	208	802	*	

* Mean of average age, 11 years 7 months.

NELSON.

SIR,—

31st December, 1889.

I have the honour to lay before you my report on the Nelson public schools for the year 1889.

Ninety-one schools were at work at the close of the year. When the schools were examined 5,741 scholars were on the rolls, 5,404 being present on those occasions. The absentees numbered 337. The number of children on the roll at the end of the September quarter (the latest for which returns have been sent in) was 5,801, being an increase of 319 on last year's return.

On the whole—with a few grievous exceptions which will be specially dealt with in the detailed account of each school—our schools may fairly be said to have come creditably out of the ordeal of an examination which in several respects was certainly somewhat more stringent than any of its predecessors. In this favourable estimate every one of the factors that go to make up the sum of what is meant by a well-conducted school has been taken into account. The honest endeavours of the majority of our teachers to remedy the admitted defects pointed out in last year's report also deserve recognition.

In one important particular—the relative prominence given to the record of passes and failures—an entirely new departure has been taken in this report. I have for some time felt that my frequent references to these matters, however modified by protests against undue importance being attached to them, have largely contributed towards the wider spreading of the mistake of regarding the percentage of passes and failures as the sole criterion of the success of a school. It is high time that so mischievous and far-reaching a fallacy were put an end to. On this occasion the intolerable jargon of the standards shall not be repeated. The words “strong” and “weak pass,” “failure,” or “percentage of passes” shall find no place in the body of this report. Those who, after the experience of the last twelve years, are still curious about such things, and who still believe that the exact equivalent of so complex a machine as a school can be found in a simple numerical expression, are referred to the prodigiously long and elaborate set of tables appended to this report [not reprinted]. That they may find some difficulty in getting at their gist, and may feel encumbered by the wealth of information set before them, is no fault of mine. Those, on the other hand, who recognise that a comparative statement of the number of scholars able to satisfy the bare minimum of requirement of the regulations is only one—and by no means the most important—element in determining the actual condition of any school will rest content with my brief but carefully-drawn-up estimate of the state of each school when it was last examined. Included in that estimate, though not always directly referred to, they will find, in addition to the results of mere standard-work, due weight given to such vital matters as the general tone of the school, the intelligence of the scholars, their alertness in carrying out instructions, their behaviour to their teachers and to one another. They will find, also, some recognition of the teacher's power of interesting and influencing his children, of his making the best use of his time, and his readiness to adopt the latest and most approved methods of teaching.

Whether the conclusions at which I have deliberately arrived on these and other matters square with those formed by Inspectors in other districts—it may well be, under widely different conditions—is to me a matter of indifference. No transferring of Inspectors, however frequent or vexatious; no painfully ingenious endeavours to define by regulations the indefinable, will, fortunately, bring about that uniformity for which the *doctrinaires* of the day are perpetually hankering. Until something approaching a Babbage's machine does for inspection what that invention was

meant to do for calculation the personal element cannot be eliminated from examinations. Whoever may be selected as examiners, and wheresoever they may be sent, their notions of what constitutes good reading, good spelling, and good writing will go with them. And so long as men remain what they are the result of any examination must always largely depend upon the skill, the tact, and, above all, the temper of the individual examiner, "regulate" him as you may.

A brief survey of those matters as to which something that is at least generally, if not universally, true may be affirmed, will fitly precede my usual estimate of the condition of each establishment.

The discipline and behaviour of the children in the great majority of our schools now leave but little to desire. Orders are carried out, and work is carried on, readily, cheerfully, and in silence, without a trace of undue severity, so far as I have been able to discover. Much of this is doubtless due to the increased attention paid of late years to both school and military drill, which, it appears to me, rank far above all other methods of fostering those habits of prompt obedience in which colonial children were at one time so notoriously lacking. This indirect good effect of drill would, of itself, fully justify the attention now paid to it, especially in our larger schools. In addition to this, however, it may be safely affirmed that a boy who has gone through the course of setting-up drill now adopted in our town schools will have acquired an upright, manly carriage that will probably abide with him until old age. It is something to train up a generation who, in the main, will not grow up clowns.

The art of reading is at last regaining that position of paramount importance to which it is entitled, but which was until lately usurped by arithmetic. A much higher degree of proficiency is now exacted and attained in this subject than was formerly reached. There are still, however, schools where there is much room for improvement. In the endeavour to get distinctness, a stilted and unnatural style, approaching to declamation has been adopted, both in reading and recitation. "A" is still pronounced, in many instances, as "eh," "the" as "thee," and the examiner has more than once been warned off from certain portions of the class-book, on the ground that the children had not yet "gone through them," which probably meant that they had not committed the forbidden passages to memory. An alternative reading-book, insisted on in England, may be looked for in vain in many of our schools. Should this omission not be supplied at my next visit, the soundness of carefully-prepared work will be ascertained by my taking as a test an extract from a newspaper, or some other "unseen passage." That the risk of some of the work produced on examination day being a sham is not imaginary may be shown by two striking instances. In each of these a numerous class that read with apparent ease a passage at the beginning of their book stumbled miserably over a few sentences taken from the hitherto-untouched portion of the same work.

Although the handwriting, on the whole, has certainly improved of late, what has been achieved in this direction falls far short of what I still look for. In not more than half of our schools, at the outside, can the penmanship be termed good; in a fourth of them it is distinctly unsatisfactory. I see no reason why nine out of ten of those who have completed their schooling at fourteen or fifteen years old should not carry away with them a bold, current style of handwriting; but in very many instances these proportions are actually reversed, a tithe only complying with my test. It is, however, a promising sign that it is among the younger scholars that the improvement is most marked. In the matter of holding the pen properly, and of sitting in the right position when writing, to which I have so often referred, I have almost abandoned the hope of effecting any wide or lasting improvement. Where teachers cannot be brought either to see the importance of any reform or to take the necessary pains to bring it about, an Inspector fights as vainly as the gods were said to do against stupidity.

Arithmetic is fairly well-taught in most of our schools—admirably taught in not a few. To exact more arithmetic than is already being given would probably have the mischievous effect of curtailing the time now devoted to other equally important subjects. I have noticed a tendency to limit the work at the earlier stages to the bare requirements of the regulations, which are absurdly easy. Unless this tendency be carefully watched, too much work will be thrown upon the last years of the school course. Mental arithmetic is hardly practised enough among the junior classes.

Although the practical worth of the study of the grammar of what has been termed "our grammarless tongue" is probably much overrated so far as regards the effect produced upon the speech or the writing of our children, yet the investigation of the relations of words to each other, and of their origin, undoubtedly affords a mental training of considerable value. The subject is so taught that my moderate demands in formal grammar are usually satisfied. The test applied in English this year—the reproduction in simple language of a short narrative previously read aloud by the class—has always been fairly well complied with, it being now pretty generally understood that the stilted English formerly in vogue will not be tolerated.

Geography and history (the former subject being generally as popular with the children as the latter is the reverse) are so taught that there is but little ground for complaint.

Although the passages given out as a test of spelling are invariably taken from the reading books in use, the mistakes made, especially in the upper classes, are far too numerous. Severer tests will be applied in future, and a substantial improvement in the spelling will be expected.

Science, or, to put it more simply, the knowledge of common things, takes, and deserves to take, a more prominent place in the school course. Their knowledge of drawing now enables the older scholars to produce neat and accurate diagrams of such things as the hydraulic press or the different kinds of levers, accompanied by a clear written description of these objects. Drawing from models, an art of no small practical value, is now generally and successfully taught.

The improvement that has been brought about, especially within the City of Nelson, in the art of singing—by which I mean singing by note—is the most striking feature in the work of the past year. At the present rate of progress, the ability to read correctly at sight a simple piece of music will in a year or two become as common as was the art of reading a simple narrative a few years ago.

My usual short estimate of the state of every school when it was examined is subjoined. [Not reprinted.]

The Chairman, Nelson Education Board.

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.
						Yrs. mos.
Above Standard VI. ...	120	...	...	...	...	...
Standard VI. ...	313	8	9	43	253	13 4
" V. ...	544	33	30	119	362	12 8
" IV. ...	627	31	24	93	479	11 11
" III. ...	815	29	42	107	637	10 6
" II. ...	783	25	30	101	627	10 0
" I. ...	645	22	24	51	548	9 0
Preparatory ...	1,894	...	...	...	...	...
Totals ...	5,741	148	159	514	2,906	*

* Mean of average age, 11 years 3 months.

GREY.

SIR,—

Education Office, Greymouth, 20th March, 1890.

I have the honour to submit my fourth annual report upon the schools of this district.

The number of schools examined was twenty. The following table gives particulars of passes, &c., from the year 1885, and of percentages on class subjects, &c., from 1886:—

TABLE A.

	1885.	1886.	1887.	1888.	1889.
Roll number on day of examination ...	1,383	1,484	1,513	1,724	1,746
Number of above who have already passed the standard course ...	14	28	27	9	18
Within standard classification ...	872	994	1,058	1,158	1,177
Number enrolled in standard classes present at examination ...	828	830	972	1,050	1,100
Number promoted to a higher standard ...	579	594	676	808	731
Percentage of promotions—					
On roll number of school ...	41·87	40	44·6	46·8	41·9
On roll number of standard classes ...	66·4	59·7	64	69·7	62·1
On number present in standard classes ...	69·93	71·5	70	72	66·5
Mean of average age in standards ...	...	11y. 1m.	11y. 4m.	11y. 6m.	11y. 3m.
Mean of average age of those who passed ...	...	11y. 6m.	11y. 5m.	11y. 7m.	11y. 6m.
Percentage of passes in standard pass subjects ...	...	85	78	78	77
Percentage on class subjects—					
Drawing ...	...	48·9	64	68·9	78·2
History ...	...	49·9	35	37·2	53·6
Geography ...	...	54	42	50·8	49
Elementary science and object-lessons ...	...	55·6	53	62	72
Mean percentage on class subjects ...	...	52·1	48·5	54·7	63·2
Average marks for additional subjects (possible total, 20 for 1886, 25 for 1887, 40 for 1888, 20 for 1889)—					
Repetition and recitation ...	...	13·5	15	16	14·6
Drill and exercises ...	...	15	16	12·5	15
Singing ...	...	17·5	18	22	17·5
Needlework ...	...	16·5	17·8	22·5	12·6
Subject-matter ...	...	15·0	12	...	...
Mean average ...	...	14·8	15·8	18·25	15

The increases upon the previous year are: Roll number, 22; above Standard VI., 9; number presented in standards, 19; number of standard scholars present at examination, 50.

The last particular is the only one worthy of notice, the percentage of absentees being less than in 1888 by 2·8 per cent.

The percentage of absentees for the Greymouth School is 11, or nearly double the percentage for the whole district, the total number absent being forty-seven, exclusive of the whole of the Seventh Standard. Taylorville and Dobson had one and three absentees respectively; Teremakau,

Hatter's, Maori Gully, Richardson, Ngahere, and Red Jack's had none absent; Kynnersley, Orwell Creek, Totara Flat, and Greenstone had each one absentee; Marsden, Dunganville, and Westbrook had two each; Ahaura, Notown, and Cobden three; and Paroa seven.

The percentage of promotions shows a reduction generally—on roll number of school, 4.9 per cent.; on roll number of standard classes, 7.6 per cent.; and on number present in standard classes, 5.5 per cent. This would appear to indicate a general falling-off in results; but it is not so, the cause being found more in the specially poor results of a few schools. In no previous year have so many of the schools done such thoroughly good work; but the appearance of the largest school in the district amongst the weak division has a serious effect upon the general result. Excepting in geography there is a decided improvement in all the class subjects.

Drawing is generally very well taught; and history and science exhibit a very pronounced advance. This is no doubt attributable to some extent to the introduction of the History and Science Readers, but in a greater degree to the more practical nature of the teaching.

In additional subjects there is a very marked improvement, the mean percentage of marks being 75, as against 45 for the previous year. History was omitted in nine schools, science and object-lessons in nine, drill and exercise in twelve, singing in fourteen, needlework in seven. In a few cases there are acceptable reasons for the omissions.

Needlework is taught in all schools having a female teacher or assistant.

On the whole the work of the district reaches a good standard. It is satisfactory to find that the teaching of science is extending, and that the manner of its teaching is improving.

I found ample proof that the references to certain defects made in my last year's report had been carefully noted by the teachers, a great improvement being perceptible in some respects. Classes I. and II. are generally well and carefully taught, the two principal mistakes made being of a widely different character. The scholars are sometimes allowed to read too long in one book, with the result of their getting the subject-matter committed to memory. The introduction of a strange book by the examiner then produces trouble. Again, I sometimes found them trying to read in the First Book before the Primer had been mastered. In teaching notation and numeration to these classes illustrative material should be more generally used. Mental arithmetic had received attention in a few schools with marked effect upon the general work. It is claimed for arithmetic that, apart from its practical use in the every-day affairs of life, it is valuable for the general development of the intellect; but when it is taught in a purely mechanical manner I question if it has not a deadening and weakening effect upon the mind. If, in all cases, thorough mental practice were to precede slate work, beginning with the simplest possible illustrations of a rule, we should have less of that inability to comprehend a question which lies at the root of most of the failures in arithmetic.

It may have happened that a small extra percentage of failure was caused in Standards V. and VI. by my requiring the work to be done on paper, instead of the slate as hitherto. As, however, those classes in some schools do not appear to have been in the slightest degree affected by the change this can hardly be accepted as an excuse. Indeed, I think it very desirable that the upper classes should be weaned from the use of the slate as much as possible before leaving school, for, a mistake on the slate being easily corrected, there is encouragement to carelessness. It appears hardly necessary to point out that if arithmetic is to assist in development of brain power it must be as a mental process; but it is quite usual to find a higher class fairly expert at processes on slate, and yet, when deprived of slate and pencil, bungling over an extremely simple problem. In the lower classes more attention should be paid to neatness of arrangement on slate. In some cases the work was good as to quality, but disfigured by want of orderly arrangement and care in making figures.

The writing is on the whole improving throughout the district, and in the great majority of the schools close attention is paid to the condition of the copybooks. I should like to see the system of teaching this subject lately introduced into the Greymouth School adopted generally in the district. Every scholar in the class writes the same copy, and the mistakes are exhibited and corrected on the blackboard. This is the only intelligent and efficient system, especially for large classes. Though irregular attendance may cause blank spaces in the copybooks, leading to protests from parents economically disposed, I would strongly urge the adoption of the blackboard lesson.

Spelling has improved, especially in the lower classes.

Composition in some schools was very well done; but in the majority there is still room for improvement. The defects referred to in my last report are still apparent, though they are not so general. There is a tendency, I think, to overestimate the pupils' capabilities. The exercises for Standards III. and IV. should be confined to simple narrations of facts and occurrences, and for Standards V. and VI. the same, with the addition of the reproduction of some interesting story or narrative. The larger schools should have a small library of interesting books for the use of the upper classes. Extracts from these, reproduced by the scholars after reading, with correction and criticism upon the blackboard, would make excellent practice.

Geography is the least satisfactory subject. This may be partly explained by the introduction of new books at a late period of the year.

Physical geography appears to receive little attention, excepting in a few of the best schools.

Map-drawing needs improvement, the location of places being too often defective. The position relative to other countries is seldom shown; and the adjacent seas and oceans are often omitted.

During the year Geographical, History, and Science Readers were introduced for the purpose of giving more practice in reading, and of inducing a more scientific treatment of the subjects mentioned. These books are principally valuable, not as containing all that a scholar should know of the subject, but as indicating the method of teaching to be adopted. Teachers who use them by giving pages of matter as home lessons to be committed to memory do not yet understand their

proper purpose. Each one of the subjects referred to can be better taught from the fullness of the teacher's own knowledge, combined with the power of making a lesson interesting. This is how botany had been taught at Cobden and Dobson Schools, with the result that pupils have a knowledge of the plant with its parts, instead of only the verbal description.

The reading generally does not yet show much effect from increased opportunity for practice, but in two schools at least considerable improvement was perceptible. In addition to the reading books already mentioned, new sets of readers and grammars were introduced at the beginning of this year: Longmans' New Readers, and Mason's Standard Grammars.

As some dissatisfaction has been expressed by parents on account of the change, I take the opportunity of giving the reasons for it: 1. To furnish a greater amount of practice in reading. 2. To promote better methods of teaching. 3. To dispense with the use of books printed in small type. 4. To secure uniformity in books throughout the district. Hitherto each teacher has used such books, excepting Readers, as seemed best to him, and consequently, when a child changed its school it had to change its books also.

The Chairman, Grey Education Board.

I have, &c.,

EDWARD T. ROBINSON, Inspector.

SUMMARY OF RESULTS FOR THE WHOLE DISTRICT.

Standard Classes.	Presented.	Absent.	Excepted.	Failed.	Passed.	Average Age of those that passed.	
						Yrs.	mos.
Above Standard VI. ...	18	...	...	...	...	...	...
Standard VI. ...	89	6	3	27	53	14	1
" V. ...	127	11	5	55	56	13	5
" IV. ...	223	22	10	61	130	12	5
" III. ...	252	11	12	77	152	10	11
" II. ...	249	17	3	37	192	9	8
" I. ...	219	10	8	53	148	8	9
Preparatory ...	569	...	...	...	...	...	...
Totals ...	1,746	77	41	310	731	*	*

* Mean of average age, 11 years 6 months.

WESTLAND.

SIR,—

I have the honour to present my fifteenth annual report on the condition of primary education in the District of Westland.

Thirty schools have been in operation during the past year, six small schools having been opened since the last annual examination. Four of these were open so short a time before the date fixed for the examination that I did not think it advisable to examine them this year. The number of schools examined was therefore twenty-six, and the total roll number was 1,707. Last year the roll number was 1,790, with twenty-four schools. This appears to confirm the statement made in the Board's last annual report, to the effect that the number of children in the district is steadily decreasing; but, though the number of children in the Board's schools has undoubtedly become less, this may be partly traced to the increased efforts of one section of the community to establish schools of their own. Three such schools have been opened (or reopened) lately—at Ross, Kanieri, and Kumara respectively—and these have necessarily taken some scholars from the Board's schools. The actual decrease in the attendance during the past year is rather over $4\frac{1}{2}$ per cent.

The number presented, exclusive of those in the preparatory classes, was 1,154, or about $67\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. of the roll number, so that, with a decrease of $4\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. on the roll number, there is an increase of $1\frac{3}{4}$ per cent. in the number of scholars above Class P. Excluding those who had already passed Standard VI., 1,117 scholars were presented for examination, but, 82 of these being absent, the number actually examined was 1,035; and 29 were "exceptions." The number of absentees on examination days amounted to 7.3 per cent. of the number presented and 4.8 per cent. of the roll number, both rates being a little lower than last year, though still considerably above the New Zealand average. The absentees were most numerous in the Fourth and Fifth Standards. The total number of "passes" this year was 804, or 80 per cent., which is about equal to the average of the whole colony last year, and an advance of 3 per cent. on our own results for the same period. Table 3 [not reprinted] gives the results of the late examination in all standards at every school, with the average age of the scholars who passed, and the average percentage of marks gained by the whole class. The last four columns on the right-hand side of the table give the final results of the whole examination; the last of all being supposed to give approximately the numbers expressive of the relative efficiency of the several schools. As they stand, however, like all other figures, they can be made to appear to prove anything. It is necessary to divide the schools into at least two classes, one to include all schools having more than one teacher (counting pupil-teachers and monitors). It would be manifestly absurd, for instance, to assume that Mapourika is a better school than Arahura Road because the combined result of the former is higher than that of the latter. I have therefore arranged the schools of the first division in the following table according to the number of scholars examined in standards, and the numerical strength of their staffs. These again may be subdivided into at least four classes as indicated by the horizontal lines:—

Schools.	Examined in Standards.	Staff employed.	Mean Percentage on Pass and Class Subjects.	Additional Marks.	Combined Result.
Hokitika ...	252	Four adults and five pupil-teachers	66	64	130
Kumara ...	218	Three adults and four pupil-teachers	60	68	128
Ross ...	104	Two adults and three pupil-teachers	69	67	136
Goldsborough ...	77	Two adults and two pupil-teachers	49	41	90
Woodstock ...	71	Two adults and two pupil-teachers	61	74	135
Stafford ...	63	Two adults and two pupil-teachers	58	71	129
Kanieri ...	41	Two adults and one pupil-teacher	63	53	115
Arahura Road ...	39	Two adults and one pupil-teacher	68	33	101
Gillespie's ...	34	One adult, one monitor, and S.M.	59	45	104
Blue Spur ...	31	One adult, one monitor, and S.M.	42	43	85

Table 4 [not reprinted] contains a summary of results in the several "pass" subjects of the standards; and a comparison of this with the corresponding table in my last report shows a marked improvement in the majority of the subjects. The low percentage of passes for drawing is mainly due to the fact that very few schools took up geometrical and model drawing in the Fourth Standard, and without at least one of these no scholar was allowed to pass. I allotted 100 marks to drawing in Standard IV., apportioned thus: Freehand, 30; geometrical, 40; model, 30. The drawing in all standards is judged by work done in my presence, and not by the ordinary drawing books, which may or may not have been "touched up." In most schools I also look through the drawing books, and some very fair specimens of freehand are to be found amongst the Fifth and Sixth Standards of Ross, Kanieri, and Kumara. Arithmetic shows an apparent falling-off of 4 per cent., the standards betraying the greatest weakness being the Third and Fourth. The best results in this subject were obtained this year at Woodstock. Mental arithmetic is still much neglected, and, consequently, is seldom brought to the assistance of ordinary arithmetic as much as it might be; and I have no doubt that this has a great deal to do with the general weakness of the subject at an examination with a strictly limited time for each paper. Geography is a pass subject in Classes 3, 5, and 6, and the results this year are 13 per cent. lower than those of last year, the Sixth Standard being the weakest. This I attribute in a great measure to the poor quality of the memory maps, and to the large proportion of marks which I allow for a well-drawn map, in order to encourage what I believe to be the most effective method of teaching one part of the subject. A more extensive knowledge of the natural and political features of a country can be displayed in a well-drawn map than could be elicited by a long series of questions; and the knowledge acquired by a constant practice at map-drawing is more likely to be retained than that obtained by almost any other method of instruction. To secure the full benefits of mapping from memory, however, it is necessary that the parallels and meridians should be given with some approach to accuracy, and this is done at very few schools in the district, Kanieri being much in advance of the others in this respect. Questions given to Standard V. and Standard VI. on the natural resources, industries, manufactures, &c., of different parts of New Zealand were fairly answered on the whole, but some ludicrous mistakes were made by several scholars. Among the industries of Auckland was mentioned "a large pump that lifts 10 tons of water per minute from a depth of 640 miles;" "The chief industry of Wellington is a House of Parliament." An increase of 10 per cent. in the passes in spelling is a very satisfactory feature of the year's work, as the tests applied to the several standards are, I believe, as severe as in any other part of the colony. In grammar, too, considerable improvement is observable, and this is chiefly due to a better treatment of composition, to which portion of the grammar paper I allot liberal marks. The attempts made at some schools to give the derivations of a few words taken from the reading book serve to illustrate the old proverb, "A little knowledge is a dangerous thing." Take the following specimens: The derivation and meaning of the word "hypocrite" were given—"Hippas, a horse; *krites*, a judge—a judge of horses;" and "Annihilate—*ana*, again, and *nihil*, nothing—to eat nothing again;" "Antidote—a short story," &c. The writing throughout the district, as judged by the transcription done at the examination, is also, generally speaking, satisfactory, though in some schools there is a tendency towards microscopic writing, which should be discouraged. I find, however, as I have remarked in previous reports, that the writing in copy books and exercise books is by no means equal in merit to the specimens written at the examination; and it is therefore my intention for the future to award marks for writing entirely by the books written during the year—two copybooks at least to be presented by each scholar.

CLASS SUBJECTS, ETC.

Table No. 5 [not reprinted] shows the marks awarded for class and additional subjects to the several schools; and, considering the nature of the subjects and the difficulties by which the smaller schools are harassed, I think that on the whole there is reason to be satisfied with the results, although in most instances a higher standard ought to be aimed at in the future.

Music is taught at four schools only—viz., Kumara, Hokitika, Woodstock, and Ross. Military drill is confined to Stafford, Kumara, and Ross, but sufficient class drill is practised at nearly all the schools. The remarks made in my last report with reference to elementary science are equally

applicable this year. The work of the upper standards is generally good and sometimes excellent. The lessons on chemistry at Stafford are illustrated by experiments, some of which, at my request, were successfully performed by boys in the Sixth and Seventh Classes. With one exception, all the schools having three or more teachers (including pupil-teachers) have done fairly well in elementary science as far as the Fifth and Sixth Standards are concerned, the mean percentages being reduced by the results obtained in Standard IV., which, as usual, are far from satisfactory; but for this I do not consider that the teachers are to be blamed. Object-lessons are given, after a fashion, at nearly all the schools, and a considerable amount of useful information appears to be retained by the recipients; but at only two or three schools are these lessons given in a manner calculated to serve their true purpose. The misspelling of easy words in the object-lessons of Standard III., referred to in my last report, is not quite so conspicuous this year, but there is still much room for improvement in this respect, failing which there is a danger of this exercise becoming absolutely detrimental.

The order and discipline of the schools and the behaviour of the scholars outside the school (so far as I have had opportunities of observing it) are on the whole fairly satisfactory. I have been obliged this year to make a less favourable "remark" under this head at one school on account of the constant chattering that I had to complain of during the examination. At another school the wall at one end of the building is disfigured by a profusion of ink-splashings. Here also the day's proceedings were varied by the descent of a stone upon the iron roof while the examination of a part of the scholars was in progress. This, however, was no new experience at the school referred to, and is, perhaps, an indication of the "excellent moral tone" with which the Committee are so satisfied.

INSPECTION.—On looking through the notes made at the various schools during my visits of inspection, I find the following defects and peculiarities referred to: Classes P. and S1.—Writing with short stumps of slate pencil (very common). One teacher defended this practice on the ground that the long pencils produced a disagreeable sound. Same classes.—Slates not properly and uniformly ruled (common). Children in Standard I. and Standard II. counting strokes made on their slates instead of *adding* the numbers together (common). Children engaged in exactly the same work in arithmetic, grammar exercises, &c., sitting close to one another, although there was ample unoccupied space—a condition highly favourable to the encouragement of copying (occasional). Ventilation not properly attended to (a few cases). Classes at desks repeating lessons aloud while the teacher was giving a reading lesson to another class (one instance). Reading.—Boys sitting and leaning their chests against the desks. Not sufficient attention to expression and intonation. In some schools no pattern reading. Writing.—Pens not held properly (very general). Awkward position of scholars while writing. Bad specimens of writing on blackboard (sometimes actual mistakes) by teacher. Pupil-teacher at the back of his class showing *one* scholar how to work a question in arithmetic. Exercise Books.—Errors not properly corrected (occasional). Some books without names of owners or of their classes. Some exercise books very dirty and untidy (too common). Daily Attendance Registers.—Certain columns not filled up; morning (or afternoon) attendance not added up; totals not entered up at the end of the week. Admission registers not kept properly posted up to date (common). Time tables require amendment (a few). In some of the more important cases the remarks called for by what fell under my observation during the inspection were communicated to the head teachers in writing; in the others the defects were pointed out to the teacher after school hours.

In very few schools is the blackboard so well utilised as it might be in the teaching of subjects other than arithmetic. Scarcely anything shows the quality of a teacher more than his manner of using, or his habitual neglect of, the blackboard. If, as it has been said, the consumption of soap in proportion to the population is a measure of the civilisation of a country, it is at least equally true that the consumption of chalk may be taken as one indication of the efficiency of a school. I beg to recommend that every school be furnished with a file, or portfolio, and that teachers be instructed to file, and *keep in the school*, all circulars addressed to them by the Board. It frequently happens that a new teacher is not aware of the contents of some circular issued a few months before his appointment, and it is by no means a rare occurrence for teachers to plead ignorance of some instruction conveyed to them a year before in the same manner.

Before leaving this portion of my report I cannot refrain from referring to the serious loss the district has sustained during the past year. "The great teacher, Death," has removed one of our staff—the late Mr. James Woodward, who, after years of faithful and most effective service, at length succumbed to the complaint to which he had been long subject, his end having been hastened by his absolute and untiring devotion to his duties. His indomitable will kept him at his post long after most men would have been compelled to seek relief in repose, and his friends, the Committee, and the Board remained in ignorance of the full extent of his weakness until too late; otherwise they would no doubt have insisted upon his taking the rest he so much needed. His loss will long be felt by many, more especially by those who, either as scholars or as members of his staff, have received the benefits of his teaching and example. For some months prior to his death Mr. Woodward was more or less unfit to fulfil his duties in his accustomed vigorous and searching manner, and, as a natural consequence, Kumara occupies a lower position this year amongst the Westland schools than it has held for many years.

PUPIL-TEACHERS.—Eighteen pupil-teachers were examined for promotion during the first week of the Christmas vacation—viz., eight for admission to the first class, four for the second class, four for the third class, and two for the fourth. All of these passed, and eight of them succeeded in passing "with credit"—*i.e.*, gaining upwards of 75 per cent. of the attainable marks. One pupil-teacher narrowly escaped failure in Class 4, through serious weakness in two subjects. One of the Board's regulations provides for the preservation of all exercise books used by the pupil-teachers during the year, and for their production at the examination. This enables me to devote some little time to a careful scrutiny of their contents, which afford a tolerably fair indication of the

course and methods of instruction followed by the several teachers. As a rule these are satisfactory. In one case, however, I observed upwards of fifty uncorrected errors in eleven exercises (Latin). The exercise books of a pupil-teacher from a country school contained little but dictation and grammar (chiefly parsing); in the former many words were left out entirely, and in the latter many mistakes and omissions were not marked, and doubtful abbreviations, such as "p.," "a.," "ad.," &c., were habitually used. Another pupil-teacher, from the same school, had no exercise books excepting those that he had written under private tuition, and stated that the head teacher of his school had given him very little written work, and that had been done on scraps of paper, instead of in books as required. He also stated that he had received no instruction in algebra during the past year from his own head teacher. If these statements are correct I must again urge the Board, in justice to the young people whom they undertake to train up for the teaching profession, to reconsider the suggestions made in my last and several earlier reports, or, at any rate, to decline to appoint fresh pupil-teachers to this school, but, as those now engaged drop out, to supply their places by allowing two monitors who have passed Standard VI. for each pupil-teacher allowed by the Board's regulations. There is another matter connected with the pupil-teacher system that I must refer to at the risk of giving offence, and that is, the passing over of pupil-teachers out of their time, and appointing young persons without any claim on the Board, and certainly far less qualified for the position, to the teachership of small schools. There is a point where subserviency to the wishes of Committees and parents ceases to be praiseworthy, and here at least I think the Board should take a firm stand, and absolutely refuse to appoint or (in the case of aided schools) to sanction the appointment of any unqualified person when an ex-pupil-teacher is willing to accept the position. Before leaving the subject of pupil-teachers I may refer to the inconvenience and even injury suffered by schools having pupil-teachers, upon the retirement of one or more of them at the expiration of their terms of service, and the filling of their places by young persons necessarily without experience. As it is only by strictly adhering to its regulations that the Board can hope to keep its expenditure within its income, it is absolutely necessary that pupil-teachers out of their time should be replaced by others of the lowest class; but it is evident that this bears hardly on the schools that have to exchange the services of a first-class for those of a fourth-class and inexperienced pupil-teacher. Any scheme that could be devised to obviate the evil would be liable to derangement from time to time through pupil-teachers leaving the district before their terms of service had expired, as has happened several times in the Hokitika School. A suggestion has been made by some members of the Committee of that school which I think is worthy of consideration. It is that pupils desirous of appointment as pupil-teachers should, as a "condition precedent," be required to give their services gratuitously as monitors for a certain time before they should be eligible for appointment, and while awaiting a vacancy. This plan would have the double advantage of giving the aspirants to the position an opportunity of exhibiting, and the head teacher the means of judging of, their fitness for the teaching profession; it would involve no expense to the Board, and would reduce the chances of an unsuitable appointment to a minimum. The number of such unpaid monitors should bear some fixed proportion to the number of pupil-teachers employed in the school, and there is no doubt that there would be no lack of scholars who have passed the Sixth Standard who would be willing and eager to act as monitors, as their chance of ultimate appointment would then be materially increased. The chief advantage gained by such an arrangement would be that upon the retirement of a pupil-teacher the vacancy in the staff could be filled at once by one of these monitors with some little experience in school work, and not by an entirely untried hand. Should the idea thus roughly sketched out commend itself to your judgment, I shall be glad to draw up the details of the scheme in the shape of an addition to the present pupil-teachers' regulations, and submit them for your consideration at the next meeting of the Board.

I had almost finished writing this report when the seventh annual report of the Educational Institute of New Zealand came under my notice. With many of the resolutions agreed to by the Council I heartily concur, and the principles of not a few of them have been again and again recommended by myself, and indorsed by the present and former Boards in Westland. I may instance resolutions Nos. 1, 2, and 5, relating to departmental control, whilst No. 2, relating to the interpretation of regulations, is almost identical with the regulations in force in Westland before the Act of 1877 came into operation. With No. 3 of the same series I also cordially agree, notwithstanding that circumstances have compelled me hitherto to be somewhat profuse in percentages. There is, however, a remark in the address of the President which I hope is not to be taken as an expression of the opinion entertained by the Institute. It is as follows: "Some Education Boards . . . have been too liberal in the distribution of small schools—a policy that has materially lessened the salaries of teachers in their districts." Fortunately for the remote and scattered population of Westland, this Board is one that has erred in the direction indicated by the President of the Institute, and has given every encouragement to the establishment of schools where the inhabitants have shown a willingness to help themselves to the best of their ability. In my opinion, so far from deserving censure for such a course, the Boards referred to have shown only a proper perception of their duties, by a commendable desire to extend the advantages of the public-school system to those least able to help themselves, and in so doing have at the same time done much to encourage that most desirable class of settlers who, instead of thronging to the already congested labour markets of the towns, have elected to hew out a home and independence for themselves in the waste places of the colony. If the funds at the disposal of these Boards have been so limited as to compel them to underpay the teachers of the larger schools in order to provide a mere pittance for the remote teachers, it is the fault of the system, and not of those who administer it, unless it can be shown that they have been extravagant in other directions; and I trust that wherever a dozen children can be assembled at one centre no Board will hesitate to extend to them the advantages of a system of primary education which their parents, as taxpayers, are assisting to maintain. If

the worthy President of the Institute could have witnessed the delight evinced by a scholar between seventeen and eighteen years of age on passing the Second Standard, who less than twelve months before hardly knew his letters, and who, but for the aid afforded by the Board, would still have been in the same state of ignorance, I do not think he would have felt inclined to blame the Board for assisting even so small a school as that referred to.

The Chairman, Westland Education Board.

I have, &c.,

JOHN SMITH.

SUMMARY OF RESULTS FOR THE WHOLE DISTRICT.

Standard Classes.	Presented.	Absent.	Excepted.	Failed.	Passed.	Average Age of those that passed.
						Yrs. mos.
Above Standard VI. ...	37	...	...	...	...	...
Standard VI. ...	87	7	1	12	67	13 4
" V. ...	144	17	4	27	96	13 4
" IV. ...	207	23	2	48	134	12 8
" III. ...	214	16	1	46	151	12 0
" II. ...	237	10	16	42	169	11 2
" I. ...	228	9	5	27	187	9 7
Preparatory ...	553	...	...	...	...	...
Totals ...	1,707	82	29	202	804	*

* Mean of average age, 12.1 years.

NORTH CANTERBURY.

1. MR. WOOD'S REPORT.

SIR,—

Education Office, Christchurch, 14th April, 1890.

I have the honour to submit my general report on the work of the past year.

The school year, so far as the duties of the Inspectors were concerned, practically began about the middle of March. From that date down to the middle of June we were engaged in visiting schools for the purposes of inspection, except for a period of four weeks, when candidates for scholarships were examined and standard test cards were prepared. From June to the end of March last the examination of schools was steadily undertaken, the only interruption of moment to the continuity of this work being due to the employment of our services in connection with the teachers' examination held at Christmas.

During the year I paid visits of inspection to forty-eight schools, among which were included all the large town schools. I also visited the Normal School, as occasion required, in order to assist in determining the distribution of the staff of student-teachers employed there. Four important country schools which had fared badly at the last examination received additional visits, with, I am glad to say, gratifying results.

The standard examinations throughout the district were conducted by my colleague, Dr. Anderson, or myself, and in the case of six town schools by both of us conjointly. Twenty-five schools, situated in the southern and midland divisions of the district, were examined by myself alone; and to this list I may add, as representing the sum total of my examinations, the names of three schools which, although they do not come under the category of public elementary schools, were examined by me at the request of the Board—viz., St. Matthew's Church School, Burnham Industrial School, and Canterbury Orphanage School.

The following tables show (A) the results of the examinations in pass-subjects in (a) the seventy-five schools examined by me, and (b) the six town schools, in the examination of which Dr. Anderson took part; and (B) a summary of the results in pass subjects for the whole district in a form convenient for estimating the progress made in the past year.

Table A.—Pass Subjects, Numbers examined.

Class.	Presented.		Absent.		Excepted.		Failed.		Passed.	
	(a)	(b)	(a)	(b)	(a)	(b)	(a)	(b)	(a)	(b)
Above Standard VI. ...	18	46	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Standard VI. ...	150	177	9	4	4	1	35	28	102	144
" V. ...	388	440	19	11	11	14	128	99	230	316
" IV. ...	744	671	31	25	23	26	184	170	506	450
" III. ...	1,156	794	53	38	66	39	274	161	763	556
" II. ...	1,111	814	47	21	36	24	105	83	923	686
" I. ...	1,037	708	25	20	12	4	84	14	915	670
Preparatory ...	2,636	1,857	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Totals ...	7,240	5,507	185	119	152	108	810	555	3,439	2,822

Table B.—Pass Subjects for the Whole District for the Years 1888 and 1889.

Classes.	Presented.		Absent.		Excepted.		Failed.		Passed.		No. of Schools presenting.	
	1889.	1888.	1889.	1888.	1889.	1888.	1889.	1888.	1889.	1888.	1889.	1888.
Above Standard VI. ...	108	84	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	45	27
Standard VI. ...	514	483	16	20	8	8	113	105	377	350	103	96
" V. ...	1,291	1,140	43	31	45	51	361	383	842	675	134	129
" IV. ...	2,225	2,110	96	94	85	95	593	562	1,451	1,359	152	141
" III. ...	3,153	3,130	156	160	154	152	749	838	2,094	1,980	158	151
" II. ...	3,058	3,047	112	138	98	112	336	379	2,512	2,418	157	156
" I. ...	2,807	2,894	75	112	36	58	176	223	2,520	2,501	155	149
Preparatory ...	7,087	6,839	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	160	156
Totals ...	20,243	19,727	498	555	426	476	2,328	2,490	9,796	9,283	160	156

The statistics in the above tables seem to mark a material increase in the efficiency of the teaching; and this advance I may say I expected, from my general impression, derived from daily observation, as to the steady improvement in these subjects.

In class subjects and in additional subjects the results of my examinations are almost identical with those for the whole district, published in Table C of the Appendix. Geography is on the whole the best taught, and is the only one of these subjects in which any substantial improvement is shown.

In explanation of the brevity of this report, I beg leave to say that I purposed to embody in it a criticism of the syllabus of instruction; but, as this subject has just been dealt with by me in a report which I have submitted to the Minister of Education, the remarks I wished to offer must necessarily come before the Board in another form.

I have, &c.,

The Chairman, Education Board, North Canterbury.

L. B. Wood, M.A., Inspector.

2. DR. ANDERSON'S REPORT.

SIR,—

Christchurch, 12th April, 1890.

I have the honour to present a general report on the past year's work. The year's work to which such a report refers is supposed to end with the close of December, but through the reduction in the staff of Inspectors the annual series of examinations included has extended to the close of March.

As usual, the months preceding July were occupied by the Inspectors in completing any examinations left over from the previous year, in compiling returns, in examining candidates for scholarships at the April examination, in preparing a sufficient number of examination papers for use in the ensuing standard examinations, and in paying visits to schools for purposes of inspection.

The schools of the northern division of the district, taken by Mr. Wood in the previous year, and comprising the chief suburban schools and those north of Christchurch—in all fifty-eight schools—fell to me in the ordinary rotation. I inspected and reported on fifty-four of these during the months March–June, the four omitted being two at Kaikoura, at too great a distance for an inspection visit, one which received instead an interim examination from Mr. Wood, and one closed temporarily through a change of teachers.

The annual examinations began on the 2nd of July, and, the third Inspector being meanwhile withdrawn, it became my duty to join my colleague in the examination of the large city schools. These, with two side schools attached, having a roll number of 5,507 children, were finished about the 17th of August. During the remainder of the period covered by this report I have examined separately seventy-nine schools, with a roll number of 7,496 children, and shared with my colleague and Mr. Veel the annual examination of pupil-teachers and a second scholarship examination, both held in December, but, so far as the work of the examiners is concerned, extending well into January.

I submit in tabular form the chief facts of the standard examination results, distinguishing the schools examined jointly and those examined separately. A series of comparative proportions is also submitted, which may prove of some interest now, or be convenient for future reference. The returns for the whole district are contained in the appendices.

Table A.—Pass Subjects, Number examined.

Class.	Presented.		Absent.		Excepted.		Failed.		Passed.		Schools included.	
	(a)	(b)	(a)	(b)	(a)	(b)	(a)	(b)	(a)	(b)	(a)	(b)
Above Standard VI. ...	46	44	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	4	26
Standard VI. ...	177	187	4	3	1	3	28	50	144	131	4	54
" V. ...	440	463	11	13	14	20	99	134	316	296	4	67
" IV. ...	671	810	25	40	26	36	170	239	450	495	4	78
" III. ...	794	1,203	38	65	39	49	161	314	556	775	4	79
" II. ...	814	1,133	21	44	24	38	83	148	686	903	6	77
" I. ...	708	1,062	20	29	4	20	14	78	670	935	6	78
Preparatory ...	1,857	2,594	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	6	79
Totals ...	5,507	7,496	119	194	108	166	555	963	2,822	3,535	6	79
	13,003		313		274		1,518		6,357		85	

(a) Examined jointly with colleague.

(b) Examined separately.

Table B.—Pass Subjects, Proportions calculated in Percentages.

Class.	Presented of Number enrolled.				Passed of Number enrolled: “Percentage of Passes.”				Failed of Sum of Passes and Failures: “Percentage of Failures.”			
	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)
Above Standard VI. ...	.8	.6	.5	.4	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Standard VI. ...	3.2	2.5	2.5	2.4	2.6	1.7	1.9	1.8	16.3	27.6	23.1	23.1
“ V. ...	8.0	6.2	6.4	5.8	5.7	3.9	4.2	3.4	23.9	31.2	30.0	36.2
“ IV. ...	12.2	10.8	11.0	10.7	8.2	6.6	7.2	6.9	27.4	32.6	29.0	29.3
“ III. ...	14.4	16.0	15.6	15.9	10.1	10.3	10.3	10.0	22.5	28.8	26.4	29.7
“ II. ...	14.8	15.1	15.1	15.4	12.5	12.0	12.4	12.3	10.8	14.1	11.8	13.6
“ I. ...	12.9	14.2	13.9	14.7	12.2	12.5	12.5	12.7	2.0	7.7	6.5	8.2
Preparatory ...	33.7	34.6	35.0	34.7	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
All classes ...	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	51.2	47.2	48.4	47.1	16.4	21.4	19.2	21.2

(a) Examined jointly.

(b) Examined separately.

(c) North Canterbury District, 1889.

(d) North Canterbury District, 1888.

I have little to say by way of comment. The broad general feature of importance is that the figures are with considerable uniformity a point or two ahead of those for the previous year, and, although the difference is not great, it encourages the belief that a steady improvement is still in progress in the district. A marked advance is made in Standard V.; but how far this may be due to the more or less conscious favour shown in doubtful cases, and arising from the idea that the difference between the results previously obtained in this standard and in Standard VI. required some adjustment, I am unable to say. In the presentation it may be worth noting that Standard I. has come down, but not to any very appreciable extent; that Standard III. still remains the most bulky class; and that a slight tendency is observable towards improvement in the numbers of the higher classes.

As regards the schools with which I have had especially to deal during the year, any effective comparison between their present and their former performance is precluded by the fact that all but a few of those separately examined by me, and all visited for inspection, were taken in 1888 by a different Inspector. This is only one of the disadvantages of an annual change of districts—disadvantages hitherto reduced to a minimum by the close intercommunion happily prevailing between the Inspectors, but about to be made more prominent by the coming necessity of paying but one annual visit to many of our schools.

Table C.—Class Subjects.

Subjects.	Examined jointly.		Examined separately.		North Canterbury District, 1889.		North Canterbury District, 1888.	
	Marks (0 to 100).	Schools included.	Marks (0 to 100).	Schools included.	Marks (0 to 100).	Schools included.	Marks (0 to 100).	Schools included.
Drawing ...	48.0	4	39.4	59	38.4	123	39.4	144
History ...	49.0	4	36.8	79	39.9	157	40.0	151
Geography ...	57.0	6	57.4	79	56.7	160	54.9	156
Science and object-lessons ...	52.7	6	39.7	79	39.8	160	41.7	155
Average of “percentage on class subjects” ...	54.0	6	43.0	79	44.0	160	44.5	156

Table D.—Additional Subjects.

Subjects.	Examined jointly.		Examined separately.		North Canterbury District, 1889.		North Canterbury District, 1888.	
	Marks (0 to 20).	Schools included.	Marks (0 to 20).	Schools included.	Marks (0 to 20).	Schools included.	Marks (0 to 20).	Schools included.
Repetition and recitation ...	15.2	6	12.5	79	12.4	158	12.5	156
Drill and exercise ...	14.7	6	11.5	65	11.4	138	11.2	146
Singing ...	13.0	6	11.1	65	11.0	125	10.2	129
Needlework ...	15.4	6	14.3	78	14.3	154	13.8	151
Subject-matter of reading lessons ...	14.0	6	11.9	79	12.3	159	12.1	156
Extra drawing ...	10.0	1	...	...	10.0	1	6.8	4
Average of “additional marks” ...	72.2	6	57.1	79	57.3	158	57.2	156

The additional subjects keep very close to the previous marking. What change there is is generally on the right side.

The class subjects differ from those of the pass and additional groups in falling slightly below last year's estimate. In drawing a lower mark is quite consistent with a real advance, as the maximum assigned for freehand, of which the work still chiefly consists, has been a little lower for Standards V. and VI. than for Standards IV., V., and VI. the previous year. It is to be observed besides that, as drawing has been a class-subject in Standards V. and VI. alone, the mark does not pretend to represent the general condition of drawing in our schools. In a few cases, where only one or two children have been concerned, I have omitted to make a class estimate, so that the number of schools credited with drawing as a class subject does not exactly correspond with the number in which Standard V. or Standard VI. has been represented.

History appears to me to be declining, and science and object-lessons to be much as they were, neither showing in the majority of cases any distinct merit, and both being often of merely nominal value.

The geography is the only class subject in which the mark has risen. The greater half of the percentage assigned is due to the answering of Standard II.; but I have been getting better maps in Standard IV., and I have no doubt that increased practice in drawing, and, still more, the stimulus of pass requirements in Standard V., with which Standard IV. is now very frequently associated in the subject, have had a useful influence. The rest of the work in Standard IV. is, however, commonly too imperfect to do if the classification of the children depended on it.

I have, &c.,

W. J. ANDERSON, LL.D., Inspector.

The Chairman, North Canterbury Education Board.

SOUTH CANTERBURY.

SIR,—

Education Office, Timaru, 18th March, 1890.

I have the honour to submit my general report on the schools in this district for the year 1889.

With the opening of the new schools at Glenavy, Adair, and the Cave, the number of schools in operation at the close of the year has been brought up to fifty-two. The usual visits of inspection were paid to the schools, and a report of each visit was presented to the Board, and forwarded to the Chairman of the School Committee for the information of the Committee and the teachers. All the schools were examined, and within a few days of the examination I was able to furnish the teachers with a copy of the schedules, showing the results of each child's work in every pass subject, and recording its success or failure in the standards. The following table will show the general results of the examinations for the year:—

Standard Classes.	Presented.	Absent.	Excepted.	Failed.	Passed.	Average Age.	
						Yrs.	mos.
Above Standard VI. ...	52	...	...	...	...	...	...
Standard VI. ...	168	4	1	32	131	13	9
" V. ...	364	17	15	106	226	13	0
" IV. ...	521	29	29	127	336	12	2
" III. ...	694	32	35	167	460	11	1
" II. ...	669	33	9	69	558	9	11
" I. ...	620	18	10	38	554	9	0
Preparatory ...	1,677	...	...	...	...	...	...
Totals for 1889 ...	4,765	133	99	539	2,265	...	...
Corres. do., 1888 ...	4,610	136	123	521	2,224	...	...

The number of pupils presented on the examination schedules was 4,765, of whom 52 had in some previous year passed the Sixth Standard, 1,677 were in the infant or preparatory classes, and 3,036 belonged to the standard classes. Of the 3,036 presented in standard classes, 2,903 were at school on the day of examination, and 2,265 passed the standard for which they were presented.

The official percentage of failures, estimated on the standard class rolls exclusive of absentees and exceptions, is 19, the same as last year. The average percentage in class subjects has advanced from 55 to 57, but there is a fall from 57 to 54 in the average of additional marks.

READING.—While it cannot be said that any very noticeable improvement has taken place in the reading of the district as a whole, there has certainly been no falling off from the standard of quality it has reached in the past. As a rule the best reading is heard in the larger schools. Many reasons could be given to account for this: it is necessary here to mention only one, which might not occur to the teachers of our small schools, for whose benefit I wish to bring it forward. When the reading lesson of a large class is being conducted each scholar must put forth considerable effort in order that his reading may be followed by the members of the class. He is thus compelled by his surroundings to brace himself for his task, the larger audience compelling him to clearer enunciation and distinctness of speech, and his reading becomes not only intelligent, but intelligible. As the teacher of the small class cannot have the large audience for his pupils to read to, he must do something to make up for this disadvantage. By taking up a position which places him a good distance from his class, and insisting on the pupils reading in a tone of voice which he can easily

follow without looking at the text, the teacher will soon find his pupils responding to the greater demand put upon them for distinct and deliberate utterance. In most schools a fair amount of time is daily spent in testing the pupils' comprehension of what is read in the class. The answering is sometimes very good, but it is not an uncommon occurrence to meet with a class so badly trained that after repeated trials one has to give up the attempt to get a full and intelligent answer to any question.

SPELLING.—The classes which showed the greatest weakness in the formal spelling and dictation exercises were the Fourth and Fifth Standards. In the First, Second, and Sixth Standards spelling was usually very good. The dictation exercises of the higher standards suffered in most cases from careless punctuation. As usual, the exercises in composition exhibited much worse spelling than any one except a schoolmaster or an examiner could believe possible. A boy can write a fairly difficult paragraph of eight or ten lines from his reading book, with a dozen hard words for spelling, without making a single mistake; and yet his composition may bristle with errors in words of every-day use. "I seen a horke sitting on a goss fence" is no exaggeration. A Sixth Standard boy, who was absolutely correct in dictation and spelling, wrote "benevolent *instachusian*" in his grammar paper. "The tame cat is the *dwaugh* of the species" is a puzzle from a Third Standard girl's paper.

WRITING.—Few pupils fail to secure a pass in writing. At the same time the quality is not generally much more than passable. With sufficient care in supervision, not only of copybooks, but of all written matter, a great improvement might certainly be made. Too little use is made of the blackboard in giving direct instruction in writing; in fact, direct instruction practically ceases with the First and Second Standards in all but a few schools, the practice to be got from the copybooks and in transcribing passages from the reading books being deemed sufficient for the other standards. Many of the pupils get into a very bad style of writing from the pressure put upon them in taking down "notes" on various subjects; for this is always a hurried exercise. Even Third Standard children have their note books, with page after page of almost illegible stuff, supposed to be "notes of history."

ARITHMETIC.—In all the classes up to and including the Fourth Standard, I am pleased to note a gratifying improvement in the accuracy of the work in arithmetic. The weakness in notation which was so prevalent is fast disappearing, and the slow habit of finger-counting has almost everywhere been driven out by a more general use of the ball-frame, and the introduction of regular and frequent practice in the "tables." The poorest results in arithmetic were got from the Fifth Standard; while the Sixth Standard papers, though rather better, were frequently no more than passable. In these classes, however, in the two largest schools the black mark in arithmetic was recorded in the schedules against a very small percentage of the pupils. There, and wherever else high results are obtained, good teaching alone is not relied on; all through the year the stage of progress is gauged by test examinations, the intervals between the examinations being lessened as the yearly reckoning draws near. The pupils who are really able for their work thus gain confidence in themselves which does not desert them on the day of examination; and for accuracy, rapidity, and neatness, the papers sent in on that day are nearly as good as any they have done at their "trials." That there should be teachers who go on for month after month without saving time by losing a day at stated intervals for these test examinations is almost beyond belief, but there are such, both in large and in small schools. If they would adopt a plan of procedure which the most competent teachers find indispensable, they would be less surprised at the results they obtain, and have less occasion for seeking ridiculous excuses for their continued want of success.

GRAMMAR AND COMPOSITION.—In the majority of our schools the Third Standard pupils had little difficulty in distinguishing the nouns, pronouns, verbs, and adjectives in the sentences submitted to them, and failures in grammar were therefore much less common in this class than formerly. To give the "why" for every part of speech still proves the great stumbling-block to the Fourth Standard, but, as this is the essential part in telling the parts of speech, the consequence of not knowing it was disastrous to a great many pupils. The parsing of Standards V. and VI. was marked by accuracy and precision in only a very few schools. If the children were earlier taught to make a simple analysis of each sentence before they attempt to parse the words in it, many difficulties would be removed, and the value of this part of the grammar lesson as a mental discipline would be enhanced. Analysis of sentences was generally much better done than parsing. There is a danger of some of our teachers treating this exercise as an end in itself, whereas its value mainly consists in enabling the scholar to get a better understanding of what he reads, and in directing his attention to the ways in which sentences are constructed. When this is recognised the teacher will find it a valuable aid to the training of his scholars in the art of sentence-making or composition. Every one knows how hard it is to get children of average ability to write clearly and correctly on subjects with which they are quite familiar; but after making due allowance for all the difficulties to be overcome we might fairly expect the exercises in composition to be of higher merit than they usually are. Instruction in composition commences as soon as a child passes the Second Standard. If this is continued throughout the school course, and if suitable and sufficient practice is given along with the instruction, by the time he leaves school every scholar should have acquired a fair degree of skill in this art. So far such attainment is very rarely met with.

GEOGRAPHY.—In Standards IV., V., and VI., in which geography is a pass subject, the pupils in the majority of the schools easily secured a pass. To make sure that the preparation had covered all the ground to be got over in each standard, oral examination was mainly relied on. Memory-maps were done on paper, and in the highest two standards a few questions were also given to be answered in writing. The maps were often very well done. The answering of the Sixth Standard pupils was generally accurate and full, but that of the Fifth was too often confined to the mere naming of places and their positions. As a class subject in Standards II. and IV. I found the results of the teaching of geography quite satisfactory in the great majority of the schools. A great deal might still be done by the teachers to make the lessons more interesting. For this purpose illus-

trated papers, books of travel, tourists' guide-books, &c., can all be turned to excellent account in the schoolroom. In my own experience in schools at Home I found it of great service to go through the "Shipping Intelligence" column of a newspaper. The scholars greatly enjoyed the change from the text-book; and in case any one should think there was more play than profit in half-hours occasionally spent in this way, I would advise him to make a trial of it, and I expect he will be astonished at the demand made upon his geographical knowledge before he gets to the foot of the column.

DRAWING.—Good progress continues to be made in the teaching of freehand drawing. In nearly all the schools a little geometrical drawing was professed in the Fifth and Sixth Standards, in addition to freehand. To obtain a pass in the Fourth Standard both freehand and geometrical drawing were required, and with only one or two exceptions the teachers were able to show a fair amount of both kinds of drawing. In the beginning of the year some difficulty was experienced in procuring cheap and serviceable instruments. Most of those I have seen in the hands of the children should have been cheap enough, for they had little else to recommend them, and with the most careful handling they will soon get out of order.

CLASS SUBJECTS.—The only subjects that remain to be spoken of under this head are history, science, and object-lessons. In their treatment of these subjects most of the teachers have found a means of conveying to the pupils a great deal of more or less useful information. The credit of making these lessons more than mere tasks for the memory belongs to a few of our most painstaking and skilful teachers.

ADDITIONAL SUBJECTS.—*Drill.*—In forty schools some training has been given in military drill and physical exercises. The marks (0 to 20) awarded ranged from 4 to 18, the average obtained being 11. *Singing.*—I am sorry to say that we have as many as nineteen schools where the singing lesson finds no place in the time-table. In about twenty of the others little more is attempted than the singing of a few songs learned by ear. In the rest the children are taught to sing from notes, and in these schools the singing is generally very good. *Sewing.*—Instruction in needlework is given in forty-two schools, and in the great majority of these the work shown was more than creditable.

During my visits to the schools I have always found the children well-behaved. It is due to the teachers and the children to mention that only one or two instances of attempts at dishonest practices during the working of the papers set for examination have come under my notice, and from the general tone of the schools I regarded these as results of sudden impulse rather than the outcome of evil habit.

I have, &c.,

JAS. GIBSON GOW, M.A., Inspector.

The Chairman, South Canterbury Board of Education.

OTAGO.

SIR,—

We have the honour to submit our report for the year 1889.

During the year all the schools in the Otago District were examined, and all but eight were visited for inspection. Four of the latter were closed when the Inspector was visiting the district in which they are situated. Four schools were opened during the latter half of the year, when the school examinations were going on. Some additions were made every year to the number of schools, and the work of examination occupies annually somewhat more of our time. The time available for inspection is proportionately curtailed, and in order to overtake the work we are compelled in many cases to visit two schools in a single day. But for this arrangement we could not have overtaken the work of inspection so fully as we have done. The following table shows the chief statistics of examination for the year:—

Standard Classes.	Presented.	Absent.	Excepted.	Failed.	Passed.	Average Age of those that passed.
						Yrs. mos.
Infants	8,012	...	...	...	...	...
Standard I.	2,949	44	35	162	2,708	9 2
" II.	3,048	60	79	221	2,688	10 2
" III.	3,082	93	115	502	2,372	11 5
" IV.	2,408	61	88	434	1,825	12 2·5
" V.	1,749	49	65	365	1,270	13 2·8
" VI.	937	18	11	175	733	14 0·2
Above Standard VI.	216	...	...	...	...	...
Totals	22,401	325	393	1,859	11,596	*

* Mean of average age, 11 years 8·4 months.

Of the 22,401 pupils presented on the examination schedules, 14,173 were entered for examination in one or other of the standards, being 254 more than the corresponding number for last year. In all, 13,848 were present and were examined in Standards I. to VI. Of these, 11,596 passed the standard for which they were presented. The percentage of failures in standards was 13·8; in 1888 it was 15½; and in 1887 it was 18. The average percentage of marks for class subjects was 55·5, as against 56 for 1888; and the average of marks for additional subjects 68·2, as against 66 for last year. In every standard there has been an advance in the percentage of standard passes. The advance is 4 per cent. in Standard V., 3 per cent. in Standard II., 2 per cent. in Standard I.,

Standard III., and Standard IV., and 1 per cent. in Standard VI. A rough idea of the proportion of schools in which the percentage of failures was low, moderate, or high, may be gathered from the following table:—

			Percentage of Failures.
In 17 schools (equal to 9 per cent. of the total number) from			... 0 to 5
" 30	" 16	" "	... 6 to 10
" 74	" 39	" "	... 11 to 20
" 34	" 18	" "	... 21 to 30
" 19	" 10	" "	... 31 to 40
" 11	" 6	" "	... 41 to 50
" 3	" 2	" "	... 51 to 67

The percentage of pupils who are *excepted*, though still small, shows a slight advance on that of previous years. Last year we were glad to note that on the average Standard I. was passed at an age of a trifle over nine years. Our hopes that the age at which this standard is passed would still further decline have not been fulfilled, for this year the age has risen to nine years and two months. At present teachers are allowed to withhold from examination in Standard I. as many of the pupils preparing the work of that standard as they please. The way in which this power is exercised causes a good deal of dissatisfaction to parents, and in some cases the power is evidently abused. In one school several pupils, who are now twelve years old or more, and have been from four to six years at school, have not yet been presented for examination in Standard I.

The tables and statistics given above afford gratifying evidence of the growing efficiency of the teaching in the Board schools. A most satisfactory feature in the progress which they disclose is that it has been shared in by every class of pupils. The only features that suggest misgiving are the continued decline in the percentage of marks for class subjects, the unexpected advance in the age at which Standard I. is passed, and the increase in the percentage of *exceptions*.

The great majority of the schools are now on the whole very fairly conducted, and a large number are conducted well. The schools of intermediate and smaller size, though they may not show the highest percentages, are decidedly the most efficient, their superiority being evidenced by better attention, greater intelligence, and a better working spirit on the part of the pupils. In these respects a very few of the largest schools are almost their equals, but as a general rule the bigger the school the more distracted is the attention, and the less earnest and single-minded the application to study. These shortcomings of the larger schools are partly inherent, being due to the unwieldy size of the classes and the very scanty staff allowed for their management. But they are also in a very considerable measure attributable to the great difficulty of securing for headmasters men who have the qualities of a captain or chief, and who can make their personality felt in every room and every class under their charge. It is owing to the want of these qualities that the frequent changes of assistant teachers are attended with such friction and such peril to attention and progress. Schools that must be classed as badly conducted are chiefly of small size, so that their feeble management affects but few pupils. The practice of appointing females as head teachers in many of the smaller rural schools is working very well. Female teachers do not move from school to school so frequently as males, and on the whole they conduct schools of this class decidedly better than most of the male teachers who fill such positions.

The teaching continues to improve in intelligence, though the progress is not rapid. There are still a good many teachers who are satisfied with the attainment of mere results, and take little account of the educative quality of the process by which the results are reached. This criticism applies specially to their treatment of geography, of grammar, of science, and of object-lessons, though also to a considerable extent to that of English, of history, and of composition. A high degree of earnestness and care is quite compatible with mechanical methods, and may even make men overlook their failure to cultivate in a progressive and intelligent manner the pupil's powers of observation, of reasoning, and of expression. Great pains, for example, is taken to train children to read with ease and expression. To this end a good many teachers never allow their pupils to attempt a passage until it has been read to them in a model style by the teacher. Such treatment of new reading lessons is most mechanical, and calculated to stifle every gleam of originality. A limited number of lessons can no doubt be got up in this way; but how is the pupil to learn to grasp for himself the writer's meaning and mood, and render them with expression inspired by his own feelings? Except in the most elementary classes, it were surely much better to encourage the pupils to prepare and study their reading lessons, care being taken to test the preparation, and then, and not till then, to get them to try the passages without help, which should, however, be given when required, and not when it would arrest every attempt at original interpretation. It is in the grammar of Standards III. to VI. that there is the greatest danger of mechanical routine supplanting intelligent study. To make this work educative it is indispensable that the significance of technical terms should be constantly brought out, and that the uses of words in a sentence and their connection with one another in the thought of the writer should be clearly stated. To say, as is done commonly enough, that the word "for" shows relation, without specifying the objects between which the relation exists, or that "cow" is the name of a thing, without any attempt to specify the kind of thing named by the word—all this is mere dead routine, and of scarcely any educative value. We need not multiply examples of this grievous fault. It is the chief danger that teachers have to guard against, and it is the besetting sin of many an earnest man. Unintelligent methods involve a double failure—they fail to educate and train the mind and its powers, and they fail to achieve good results, as they are called. The better the teacher the more watchfully does he consider whether his methods are in the highest degree intelligent and educative. To attain the best examination results is never his chief aim—it is rather to attain these by the means that yield his pupils the best kind of mental discipline. He who carries on his work in this spirit rarely fails

to get the best results, and, besides this, he succeeds in giving his pupils a fitting training for the coming duties and responsibilities of adult life. To the community the faithful labours of such a man are beyond price.

The only subjects to which we need refer in any detail are object-lessons, science, and singing. We do not see many object-lessons taught, but we examine on a great number every year, the teachers very often helping us to form a better judgment of the work by examining their own pupils on one or two of the lessons. From the evidence before us it is plain that object-lessons are little liked either by teachers or by pupils, and that the treatment of the subjects does comparatively little to train the pupils to observe and describe what is placed before them, and to reason in a simple way about the facts. The lack of interest in these lessons is very largely due to too learned treatment. Teachers, indeed, cannot know too much about the subject of the lessons, but they may very easily attempt to teach more than their pupils can understand or take any interest in. The treatment, both as regards extent and arrangement of matter, must be adapted to the knowledge and circumstances of the class, and the selection of topics should be determined more by the range of the pupils' experience than by the knowledge and tastes of the teacher. This is a condition that might well be more generally observed. Teachers would succeed in giving better lessons and interesting their pupils more if they would trust more to their own knowledge and judgment, and less to the crutches of the text books. Object-lessons handled in a simple and sensible way should and would be the most delightful part of the school work. They would give firmness and precision to a large mass of loose and undigested knowledge which the children already possess, and lead them to compare, distinguish, and describe what their attention is directed to in a way that would greatly further true education. Excess of detail, especially in dealing with manufacturing processes, is one of the chief things that make object-lessons so repulsive to scholars and teachers, and the current text books are generally deeply tainted with this fault. Take the subject "Tea" for example. Who can care anything about the exact number of gatherings of the leaves or about the months in which they are made? Why describe every step in the process of drying as minutely as if tomorrow we were going to put it all into practice? To Chinese boys these details may be important, but to English boys they are not. In like manner, in dealing with such technical processes as the manufacture of paper or leather the lessons are usually loaded with a mass of details that are devoid of interest and are of quite subordinate importance. The aim of such lessons is, we take it, to give an accurate but general idea of the important steps in the manufacture, and not to give such a technical lesson as would suit a tanner's or a paper-maker's apprentice. It seems to be chiefly owing to the circumstances here indicated that teachers regard object-lessons with apparent dislike, while pupils regard them with indifference.

The present regulations relating to instruction in science, which have been in force for a number of years, provide for the division of the whole programme into a three years' course of lessons. Under this arrangement one-third of the course is covered every year, and the whole of it in three years. In a large number of schools these provisions have been more or less ignored, and in only a few has a definite programme, divided into three courses, been drawn up and observed. It is unfortunate that the course is not more definitely mapped out in the regulations, and it is highly desirable that a detailed scheme of lessons covering the whole of the prescribed programme should be made out. This subject might very well engage the attention of the frequent conferences of teachers, though we are not aware that it has ever done so. We hope, however, that the matter will be taken up, and that teachers generally will soon have at their disposal a suitable arrangement of the whole subject in a three years' course of lessons. The possession of a good detailed scheme of science lessons would be of very great value for avoiding repetition and discontinuity in the lessons of the numerous schools in which changes of teachers take place in the course of the year. In many rural schools the principles of agriculture are substituted for the general programme of science lessons. No attempt is made to teach "Agricultural Chemistry" (as the subject is named in the syllabus) in any special sense, for even the most elementary instruction in chemistry cannot be given in such schools. On the whole, the teaching of science is not successful. It is very often regarded as an outside subject—an intruder into the domain of the school course, and, in fact, except in a few cases, receives but a small share of earnest attention. One short lesson a week is the time usually devoted to it. In these circumstances valuable results are not to be expected. Greater thoroughness in the teaching, so far as it goes, is much needed, for inaccurate science is worthless. We doubt if half the children taught about these objects know the difference between a thermometer and a barometer, or can tell distinctly the use of either. In saying this we have in view not only the answering to our own questions on the subject, but also that to those of the teachers themselves, who usually conduct half or more of the examination in this subject. To make the science-teaching effective more time must be allowed for it; but even with the present allowance of time an earnest application of adequate knowledge should lead to more satisfactory issues. Our syllabus is so heavy that teachers may well be excused for giving but a short time to this subject; but for the worthlessness of much of the current teaching we do not think any excuse possible.

Singing is taught in most schools—in a few with great fervour and success, and fairly in a large number. Ability to read easy music at sight, either in the tonic sol-fa or in the common notation, is, however, but rarely acquired, and, indeed, the course of training seems seldom directed to gain this end. To get adequate practice and readiness in reading at sight pupils need to have in their hands some song books such as those mentioned in a circular issued a year or two ago by the Board. Most of these books are very cheap, and if the pupils cannot buy them the teachers could do so out of the pen-money. In a number of schools in which singing is taught with fair success the practice of it is confined to special lessons. This arrangement ignores one of the chief uses of singing—to make a pleasant and cheerful break in the ordinary routine, and act as a tonic to the feelings and the will. In a few schools it is not taught at all.

During the year we have had reason to suspect that teachers sometimes use influence with the parents of backward children to keep them away from school on the day of examination. In more than one case it has been proved that this has been done, and there is grave reason for believing that it has happened to a small extent in a good many more. At the same time the evil cannot be common, for of the 14,173 pupils entered for examination in the standards only 325 were absent. If pupils are withheld in this way the parents are quite as much to blame as the teachers, and they should share with the latter the reprobation with which such conduct is visited. It would be well if head teachers would procure from the parents and submit to the Inspector a signed statement acknowledging, and perhaps also accounting for, the absence of their children. This simple expedient would clear them from all suspicion of complicity in fraud, by throwing the responsibility on the parents. There has also been some trouble about promoting pupils who have failed to pass at the standard examination. We notice with regret that it is becoming more common for teachers to keep back all who have not passed their standard. The motive for this is doubtless to evade the responsibility of deciding which of those who fail should be promoted and which should be kept back. This responsibility should certainly be undertaken by the teachers, for they must know much more about the attainments of their pupils than an Inspector can, and they should be prepared to act on their superior knowledge. Every one knows that a good pupil sometimes fails to pass, while an indifferent one manages to pull through; and, this being unavoidable with a single test, the result of that one test should not override the judgment of the teacher, founded on his more ample knowledge of the pupils' attainments.

There has been considerable improvement of late years in the instruction of pupil-teachers, and the results of the last examination were in many respects highly satisfactory. We are glad to find that very few are now dismissed for want of progress in their studies. The order, behaviour, and manners of the pupils attending the schools continue to be as satisfactory as heretofore. We have much pleasure in bearing testimony to the great earnestness and attention with which the teachers as a body discharge their responsible and weighty duties. Many of those who fail to give the satisfaction we could desire cannot trace their failure to indolence or want of zeal, and with growing skill they may hope to see their efforts ultimately rewarded by substantial success.

We have, &c.,

D. PETRIE, }
W. TAYLOR, } Inspectors.
P. GOYEN, }

The Secretary, Otago Education Board.

SOUTHLAND.

SIR,—

Education Office, Invercargill, 20th March, 1890.

We have the honour to submit our report for the year 1889.

During the year we examined, either singly or conjointly, one hundred and two schools. Sixty schools were also inspected by us. Nearly six weeks were occupied in preparing papers for the pupil-teacher and scholarship examinations, and thereafter assessing the same. A considerable proportion of time was spent in the preparation of test-cards and in the compilation of various official reports. The following schools—viz., Oteramika Gorge, Glenorchy, Waikawa, Greenhills, and Springhills—were opened during the year, and were not examined. Mataura and Mabel were twice examined, so as to make their time of examination agree with that of other groups with which they would naturally be taken. Hedgehope was closed at the date on which it should have been examined, and had to be held over accordingly. The following is a summary of results for the whole district:—

Standard Classes.	Presented.	Absent.	Excepted.	Failed.	Passed.	Average Age of those that passed.	
						Yrs.	Mos.
Above Standard VI. ...	39	...	...	...	...	...	...
Standard VI. ...	190	8	9	30	143	14	6
" V. ...	484	12	34	175	263	13	8
" IV. ...	779	20	36	163	560	12	8
" III. ...	1,311	56	89	302	864	11	7
" II. ...	1,185	37	57	51	1,040	10	6
" I. ...	1,113	29	24	52	1,008	9	4
Preparatory ...	3,062	...	...	...	...	...	...
Totals ...	8,163	162	249	773	3,878	*	*

* Mean of average age, 12 years.

As compared with last year, the total number presented has increased from 7,587 to 8,163, and the number presented in standards from 4,462 to 5,062. The percentage of failures has fallen from 18 to 17, and the percentage of absentees in standard classes from 4 to 3. A substantial increase in the number of pupils presented for examination in the higher standards has again to be noted.

The impression derived from a general survey of the year's work is that the state of education in the district is, on the whole, satisfactory. Indeed, considering the weight of the syllabus and the adverse circumstances to which many teachers are exposed, the amount and quality of work done are in some instances little less than marvellous. Such success implies enthusiasm in teachers and scholars alike, and in a number of schools it is gratifying to find, on the part of both, abundant

evidence of this feeling. As a class the teachers are conscientious and hardworking. In the notes below, which apply chiefly to the less efficiently conducted schools, special topics are dealt with and the more prominent faulty methods summarised.

METHODS.—The chief shortcomings here are due to insufficient preparation for lessons on the part of teachers. Some trust to the happy inspiration of the moment, and some few quietly ignore the fact that their peculiar function is to teach, not to hear lessons. Without forethought and travail of spirit no lesson can be intelligently given.

DISCIPLINE AND MANNERS.—In nearly all schools discipline is good. One would like to see the children of some schools more frank and polite. Lack of these qualities is doubtless in a great measure due to natural shyness. This might be to some extent overcome by the teacher's precept and example. Specific attention should be called to the somewhat prevalent habit of coming late to school. One now and again sees late-comers take their places in class without rebuke, as if it were quite as seemly to be late as to be in time. This habit is against the best interests at once of children and of school.

TIME TABLES.—In most schools carefully-prepared time tables are displayed. In some, however, a mere scrap of paper, only partly indicating the subjects of instruction for the day, is accounted sufficient. Little wonder in such cases that the teacher gets befogged as to the sequence of lessons.

BUILDINGS, FURNITURE, AND APPARATUS.—During the year no case of gross neglect was observed. On the contrary, many teachers, and also scholars, take an active interest in conserving and improving the Board's property.

READING AND RECITATION.—Want of expression is sometimes very noticeable in the upper classes. The main factor in teaching this art—viz., enabling the pupils to mentally grasp the images symbolised by words, which images would react on the feelings—is generally overlooked. The intelligent handling of phrases is another factor that is often neglected in teaching reading. It might here be pointed out that by enabling pupils to appreciate the function of phrases the teacher has ready to hand a lever of vast power for teaching not merely reading, but also grammar, analysis, and composition.

SPELLING.—The onus of preparation is often thrown entirely on the children. Were preparation in every instance clinched by a thorough test, no serious exception could be taken. In the bustle of work teachers are oftentimes apt to overlook the innumerable little devices for fixing the form of words in the juvenile memory. If such devices were more generally employed, much time would in the long run be saved.

WRITING.—This subject would be more successfully treated were children taught in an interesting manner the elements of letters. Thus the writing and the drawing lessons would shade into each other. This method should be adopted in imparting to children their first lesson, and all future progress should be guided by the same principle. Mere tithes of pencils are sometimes used, with baneful results, in infant classes.

GRAMMAR.—In the two upper standards parsing is often very incomplete. It is apparently assumed that when a word is denoted a preposition or a conjunction it is straightway parsed. An impoverished account of the verb, too, is frequently offered. Grammar being for the child an analytic exercise, its worth is reckoned by the fullness and exactness with which the analysis is made.

COMPOSITION.—This is one of the few constructive school exercises, and form is not its least important character; but one sometimes sees a succession of words, intended no doubt for statements, without form, and void. Capitals are abused, common words are misspelt, and to the various sentences there is neither beginning nor end.

GEOGRAPHY.—Topography is well known in most schools. More might be done in making this subject a vehicle for interesting children in the varied aspects of society, and in the natural phenomena by which they are encompassed.

ARITHMETIC.—One notices with pleasure that most teachers strive to teach this subject in an intelligent manner, thus rendering it of true educational value. But to this statement there is also an obverse. Mechanical accuracy alone is sometimes accepted as full proof of knowledge, and pupils miss the opportunity of having their incipient faculty for logic brightened and stimulated at the blackboard.

DRAWING.—This subject has been satisfactorily treated in the three first standards in almost all schools. In some the syllabus requirements *re* drawing for the higher standards have not been complied with—owing, no doubt, to the inability of teachers to do so. The more easy programme recognised by the department will afford considerable relief to schools of all grades.

HISTORY.—This is one of our least-successfully taught subjects. No doubt in many schools time is too scant to treat it with any degree of fullness. Improved methods of instruction would in great measure surmount the difficulty. Children cannot be blamed if they turn away in despair from the study of a skeleton with dislocated bones. On the other hand, a living organism does not fail to interest them. It is in the teacher's power to choose under which guise he will present history to his pupils.

SCIENCE AND OBJECT LESSONS.—These subjects are taught with more or less success in all schools. The chief obstacle to effective work is dearth of apparatus. It is painful to see object-lessons given where the object, or even a picture of it, exists in the mind of the instructor alone. A still more unfortunate feature is the attempt to give such lessons without putting any summary on the blackboard.

DRILL.—In several schools the boys are very successfully drilled. The new regulations of the Board on this subject will awaken fresh interest in the minds of teachers regarding its importance. For fitting boys to succeed in the struggle for existence few subjects are more effective.

SINGING.—In very few schools has this subject been taught with pre-eminent success. In others it is either not taught at all, or taught in such a way as to be of little educational or emotional value. In this particular subject our children are far behind their fellows in the Old Country.

These and many other points have been talked over in detail with individual teachers. After inspection a memorandum is invariably sent to the teacher calling attention to weak points and suggesting improvements. Such suggestions have always been courteously received. How far they have proved beneficial time alone will show.

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 time-exercises. 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. Object-lessons 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.

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

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