

History.—For the same reason the acquiring of some knowledge of what may be termed the dry bones of history may be defended. The more prominent facts and dates, once thoroughly mastered, will serve as pegs on which an ampler clothing may be hung by those whose taste leads them in that direction. It is certain that the results of the oral examinations in history show that the majority of our children have been well grounded in the modest array of facts insisted on.

Drawing.—The omission of geometrical drawing from the course required from girls will doubtless prove an appreciable boon to one-half of our children. It only remains to relieve the boys from the grievous burden imposed upon them, especially in the Fourth Standard. There is every reason to be satisfied with the honest attempts made by the teachers to comply with the excessive demands of the syllabus, which has evidently been inspired by specialists, and is the laughing-stock of all those who have any sense of proportion.

Vocal Music, which at one time promised to become general, has gradually receded into the background, and finds a place in few but our larger schools, and by no means invariably even in those.

We have, &c.,

W. C. HODGSON.

G. A. HARKNESS, M.A.

The Chairman, Education Board, Nelson.

SUMMARY OF RESULTS FOR THE WHOLE DISTRICT.

Classes.	Presented.	Absent.	Excepted.	Failed.	Passed.	Average Age of those that passed.
						Yrs. mos.
Above Standard VI. ...	165	...	...	...	...	...
Standard VI. ...	413	25	16	109	263	13 11
" V. ...	637	22	43	191	381	13 0
" IV. ...	689	31	33	117	508	12 0
" III. ...	687	24	50	158	455	10 10
" II. ...	761	28	18	66	649	9 10
" I. ...	768	21	30	83	634	8 9
Preparatory ...	1,732	...	...	...	...	...
Totals ...	5,852	151	190	724	2,890	11 5*

* Mean of average age.

WESTLAND.

SIR,—

Hokitika, 9th March, 1894.

I have the honour to present the Inspector's annual report for the year 1893.

When, on the 1st July, my term of office began, the inspection of schools had already been concluded. Consequently the scope of this report is limited, as, in the absence of inspection visits, it is impossible to more than imperfectly estimate the value of the methods adopted by the teachers, or of many general features of school-work. As separate reports have been presented on the examination of the pupil-teachers, the scholarship candidates, and the secondary class at the Hokitika District High School, the attention of the Board is here directed only to the ordinary primary work of the schools.

During the latter half of the year all the schools in the district were examined. To each examination report was attached a brief and general estimate of the value of the results. This is intended to weaken the effect of the percentage of failures as an appraisal of the teachers' work, which may be of good quality in schools showing, for various reasons, a comparatively high percentage of failures. It is very important that Committees and teachers should not be satisfied with the mere passing of a certain number of pupils. In addition to the general estimate addressed to the Committee, a memorandum to the teacher served to point out in detail any matters requiring attention.

The teachers of the district, as a body, are zealous, painstaking, anxious to overtake the work of the syllabus, and very ready to adapt their methods in accordance with suggestions made. It is therefore in expectation of benefit to the schools that certain weaknesses are pointed out. With a few exceptions, the work of the larger schools, and of the upper standards in all schools, reached a satisfactory state of efficiency. The weakest of the pass-subjects were reading and writing. In each, only two or three schools showed work of really good quality. Arithmetic, composition, and drawing were in a majority of schools successfully taught.

The syllabus of work presented by pupils in Class S7 was that of Standard VI., greater thoroughness being aimed at. At present I recommend this as the wiser course. It is in the infant and lower-standard classes that the greatest weakness in method, and consequently in thoroughness, is shown. With few exceptions, reading and writing especially are not taught systematically, so as to secure necessary gradation in the progress of the work. Teachers in charge of infant classes should present at the annual examination a definite syllabus of work, bearing internal evidence that difficulties have been overcome in proper order. There was frequent absence in these classes of attention to useful tables, and to the mental exercises in numbers, intended to form a basis on which to build up the arithmetic of the higher classes.

I have taken every opportunity to urge the teachers to direct their efforts only to what can be efficiently taught, to keep to the most important principles and information of each subject, and to go into details only as far as the circumstances of school or class will permit.