

The defects revealed by examination have been principally in spelling, writing, drawing, and composition.

Bad spelling has been very noticeable, not only in set tests, but in the composition exercises and other written work. The errors are not confined to difficult words; easy and common words are frequently mis-spelled, and geographical names, such as "Pyrenees" or "Waikato," suffer severely. We attribute this principally to the carelessness shown by many teachers in examining the written work of the children, and also to the practice of confining transcriptions to columns of words.

Writing, though legible, is often crude and ill-formed. The work in exercise-books is often much inferior to that in the copy-books, and even in the copy-books many children have been allowed to write in a style quite different from that of the head-line. Some latitude in the selection of copy-books has been given to the teachers this year; it is, however, necessary to remind teachers that a close imitation of the copy is an essential in producing good writing, and that much of the time spent over the copy-books will be thrown away if careless work in the exercise-books is allowed.

Good work has been done in geometrical drawing and also in scale drawing, but freehand drawing has somewhat fallen off, and the model drawing in a great many of the schools is not worthy of the name. The neglect of this last named branch of the subject is, we believe, due to the fact that but few teachers have a competent knowledge of the principles underlying it.

Composition is sadly wanting in vitality. Really good teaching in this subject is rare. The teachers in many schools are satisfied with setting the children some subject to write about and then criticizing their efforts. Good composition cannot be expected to result from such a plan. What is wanted is systematic direct teaching from the beginning.

It is a rare thing in this district for a child to fail in reading. Still, very good reading is not common. In accordance with instructions last year, the Inspectors tested the classes below Standard V. in two reading-books. As these classes were supplied with two books in only a very few schools, the additional test applied was in nearly every case an unseen passage. The results generally varied from fair in Standard I. to satisfactory in Standard IV. Mere examination in an unseen book will not, however, of itself improve the reading. Practice in a wider range of reading matter is what is required. We think that every class, from Standard I. to Standard VI., should read in at least two books during the year. A love of reading should be encouraged by every means available, and the occasional use in the school of an interesting book from the school library might help in this direction.

We are glad to be able to again report favourably on the general order, discipline, and tone of the schools, and on the manners and behaviour of the children. The cleanliness of the rooms has been usually well attended to. Many teachers have made successful efforts to render their school-rooms bright and cheerful, though in too many places the walls are disfigured with time-stained remnants of notices, circulars, and the like. The practice of fastening such papers to the walls by means of paste or gum is very undesirable. The papers thus fastened are not easily detached, and they or their fragments are frequently left to disfigure the walls and absorb dust and damp long after their usefulness has passed away. Another objectionable practice in favour with some teachers is to cover the walls with chalk inscriptions of arithmetical tables—formulae, and similar matter. This practice serves no useful purpose, and does not improve the appearance of the room. Improvement has been made in keeping the registers; though it is surprising to note that neglect is still sometimes found in a matter about which no one can plead ignorance or want of skill.

In addition to our ordinary work, we visited for the Education Department thirty-six Native schools. That we were able to do this as well as to attend to our ever-increasing number of Board schools is due to the help rendered by Mr. James Grierson, whom the Board appointed temporary Assistant Inspector in the middle of the year. It gives us very great pleasure to bear testimony to the valuable assistance rendered by Mr. Grierson.

We have, &c.,

JOHN S. GOODWIN,	} Inspectors.
WALTER HENRY AIREY, B.A.,	
JAS. C. DICKINSON,	
RICHARD CROWE,	

The Chairman, Education Board, Auckland.

TARANAKI.

SIR,—

Education Office, New Plymouth, 5th March, 1894.

I have the honour to submit my report on the schools of the district for the year ending the 30th December, 1893.

During the year forty-nine schools were in operation. Visits of inspection were made to all the schools with the exception of the aided school at Pungarehu and the Eltham Road School, both of which were closed when I was inspecting in their neighbourhood. The severe weather was a great hindrance to me in carrying out the work of inspection. Several visits to bush schools were necessarily short, as the greater portion of the day was spent in travelling over roads that were not unfrequently dangerous. Forty-two schools were examined. Pungarehu also was examined, but the results were of such an unsatisfactory character that the Board took immediate action to have the school placed under efficient instruction. In accordance with the expressed wish of the Committee, and the changes in the teaching staff of the schools having made such a step advisable, the examinations of the schools at Waiongona, Waipuku, and Tariki Road were postponed, and will be held during the month of April or May of the present year. About the same time it is my intention to examine the recently-opened schools at Toko, Dudley Road, and Pembroke Road.