

There are proposals for two new standards—a standard below the present First Standard (Mr. Murray—par. 1) and a standard above the present Sixth Standard (Mr. Lee—par. 1).

Among the proposals for changes in the matter of the syllabus, the most sweeping is that of Dr. Anderson (par. 3)—“Modifications in the syllabus as regards matter or graduation.” Mr. Braik (par. 8) proposes that the requirements be largely curtailed. Mr. Dickinson (par. 1) and Mr. Hill (par. 1 *a* and *b*) propose to reduce the number of subjects for small schools, and Mr. Braik (par. 3) to accept weaker passes in schools with an unaided teacher. Mr. Petrie (par. 9) and Mr. Taylor (par. 3) propose to reduce the number of “additional” subjects of examination. Mr. Morton and Mr. Petrie (par. 11) propose a modification of the drawing syllabus. Mr. Petrie (pars. 8, 12, 13, 14) also proposes a lightening of the arithmetic, and changes in grammar and geography, and would make history a subject for reading only and not for examination. Mr. Murray (pars. 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9) suggests some details for consideration. Mr. Braik (par. 9) suggests ambulance-work and swimming as subjects for boys, and cooking and sanitation for girls; and Mr. Hill (par. 1 *e, f*) proposes for boys instruction in the use of tools, and for girls instruction in cookery and in the use of the sewing-machine. Mr. Hill (par. 5*c*) proposes that in country schools a knowledge of noxious weeds and insect-pests take the place of what is now called elementary science. Dr. Anderson (par. 8) raises the question, “How far technical instruction can or should be given in primary schools.” Mr. Braik (par. 6) desires that a certain number of object-lessons be given in the fields.

With respect to the teaching of history, recommendations are made by Dr. Anderson (par. 6), Mr. Wood (par. 2 *b* and *c*), Mr. Petrie (par. 8), and Mr. Taylor (par. 4).

Dr. Anderson (par. 9) and Mr. Hill (par. 1*c*) raise the question of making a distinction between the work prescribed for boys and that prescribed for girls.

As to the conduct of the school examinations, Mr. Lee (par. 2) proposes to leave the classification of Standards I., II., III., and V. in the hands of head teachers; Dr. Anderson (par. 5) raises a question with respect to unseen tests for reading; and Mr. Murray (par. 8) proposes that, in drawing and writing, the work to be tested be always done in the presence of the Inspector.

Mr. Lee (par. 3) proposes that failure be not recorded in the case of any pupil who has made less than 250 attendances in the school year. He also proposes (par. 4) that the quantity now officially known as the “percentage of passes” be in future ignored.

The question of presenting a pupil for a standard in which he has already passed is submitted for discussion by Dr. Anderson (par. 2*f*) and Mr. Hill (3*c*).

Mr. Hill (par. 2 *a-e*) has some questions of a general character on the conduct of examinations, and (par. 5 *a, b*) on school organization.

With respect to books and school material, several questions are submitted for consideration. Dr. Anderson (par. 4) proposes the questions—(*a*) How far uniformity of school-books is desirable and possible; (*b*) which of the existing series of Readers are best. Dr. Anderson (pars. 5, 6*c*) also advocates a wider course of reading in the schools, and in this he is supported by Mr. Wood (par. 2*b*) and by Mr. Petrie (pars. 7, 8). Mr. Petrie (par. 15) and Mr. Taylor (par. 5) advocate the use of text-books in elementary science. Mr. Hill (par. 1*d*) asks, Is it advisable to have a set of text-books specially prepared for the standards? Dr. Anderson (par. 6*e*) asks for a text-book of history and social economy specially adapted to the course of study he proposes for New Zealand schools. Mr. Braik (par. 4) suggests that each Inspector prepare a text-book treating of the geography of his district in the widest sense, and that a like text-book of the geography of the colony on broader lines be compiled.

Mr. Lee (par. 7) and Mr. Hill (par. 5*d*) recommend that maps, diagrams, and pictures be prepared illustrative of New Zealand as a whole, and of its several parts, and of its fauna and flora, its industries, &c.

Mr. Braik (par. 7) proposes that the Government supply funds for apparatus for the thorough development of the senses in infant classes.

The remaining suggestions and questions have a less direct bearing on the course of instruction and the mode of inspection. They relate to—

Teachers' certificates (Mr. Lee—par. 5; Dr. Anderson—par. 2*j*; Mr. Petrie—par. 16).

Pupil-teachers' examination (Mr. Lee—par. 6; Mr. Braik—par. 2; Mr. Hill—par. 5*f*).

Evening schools (Mr. Hill—par. 5*e*).

Scholarships and high schools (Mr. Hill—par. 4).

Cultivation of pedagogical science (Mr. Braik—par. 5).

The relations sustained by Inspectors to the Secretaries of the Education Boards and to the department (Mr. Hill—par. 3*b*).

Adoption of a decimal system of weights and measures (Dr. Anderson—par. 7).

As to the conduct of the business of the Conference, it will probably be found convenient to discuss some subjects in committee of the whole. I recommend, therefore, that you elect a chairman of committees. If you decide, as you probably will, to sit with open doors while you are in conference, you can arrange that the proceedings of a committee of the whole shall be private. I think you will find it advantageous to appoint a committee to consider and report upon the order in which the several subjects or groups of subjects to be discussed shall be taken, and this business committee might nominate separate committees to prepare the separate items of business. As chairman of the Conference, I can, if it is necessary, keep the minutes; but I think it will be more satisfactory if you elect a secretary to keep the minutes and to report the resolutions of the Conference to the Minister. I do not propose to vote except in any case in which a casting-vote may be required to prevent a deadlock. It is to be understood that any member of the Conference may call for a division on any question.

I wish to maintain an attitude of impartiality with respect to all debates that may arise here; but I may be allowed, before any discussion arises, to make a few remarks on some of the more