

repeating what he had to say three or four times. The plan would be no more absurd than it is for a teacher to repeat three or four words as many times to children in Standards IV., V., VI., and such a plan can only lead to carelessness and inattention. The objects of dictation should be, in the higher classes, to test attention, to train the memory, and to produce the best results with the least effort on the part of the teacher. Reading is improving, and in the majority of schools the children acquit themselves fairly well in this important subject. Geography continues to be well taught in most schools, and the adoption of geographical readers is creating increased interest in the subject. The mapping is usually well done. Composition, when taught systematically, is a subject in which the pupils usually acquit themselves with credit. Letter-writing should receive more attention, and in Standards V. and VI. this form of composition should not be neglected. The preparation of special work, as recommended in my annual circular to the teachers, is helping forward this subject, but I notice signs of weakness in letter-writing. Few children begin and end their letters in a proper manner. For example, some of the elder pupils, when writing me a letter on some subject, have commenced, "My dearest Mr. Hill," and have ended, "Your affectionate pupil"; but, although very right and proper under certain circumstances, they can hardly be accepted in an ordinary composition test. On the whole, drawing continues to make satisfactory progress. The recent modification of the drawing syllabus in favour of girls is a concession in the right direction, but the demands for boys in Standards V. and VI. are too difficult for the average pupils in country schools, and I have been compelled to accept a lower standard in certain cases. The writing does not yet satisfy me in a number of schools. The supervision when the subject is being taken is defective. I have more than once called attention to this matter, and next year failure will follow where there is evidence of careless teaching and supervision. The remaining subjects of the syllabus are known as class and additional subjects. They include history, grammar, geography, science, repetition, singing, drill, and needlework. The marks in the summary of results which is appended to this report show the relative efficiency of each school in them. Grammar has fallen off somewhat during the year, except in a few schools like Napier, Gisborne, Port Ahuriri, and Woodville, where a special piece like the "Prisoner of Chillon" was prepared. History is intelligently taught, and historical readers are coming into general use. Without exception, all the schools take repetition as an optional subject, and very fair marks were gained in what is one of the most valuable studies pursued by the children. Drill and calisthenics are neglected in too many schools, and it would be well were a regulation made by the Board requiring all children to receive instruction in these subjects. Object-lessons are usually well taught, but science is not a popular subject among the teachers, and this state of things must continue unless the Board render some practical help to the schools by providing suitable apparatus and diagrams. In a special report submitted by me to the Board in April last I pointed out that forty-two schools had no apparatus or appliances for demonstration or instruction in science, and I made recommendations which, had they been carried out, would have resulted in great benefit to the schools. The sewing results show commendable improvement. Thirteen schools gained the mark "excellent," and nineteen others made marks varying between "good" and "excellent." In other words, thirty-two schools are marked "efficient" in this important subject. The examiners commend the darning, in which instruction is being given in an increasing number of schools, and the netting and lace stitches of the Gisborne Girls is of excellent quality. With a view to further encourage sewing in the schools, I would suggest that a badge be offered for competition among the schools, the same to be held by the school gaining the largest proportion of "full marks" in the sewing examination. The issue of special badges would do much to foster the spirit of emulation among the children of the different schools; and they might be given for drill and calisthenics, singing, and even writing.

The Gisborne District High School continues to maintain its high standard of efficiency, although the work was thrown back in the latter part of the year by an outbreak of diphtheria. Half of those belonging to the upper school entered for the matriculation examination, but the results are not yet known. The remaining pupils were examined by me in Euclid, algebra, science, Latin, French, English, and arithmetic, and the results were very satisfactory.

Touching the discipline and moral tone of the schools, I have nothing but good to state. The aim of most teachers in the service of the Board is to do their best for the children intrusted to their care; and, as a rule, their duties are carried out faithfully and well. In tone and behaviour, the schools give good promise for the future, and if it be true, as the late Lord Beaconsfield once remarked, that the most precious treasure of England "is to be found not in its ships, factories, and well-cultivated farms, but in the *character* of its people," then we may be sure there is a rich future for the country. Character is not formed by the children merely passing the standards, for the schools are doing much more than this. To instil moral truths, and to lead to their practice by the observance of deeds of kindness, sympathy, and high regard for duty, is the kind of work that is being done. Character is being created in this way, and there is no form of teaching and training in the schools that gives promise of better results.

The tabulations appended hereto contain a summary of the results for each school examined, of its general condition under the heading "Manners and Tone," and of the marks gained in class and additional subjects. [Not printed.]

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H. HILL, B.A., F.G.S., Inspector.

The Chairman, Board of Education, Napier.