

I am much pleased with the year's work in physical geography, the prescribed programme being generally well and intelligently taught. Historical Readers are in more general use. Where any difficulty exists in getting the children supplied with these Readers, I hope the School Committees will purchase sets for the use of the school. One set will last for years, and it is by far the best means of providing classes with complete sets of uniform books in good condition. Improved recitation is also a feature of the year's work. The late Matthew Arnold said, "The art of reciting a piece of poetry well is an education in itself," and I am pleased to find it is more or less being made an art. In the city schools, Tonic Sol Fa singing is more generally taught by each class-teacher, and a decided improvement is the result. Many of these teachers have attended classes taught by Mr. R. Parker, and it is already recommended in the Pupil-teacher Examination Report that such instruction classes in singing be open to all teachers at a nominal fee. The report on the needlework of the city schools, sent to me by a competent lady examiner, states that the work is more varied, better presented, and generally of improved quality. The head-teachers are advised that new plans are suggested. The making of small garments, with specimens of more varied work, with improved darning, is recommended. In many country schools the sewing is very well done. A new pole-drill for girls has been introduced with great success by M. de Mey, who continues to prove himself a valuable officer. Generally speaking, the classes showed considerable intelligence in answering questions on the subject-matter of their reading-books.

The infant departments of schools have been carefully examined, and the work in reading is much improved, especially in the city infant schools. With the exception of the Mount Cook Infant School, these departments are deficient in kindergarten occupations. Material for modelling in clay and at least three other occupations is now supplied to all these departments, and more satisfactory work will be looked for.

In my last report I expressed the opinion that school life was not bright enough, and that there was danger of children being overbored by the wearisome dulness of much of their daily occupation: *Durum et durum non faciunt murum*. A few months ago I asked the head-teachers to meet the Inspectors, and talk over with them how means could be devised whereby school work could be made more interesting, attractive, and palatable to the taught, and, if possible, at the same time, more intellectual and less wearisome to both teachers and taught. We discussed recommendations which I had drafted, and we decided on the adoption of a programme, which was submitted to the Board, who warmly approved of the plan, and voted a liberal sum of money to furnish the schools with the necessary apparatus and material. The following is the plan of work proposed for next year: That more time be given to the teaching of elementary science experimentally; that, in the lower classes, "observation lessons" should be taught by actual experiment and illustration; that "readings" of Longman's Fairy Tale Books and other books of interest and amusement to young folks, and of stirring passages from history to upper classes, be made twice a week by the class teacher; that modelling in clay and at least three other kindergarten occupations be introduced into all infant departments; that home lessons be made light and easy; and that drawing lessons should include the application of drawing to the making of cardboard models and designs. On the other hand, it was allowed that requirements in history and political geography should be definite and moderate, and that the arithmetic of one or two standards should be a little easier. We are now about to furnish schools with the means of carrying out these resolutions, which I am sure will meet with a general approval, and which, I doubt not, will in time lead to a more wholesome, a more intellectual, and a lighter-hearted school-life.

I have, &c.,

ROBERT LEE.

The Chairman, Board of Education, Wellington.

SUMMARY OF RESULTS FOR THE WHOLE DISTRICT.

Classes.	Presented.	Absent.	Excepted.	Failed.	Passed.	Average Age of those that passed.	
						Yrs.	m.
Above Standard VI. ...	127	...	...	...	...	...	...
Standard VI. ...	561	13	26	75	447	13	9
" V. ...	840	24	46	43	727	12	9
" IV. ...	1,141	37	47	60	997	11	11
" III. ...	1,771	56	107	152	1,456	10	11
" II. ...	1,644	53	100	114	1,377	9	7
" I. ...	1,403	33	24	16	1,330	8	6
Preparatory ...	3,207	...	...	...	...	...	...
Totals ...	10,694	216	350	460	6,334	*	

* Mean of average age, 11 years 2 months.

HAWKE'S BAY.

SIR,—

Education Office, Napier, 1st January, 1891.

I have the honour to submit for the information of the Board my annual summary report on the progress of education in this district for the year ending the 31st December, 1890.

Forty-seven schools were in operation at the close of the year. These contained forty-nine departments with accommodation sufficient for 5,478 pupils, supposing that the school places were