1896.

NEW ZEALAND.

EDUCATION:

REPORTS OF INSPECTORS OF SCHOOLS.

[In continuation of E.-1B, 1895.]

Presented to both Houses of the General Assembly by Command of His Excellency.

AUCKLAND.

SIR,— Education Office, Auckland, 6th March, 1896.

I have the honour to submit the usual report for the year 1895.

At the close of the year there were in operation 332 schools, or six more than at the end of last year. Of these 327 were examined. Those not examined were the following: Mokau, Pukekawa, Upper Waihou, Otumoetai, and Whangaripo. Of these, all but Mokau were opened towards the close of the year, and, except in the case of Pukekawa, after the inspection and examination of the neighbouring schools were completed. Pukekawa was inspected instead of being examined, because none of the pupils were ready for examination in the standards.

Three hundred and twenty schools were inspected in the course of the year. Of the remainder, four were visited in due course and found closed; three were temporarily closed when the neighbouring schools were inspected; four were opened for the first time after the inspection was completed; and one (Mokau*) was not visited for inspection.

The following table shows in summary the examination results for the year:—

Classes.	Presented.	Present.	Passed.	Average Age of those that passed.
				Yrs. mos.
Above Standard VI.	221	...	...	...
Standard VI.	1,132	1,087	954	14 4
" V.	1,986	1,881	1,464	13 5
" IV.	3,289	3,137	2,405	12 6
" III.	3,810	3,655	3,059	11 5
" II.	3,707	3,559	3,217	10 3
" I.	3,347	3,236	3,085	9 1
Preparatory	8,392	...	...	...
Totals	25,884	16,555	14,184	11 10†

These figures show for the year an increase of 470 in the number of pupils presented, and an increase of 1,464 in the number of pupils that passed in one or other of the standards. Last year somewhat more than 79 per cent. of the pupils examined in standards passed; this year nearly 86 per cent. have passed. The percentage of pupils that were successful in passing has thus risen more than 6 per cent. since last year, and nearly 9 per cent. in the last two years.

Head teachers have this year passed in Standards I. and II. a somewhat higher proportion than heretofore of the pupils they have examined—viz., 95 and 90 per cent., instead of 92 and 86 per cent., in Standards I. and II. respectively. In Standards III., IV., V., and VI. the percentages of passes in standards were 84, 77, 78, and 88. The comparative frequency of failures in Standards IV. and V. is mainly due to weakness in dictation, composition, and geography. On the whole, the results of the standard examinations afford evidence of considerable improvement in the teaching of the pass-subjects.

* This school, which it takes a long time to reach, has been inspected and examined since the beginning of this year (1896). † Mean of average age.

The class-subjects include grammar, history, science, and object-lessons in all classes, and geography in Standard II. The results in these are classed as "good" in 15 schools, "satisfactory" in 101, "fair" in 166, "moderate" in 42, and "inferior" in 1.

In the additional subjects the results were "very good" in 2 schools, "good" in 23, "satisfactory" in 133, "fair" in 143, and "moderate" in 24. In one school there were no standard classes, and at another, which had been open only for a few months, no attention had been paid to the class and additional subjects, and no valuation of them was made.

On the whole there has been some improvement in the class-subjects, and some falling-off in the additional subjects, as compared with last year's estimates of their efficiency.

As compared with those for last year, the ages at which the standards have been passed are somewhat lower in Standards VI., V., IV., and I.; in Standard II. the age is a month higher.

The number of pupils over eight years of age who were not presented for Standard I. was 1,960, as against 1,754 last year, when the percentage of such pupils was lower than in recent years.

A wider acquaintance with the Board's schools has satisfied me that they are in some respects more efficiently taught and better managed than I supposed when I wrote down my impressions in last year's report. It is due to the public, and above all to the teachers, that I should state this in plain terms; and it gives me pleasure to be able to qualify the somewhat unfavourable judgment for which the limited evidence then before me afforded abundant warrant. A fair number of the smallest schools—schools taught by a single teacher—are taught and managed as well as we can expect; and a large proportion of the class of schools that rank next in point of size—schools with a staff of from two to five teachers—are well managed and efficiently taught. As a class the largest schools stand somewhat below those of intermediate size, both in teaching and in management. This inferiority is mainly due to crowded rooms, to frequent changes of teachers, and to the difficulties that arise from an organization that compels two or more teachers to work together in one large room. These difficulties can be lessened only by exercising great care in choosing teachers of proved governing capacity for all classes that are taught in such unfavourable circumstances.

The weakest point in our schools is undoubtedly the management and teaching of the preparatory classes—the classes below Standard I. In these the progress in reading and arithmetic is seldom satisfactory, while the training in habits of attention and steady application leaves much to be desired. In many small schools these lower classes seem to me to be positively neglected, and it is no unusual thing to find the pupils about to be promoted into the Standard I. class quite unfit for that stage. I have had to report this over and over again in connection with the standard examinations. In many schools only a single reading-lesson a day is given to the preparatory classes. In such cases most of the morning and the whole of the afternoon are devoted to slate exercises (writing, ciphering, or drawing), except when an object-lesson comes in to relieve the monotony of the routine. The training in reading that can be given under such circumstances is most inadequate, and the progress necessarily slow. Two reading-lessons a day at least should be given to all such classes, and no time-table can be approved that does not make provision for this. Progress is retarded in other ways also, chiefly by the unwieldy size of the classes, especially in the larger schools, and the difficulty of securing really effective supervision of the pupils, seated, as most of them are, far from the teacher, and spread uniformly over a large area of the room. The advantages of concentrating the pupils of junior classes as far as practicable, and of teaching them in smaller divisions, have been pretty generally recognised, but more thorough attention to these arrangements would even further improve the teaching and the control of such classes.

The inadequate training of the primer classes in reading is, however, due in no small measure to the very limited amount of reading-matter contained in the primers and "Infant Reader" in use for some years past. The substitution of the "Queen" primers and "Infant Reader" for these meagre books will, I trust, do much to secure improvement. But more than this is needed. Before pupils are advanced into the Standard I. class they should have read the whole or the greater part of the No. 1 "Royal Reader." They will then be able to enter on the reading required for the successive standards with every prospect of doing it easily and pleasantly.

The defects in the teaching of arithmetic in the preparatory and lower-standard classes have been so serious that they cannot be cured in a year. Still, a good deal has already been done to put this part of the work on a better and sounder footing, though much remains to be accomplished. An attempt has been made in a majority of the schools to teach addition on some approved system, and in a considerable number of cases very satisfactory progress has been made. Elsewhere, partly from attempting too much in a short time, partly from the want of a clear apprehension of what to aim at, and partly from the thraldom which familiar ways of working exercise over us all, less has been done than I had expected. The mistake of attempting to teach addition and multiplication at the same time has been continued in a good many schools, to the detriment of progress. From the experience of the year I have come to the conclusion that minute and specific directions as to the treatment of arithmetic in the lowest classes would be helpful to many teachers, and I have prepared and submitted to the Board such directions on this and some other matters as seemed desirable.

The practice of massing three or four divisions of primer pupils for instruction in tables and counting is still too prevalent. It is just as necessary to teach these classes separately in tables and counting as in reading.

In most schools greater attention has been given to English, while somewhat less stress is laid on arithmetic, which still receives a liberal share of time and attention. Thanks to the praiseworthy exertions of head teachers, two reading-books are now used in all the standard classes of the great majority of the schools, and I expect that this practice will soon be universal. My colleagues all agree in thinking that reading has improved considerably since the course of lessons has been more extensive. In the upper classes of the great majority of the schools the ordinary reading-

books are read easily, distinctly, and with satisfactory expression. In the lower classes the reading is seldom so good, but there is a considerable number of schools in which good reading is met with in all the classes. It is mainly in the preparatory and lower-standard classes of the smaller schools that reading is inferior, and that the year's work is overtaken indifferently and with difficulty. These defects are to be traced to the bad start which beginners frequently make, sometimes to insufficient attention to the subject, and sometimes to unsatisfactory attention during the lessons. The defects themselves, however, are not so prevalent as I supposed when writing on this subject last year, and they have to a considerable extent been remedied in the interval. On the whole, the teaching of reading is but seldom unsatisfactory in the classes above Standard II., and in a great number of cases it is quite satisfactory and even creditable. In saying this I mean by "reading" the reading of the ordinary class-books in the hands of the pupils. This, indeed, is all that teachers can be held responsible for. If ability to read the ordinary class-books does not imply ability to read any other book of equal or even somewhat less difficulty, the directors of the educational system who fix the amount and the difficulty of the reading required at each stage must be held responsible. I greatly doubt if our pupils get as wide and thorough a training in reading, at each stage of their progress, as would qualify them to read easily other books of equal difficulty; but I cannot blame the teachers for this result. Their work is defined and limited by outside authority, and if they overtake it as defined they do all we can expect of them. A more thorough training can be secured only by a still more extensive course of reading, and with our weighty syllabus of instruction one does not see how that can be overtaken except in a few of the largest schools.

Recitation, which should display a higher degree of art in reading, is seldom as satisfactory as the ordinary reading of the classes. One cannot but doubt whether the artistic reading of the poems learned is carefully taught before pupils are set to commit them to memory.

Explanations of the language and the train of thought in the reading-lessons is seldom satisfactory, and the consideration of this topic demands increased attention and more skilful handling. In the suggestions submitted to the Board I have dealt with this matter in some detail. Preparatory study of the language of reading-lessons is little encouraged, and almost nowhere systematically tested.

Writing varies greatly from school to school. Success in teaching it depends quite as much on the teacher's power of control and his influence with his pupils as on good methods. On the whole it is not as well taught as it might be, though there are many schools in which it is creditably done. In a number of schools there is too little writing in copy-books, transcription without any model to imitate being used instead. The toleration of rather careless slate-writing and ciphering, and of indifferent work in exercise-books, is responsible for a good deal of the inferior writing one meets with. It is easy to lay too much stress on mere slowness of writing. Slowness is no virtue here or elsewhere, and it is not slow work that is wanted, but deliberate and careful work. Where there is really good attention, writing may be rapid and good, and it is none the less likely to be good because it is fairly rapid. When referring to this subject last year I spoke more favourably of the teaching than I can now do.

Drawing is, on the whole, better taught than writing, and is often good. In the smaller schools I should not be sorry to see some of the stress laid on this subject transferred to writing, a manual exercise of much more general utility, though of less intellectual value. The lower classes seldom draw as well as the higher ones. Here the pupils are too often allowed to use measures and rulers more than is desirable. Pupils would get a better training at the lower stages if figures with curved lines were more generally used as exercises.

The arithmetic of the preparatory classes has been referred to above. In the lower-standard classes there has been some advance in this subject both in quickness and in accuracy of working; in the higher classes, where the work is more satisfactory, there is no conspicuous change to note. Little has been done in the way of giving such pupils in Standards II. and III. as cannot add without counting on by units a ready knowledge of addition. In dealing with this difficulty many teachers show a plentiful lack of resource and perseverance. I do not think there is enough blackboard teaching of this subject in the lower standards. It is only direct oral work of this kind, and plenty of it, that can insure readiness and accuracy in using the fundamental operations. Too much time is frequently taken up in correcting answers, the time for blackboard teaching being thus seriously curtailed. When working exercises from books or set on the blackboard, pupils should usually do a good deal more than we find them accomplishing. The teaching at the blackboard of the higher classes is usually clear and intelligent, but too much help in solving questions and problems is frequently given. Here, as in explanation and other subjects, it is the work the pupils do for themselves, the original thought they bring to bear on the questions and problems, that is the educative agency, and such work should be encouraged and stimulated, with all patience, by questions studiously framed to suggest only what is indispensable. There has been some improvement in the mental arithmetic of the higher classes; in the lower it was not so satisfactory as in these.

In composition the work of Standard VI. was for the most part of very satisfactory quality, and that of Standard IV. distinctly better than last year's. In Standards V. and III. there has been but little improvement, and the results of the teaching are seldom commensurate with the liberal share of the school time that is devoted to it. Wider reading, and a more careful and intelligent study of sentence-structure and of the reading-lessons considered as specimens of composition, seem to me the most likely means of securing work in this subject at once sufficient in quantity and of satisfactory quality. A better training in oral composition in connection with questioning on object-lessons, history-lessons, and the story or matter of reading-lessons, would do much to enlarge the vocabulary and improve the composition of pupils at and below the Standard IV. stage.

The grammar of Standards III. and IV. is being taught with growing intelligence, but there is still wide scope for further improvement. In parsing words pupils can very generally give a fairly satisfactory reason for their answers when they are expressly asked for it. Only a minority of the

teachers have attempted to train their pupils to give such reasons as an integral part of their answers. Though simple parsing, such as is done by Standard III., is all that is required of Standard IV., many teachers still require their pupils to give the detailed parsing of nouns, adjectives, and pronouns. To this in itself there is no great objection, except that it gratuitously adds to the already heavy work prescribed for this standard, and makes it all the more difficult to enter on the elementary study of sentence-structure that is so important for the composition of this class. The two highest standards made for the most part a satisfactory appearance in this subject, and in a few schools they did well.

As was the case last year, a great many failures have been recorded in geography. I do not think that the kind of questions set accounts for this. There can be little doubt that the subject is taught in a very formal and mechanical spirit, and that the lessons fail to interest and attract the pupils. It is, however, a difficult subject to handle well, and the unavoidable shortness of the time that can be given to it in a majority of the schools robs the lessons of much of the interest that a fuller treatment would arouse. In the lower classes the teaching at the map is often unsatisfactory and inefficient, and questions are dealt with as if the text-book or certain tabular extracts in the text-book had been learned by rote and the map hardly ever looked at. Many of the questions given have been designed to test map-knowledge and encourage map-study. The following is the sort of thing that betrays the neglect of careful study of maps: Pupils can tell readily enough what and where Madrid is, but they seldom have any idea of the part of the country in which it is situated. In like manner they can give the position of St. Petersburg or Kilimanjaro (a mountain specially mentioned in the work prescribed for Standard III., for what reason I cannot divine), but they can rarely tell what sea is nearest St. Petersburg, or what ocean is nearest Kilimanjaro. Any intelligent use of the map in teaching these places should readily enable children to answer such questions as those just referred to. Much of the inferior answering in this subject is due to the poor quality of the answers with which teachers are satisfied in the written examinations they give their pupils from time to time. The exercise-books of most schools afford abundant evidence of this. Physical geography is still poorly known.

The only other subject of instruction to which reference need be made is singing. I cannot understand why this is so generally neglected. One can inspect schools week after week and never hear a note, except during the half-hour usually given to formal instruction in this art. I should like to see the singing of a verse or two of some inspiring song form part of the routine of every morning's and every afternoon's work, and the special singing-lessons looked forward to as hours of happiness and enjoyment. In only one of the schools that I have seen has a teacher made it a practice to get the pupils to sing while marching into the schoolroom. The introduction of a larger amount of singing into the routine of work should act as a valuable mental tonic, cheering and refreshing both heart and head, and lending a zest and stimulus to the lessons that follow. If taken up with heartiness and enthusiasm, it would make school-life and school-work much more pleasant and enjoyable than they usually are. In large infant departments singing is of special value, and here, happily, it is less neglected.

Though a teacher's certificate is supposed to guarantee his ability to teach singing, very many certificated teachers cannot teach a note. It would be a great improvement if the Minister could be induced to institute a special examination in singing, and to issue a special certificate to all who are really qualified to teach it efficiently. I think the Board might well approach the Minister with a proposal of this kind, and use its great influence to forward a change so necessary and so beneficial. If similar special certificates could be issued for special knowledge of drawing, agricultural science, general science, domestic economy, and botany, the teaching of these subjects would benefit very greatly.

The low tone in which pupils are allowed to speak and to answer causes, in a number of schools, a considerable loss of time and no small sacrifice of efficiency. This fault is more prevalent than it should be.

Considerable pains has been taken throughout the year to train pupils to give full answers stated in the form of sentences. The results, though often bald enough, give promise of substantial progress in this direction. Teachers, however, do not sufficiently recognise that the kind of answer a pupil will give depends very largely on the kind of question he has to answer. Full and complete answers are chiefly to be encouraged by giving, as occasion offers, questions of rather wide scope—comprehensive questions that will naturally crave in reply a connected statement of several particulars. The more such questions predominate, the better will be the training in oral composition that will be given. The repetition of the bulk of a question in stating the answer to it gives, indeed, a full answer, but it is not always desirable.

As a body, the teachers in the Board's service with whom I have come into contact give every attention to their duties. They are in a high degree punctual, courteous, considerate, and patient. Not a few show great skill in their work, while many throw great enthusiasm into it and inspire their pupils with a good working spirit. The female teachers are especially distinguished by their diligence and fidelity. A few teachers have struck me as being lazy and indifferent about their work, but this is a very unusual experience. Many who succeed but indifferently labour for success with a zeal that deserves it. These great and positive merits are in considerable measure counteracted by failings which have been sufficiently dwelt on in this and last year's report.

The examination for the standard pass in Standards I. and II. has now been in the hands of head teachers for two years. In my judgment, and in that of my colleagues, this arrangement has not conduced to a high standard of efficiency in these classes. The pupils who are passed deserve to pass, but the bare pass-level is little overpassed. In reading and arithmetic the advances made would be more thorough and rapid if the examination were still in the hands of the Inspectors. Of this I can entertain no doubt.

I have been well satisfied with the diligence and fidelity with which my colleagues have discharged their responsible and onerous duties, and am much indebted to them for advice and assistance in many matters of administration in the course of the year.

I have, &c.,
D. PETRIE, M.A., Chief Inspector.

The Secretary, Auckland Board of Education.

TARANAKI.

SIR,— Education Office, New Plymouth, 11th March, 1896.

I have the honour to submit my first annual report on the public schools in the Taranaki District for the year ending December, 1895.

I commenced duty on the 1st March, 1895, and during the year paid sixty-one visits of inspection, on fifty of which reports were written, and I examined fifty-two schools. Considerable time was occupied in drafting the new regulations for pupil-teachers, and in examining scholarship-candidates and pupil-teachers.

The Schools of the District.—At the close of the year there were fifty-four schools in active operation, and three more will soon be completed. Most of the schools are very small, and are by no means self-supporting—that is to say, the revenue derived by the Board on account of the average attendance is inadequate for their maintenance. From returns prepared by the Board's secretary, Mr. Veale, I find that in the year 1894, for only seventeen schools did the income exceed the expenditure, and nine of these gave a balance of less than £17, some yielding only a few shillings. It will thus be seen that districts such as this, in which education has to be provided for a comparatively large rural population, and in which there are few large schools, are placed at a great disadvantage when compared with districts containing large towns.

Where there is a preponderance of small schools the average rate of pay, the allowances to Committees, and the general equipment of the schools must necessarily be on a lower scale than will prevail in districts in which there are large centres of population. This is a blot upon our system of education, for, while a teacher at one school may receive £160 or more per annum for his services, a teacher at an adjacent school, merely because he happens to be in another district, may receive only £120 for exactly the same services. This is manifestly unfair, and does not tend to encourage conscientious and progressive effort on the part of the teacher. Moreover, the evil effects are far-reaching. Speaking generally, the best teachers and those who are most promising among the young teachers strive to obtain employment in other districts where their labours meet with greater reward; those who remain may try to augment their salaries by undertaking work outside of the profession, and too frequently the primary object of their appointment is lost sight of in the struggle, and the farm, &c., as the case may be, receives more attention than the school. Again, when vacancies occur, positions of equivalent responsibility do not attract applications of equal merit. I must say this pernicious system of low and unequal payments is baneful and unjust in the extreme, and one wonders how teachers can be found for small country schools when one considers the petty annoyances to which a teacher is liable to be subjected, the inconveniencies of the position, and, at the same time, the small remuneration upon which he is expected to live, to provide possibly for a family, and to lay up some provision for old age. The Education Boards are powerless in the matter, for they must not let their expenditure exceed their income, and the most practicable remedy seems to be a more equitable distribution of the capitation grant. A graduated system of capitation would overcome the difficulty, and such districts as I have referred to would be on a much better footing if the payment per head for small schools were proportionally greater than for schools with a large average attendance.

Buildings and Apparatus.—Some of the older buildings are by no means suitable for schools, as they are too low, poorly ventilated, and often badly lighted, there being too little glass for the size of the rooms, and the windows being too low and misplaced. On entering, one is frequently struck by the very dingy and cheerless appearance of the walls, which absorb the light instead of reflecting it, and on dull days in winter the rooms become quite obscured. I think it is a pity that each interior is not painted as the school is built, for on educational, hygienic, and moral grounds it is essential that the surroundings of the pupils should be bright, cheerful, and stimulating. I have invariably found that in the schools with painted interiors the teachers take a greater pride in what one may term the æsthetic environment of the pupils, and that the maps, diagrams, charts, &c., are hung tastefully and tidily. As a rule also the teachers go to considerable trouble to obtain illustrations and pictures which are interesting and instructive, and which moreover add greatly to the appearance of the rooms. In this respect the teachers at Okato and Tikorangi deserve special commendation.

I regret to say that many of the teachers have not taken care of the apparatus and appliances in their schools, and in some cases there has been gross and culpable neglect on the part of past or present teachers. Too frequently I have found the desks cut and defaced to such an extent as to render them unfit for use, the pupils being under the necessity of taking out atlases, drawing-books, &c., to obtain a level surface on which to write. Inking, scribbling, and drawing on the desk seem to have been favourite pastimes, and have evidently been unchecked. Maps are often thrown carelessly over blackboards instead of being hung in the proper fashion, with the result that the rollers are torn off and the varnished surface is broken.

During my first visits I found that the books of many of the pupils were very dilapidated, and fully 30 per cent. of the copy-books I saw on my first round of visits must have had the covers torn off, and the majority were besmeared and disfigured to a reprehensible extent. During the visits for examination purposes I found that more care was being taken with the furniture and apparatus, and that the pupils' books were being neatly covered.

Much of the apparatus in the schools is old and out of date, and I am gradually supplying new maps and appliances where such are necessary. With the liberal amount set aside by the Board for this purpose I hope by the end of the year to have the schools fairly well equipped with up-to-date ordinary appliances, though much that is needful is beyond our means at present. Many of the teachers are themselves making excellent aids to teaching, which render the instruction more effective and at the same time less laborious. I have been surprised to see how little has been done in this respect, for by means of easily-made charts and diagrams much drudgery in the mere memory work of the school may be avoided. Dates in history, catches in tables, relative proportions of weights and measures, the written letters of the alphabet, and so on, should all be placed permanently before the pupils, who may thus learn without effort, and almost unconsciously, what otherwise would be crammed off in a manner injurious to themselves and irksome to the teacher. Another excellent aid is to place on the walls good samples of work, those done by the pupils being preferred if of sufficient merit. Forms of bills of parcels, forms of letter-writing, addresses on envelopes, and so on, will require little teaching if pupils see them daily, and the impressions made are not likely to be forgotten.

Pupil-teachers.—The examination of pupil-teachers was held in the Central School during the midwinter holidays. At the end of the year there were twenty-eight pupil-teachers in the employ of the Board. Some are doing really good work, and give promise of becoming skilful and efficient teachers. Since the examination a new syllabus has been drawn up, and in it more attention is given to the training in school management, both theoretical and practical. This practical instruction in school management is a matter which teachers seem to have overlooked, resting satisfied with the preparation of certain sections of a text-book, and giving little heed to the practical instruction before a class. At examination-time the pupil-teachers can give the good points of a lesson, and can name the errors to be avoided, but they do not assimilate the knowledge and make it their own, so as to be able to apply the principles. I have seen fourth-year pupil-teachers working without any methods at all, or by methods which are condemned in every book on school management, and which they would themselves condemn as faulty if asked at the annual examination. It must be remembered that "school management" enters into all departments of the school routine, and that text-books are studied for the purpose of giving increased skill *in actual teaching*, and not for mere examination purposes. In future at inspection the pupil-teachers will be required to give special lessons before me, and for the skill displayed there will be assigned marks which shall count towards a pass at the annual examination. I hope that at the expiry of their apprenticeships the pupil-teachers will have little difficulty in passing the certificate examination in school management, for if there is one subject more than another in which they should show proficiency it is school management.

Examination of Schools.—Of the fifty-four schools open at the end of the year fifty-two were examined. The examination of Waihi had to be postponed at the last moment, and the Ngariki School had been open for only a short time. On the days appointed for the examination 3,714 pupils were on the roll of the fifty-two schools examined, and of these 2,328 were presented in Standards I. to VI., twelve were presented in the class above Standard VI., and 1,374 were in the preparatory classes. Of the 2,328 presented in Standard I. to Standard VI., 2,198 were present, and 1,453 passed. No less than 130 pupils were absent from the examination, a number which seems to me too large. The number of pupils above Standard VI. was higher than it had previously been, being twelve for the year ending 1895, as compared with five for 1894. Ngaire and the Central, with three pupils each, had the largest classes. Few pupils remain in the Sixth Standard. Stratford had the largest class, containing ten pupils, while Inglewood presented only one pupil. Ngaire, a school with a roll of 175, presented as many as the Central, with a roll of 545; in the case of the latter the pupils, when they reach the higher classes, being sent by their parents to the High School.

The following table shows the summary of results for the district:—

Classes.	Presented.	Present.	Passed.	Average Age of those that passed.
				Yrs. mos.
Above Standard VI.	12	...	...	...
Standard VI.	68	65	42	14 4
" V.	218	204	105	13 10
" IV.	442	409	216	12 11
" III.	556	531	307	11 10
" II.	540	512	390	10 9
" I.	504	477	393	9 5
Preparatory	1,374	...	...	...
Totals	3,714	2,198	1,453	12 2*

Attendance.—I find that in 1892 there were 2,697 pupils on the rolls at the examinations, and that for 1895 the number had risen to 3,714, showing an increase of 1,017 in three years. This is some indication of the way in which the work of examination has grown during the last few years.

A more pleasing feature still is the increase in the percentage of pupils that attend regularly. In this district the average attendance has for years been the lowest in the colony, and, from whatever cause this may have arisen, whether from neglect on the part of parents, from bad roads, or

* Mean of average age.

from want of energy on the part of Committees, the district is placed in an undesirable position at the foot of the list. I am pleased to note, however, that during 1894 and 1895 the average, as computed in the departmental returns, increased from 71·5 to 75·8, this being the highest ever reached, though still under that of any other district for 1894. No doubt the steps taken by the Board and by some Committees for carrying out the compulsory clauses of the Act are bearing good fruit, and exercising a beneficial effect. I have, however, I regret to say, found that in the country schools the Act is practically a dead letter, and the pupils of school age absent themselves or are detained at home by their parents with impunity. The best results are obtained where independent truant inspectors have been appointed.

Preparatory Classes.—Of the 3,714 pupils on the rolls at examination, 1,374, or 37 per cent., were in the preparatory classes. The largest infant departments were at the Central School, 174 (31 per cent. of a roll of 548), Stratford 160 (42 per cent., roll 366), Inglewood 79 (36 per cent., roll 219), Midhirst 58 (43 per cent., roll 133), Opunake 56 (44 per cent., roll 126), Ngaire 55 (31 per cent., roll 175), West Infants' 49 (38 per cent., roll 124, with only three standards), and Waitara 49 (30 per cent., roll 159). Thus, of the larger schools to which all standards are admitted, Opunake, Midhurst, Stratford, and Inglewood had, in the order named, the largest percentages of pupils in the infant rooms, while Waitara, with 30 per cent., had the lowest, the Central and Ngaire being next with 31 per cent.

Of the 1,374 pupils in the preparatory classes, no less than 475, or 34 per cent., were over eight years of age, and for the non-presentation of these in Standard I. the teachers were required to give written reasons. In most cases the reasons were satisfactory, being (1) the advanced age at which the pupils began school life, and (2) the irregular attendance. In some schools, however, pupils had undoubtedly been kept back without just cause, and some who should have been in Standard I. or Standard II. were to be found among the infants, though they had come to school comparatively early. To carry out the spirit of the regulations, every pupil seven years of age in the preparatory classes must, after each annual examination, be transferred to Standard I.; but there are cases, especially in new schools, where this is inadvisable, and where, indeed, it would be extremely injudicious to present pupils in Standard I. at eight years of age, for in the country districts they come to school much later in life than they do in towns. To force on such children without a thorough grounding in the elementary work would be most unwise.

The quality of the work in the infant classes varies very much indeed. In schools where a teacher has to manage, unaided, probably five or six classes in addition to the infants, not much time can be given to the little ones, though much can be done by systematic and careful preparation of the work, but in large schools where the infants are in charge of assistants who have the help of pupil-teachers, good work is expected. I should like to see more variety introduced into the work of the infant classes, for lessons which are too long, or in which there is insufficient variety, prove uninteresting and irksome to the pupils. Action-songs and musical drill might be used to greater advantage, as they serve as a pleasant relief from the ordinary routine.

Multiplication tables were as a rule well known, but addition tables were often weak. In arithmetic and tables the pupils should have a very fair knowledge of the requirements for Standard I. before leaving the infant classes, for what is learned as play by the infants becomes work in the upper classes, owing to the pressure of subjects. Reading and spelling were fairly taught. The phonic system of teaching word-building is being adopted in the lower classes, and with good results. Writing is generally very fair. I should like to see the writing strong throughout, for where pupils have wide lines to write between, and have plenty of time to practise, the correct impressions of form are very readily received, and if the letters are not well formed in the lower classes much has to be unlearned in the higher classes.

Average Ages of Pupils.—In this district the average ages of the pupils for passing standards are very high. Table A (not printed) shows the average ages in the various standards since 1890. In thirty cases (six standards for five years) Taranaki reaches the highest age no less than nineteen times, and the ages, as a rule, are much above the average age for the colony. From the table and from the Government returns it will be seen that the adjoining district of Wanganui approaches us very closely in the average ages of the pupils passed. This would tend to show that the same causes are at work in both districts, and undoubtedly this is the case in some respects, for the growth of settlement, with the consequent increase in the number of bush-schools, raises the average age, for the pupils do not come to school till they are comparatively old, and at twelve and thirteen years of age may be found in the preparatory classes. But, as I have written elsewhere, some of the teachers have kept in the infant classes pupils who should have been presented in Standard I.

The Examination of Standards I. and II.—In Regulation 6 the teachers are instructed to determine the pupils in Standard I. and Standard II. that are fit to pass, and on their examinations certificates are issued to successful pupils, provided only that such must be present at the Inspector's examination. The Inspector is required to report on the teacher's examination, but has no power to alter the results. Of course, if the results of the teacher and the Inspector differ greatly, a mutual understanding may be arrived at, and either of the results or both may be modified; but if the teacher adhere to his results, these must be accepted by the Inspector, though in his opinion they may be unsatisfactory. As I wished to obtain an intimate knowledge of the working of all the standards, I examined nearly all the pupils in Standard I. and Standard II., in only a few cases taking out sections or divisions, and I regret to say the system of examination by the teacher has not worked well. Though some of the teachers conscientiously required a fair standard of excellence for a pass, on the whole, too lenient a view was taken, and I found all, or nearly all, in a class passed when scarcely a single pupil merited promotion. The difficulty in such cases lies, not with the earnest teacher who may have made an error in judgment, or who, as I not infrequently found, may have misread the regulations, but with the incompetent teacher about whom unfavourable reports have been sent in probably year after year. In one such case every

pupil in Standard II. had been passed in every subject, although, following the system of examination I had adopted in other schools, I found that only one out of every eight deserved to pass, the work being unsatisfactory in four subjects out of five. In another case I passed, barely, two out of ten, whereas the master had passed seven. The pupils that are passed when unfit have little chance of succeeding the following year, and in case of transference bring discredit on the school. This has been brought prominently before me by teachers stating that new pupils possessed certificates for passing standards for which they were quite unprepared, and, though such statements must be accepted with much caution, I am afraid that there has sometimes been just reason for complaint.

I shall now proceed to refer to the subjects taught in the schools, and in pointing out defects I write with a view to their removal rather than with the object of finding fault, and I should consider this report incomplete did it not show the lines upon which it is desirable that the work should be carried on. If it should seem that I have given greater prominence to the defects than to the merits I have found, it must be remembered that this is unavoidable in such a report as I have to lay before you, for to say that a subject is good or satisfactory leaves little more to be said, but it is necessary, when defects are pointed out, to enter into some detail, and also to indicate some means of improvement.

Reading.—This is not on so satisfactory a footing as it might be, for too little attention is given to actual instruction in the methods of good reading, and to a comprehension of its essentials. Pupils are allowed to "go on reading" in rotation, making mistakes which pass unchecked, and destroying all sense by their monotonous utterance.

A good style of reading is acquired mainly by imitation, and consequently the foundation must be laid in the lower classes, where mimicry is pre-eminently the prevailing faculty. In the infant classes and in the lower standards the teacher should bring into play as much as possible this factor of mimicry, and to this end should give good models, not too long, and should require the pupils to imitate the emphasis, expression, and inflection exactly. After a paragraph has been dealt with in this way, a few words at a time, the whole paragraph should be read simultaneously by the class, or by a section of it, as the case may be, and then individual pupils may be called upon. When any error occurs it should be corrected, and the word written plainly on the blackboard, and with other words recapitulated at the end of the lesson. Other paragraphs should be treated in the same way, and the lesson should close with such exercises as the teacher may think most needful. The facility with which even the smaller pupils will grasp the idea of intelligent expression is astonishing, and in well-trained infant departments I have frequently found pupils who could read and recite in a manner which displayed considerable elocutionary powers.

In the higher classes much model reading is not so necessary, for by the time a pupil reaches Standard IV. emphasis, expression, and modulation should be well understood; but even here passages presenting unusual difficulties should be read by the teacher and repeated by the class.

By examination time the pupils in most schools have mastered the mechanical difficulties of the lessons, but there are many in which the results of "hearing reading" instead of teaching it are only too noticeable. Slurring of words and indistinct utterance are common, and give a tone of laziness and slovenliness to the work. Dropping the final consonant and misplacing the aspirate also are very common in some parts of the district, the latter being extremely difficult to overcome. Emphasis needs much attention. Upon it may depend entirely the sense of a passage, and by altering it a sentence may be made to convey possibly as many different meanings as there are words. For instance, the sentence, "Did you ride to Waitara yesterday with your brother?" can be made to ask no less than nine different questions by change of emphasis. In a few schools there is a tendency for pupils to hurry over the reading as soon as they become at all familiar with the words.

Reading in rotation should not be practised, as it results in inattention, the pupil preparing the passage he knows he will be required to read and paying no heed to the rest of the work. More attention should be paid to the position assumed by the pupils when reading. I have found pupils almost lying back on the seats with their books on the desks, or standing lazily with necks bent and shoulders rounded. They should usually be placed at the back of the desks so that to be heard they must speak out, and on no account should they be permitted to assume lazy attitudes, for "Lazy attitudes produce lazy minds."

In the lower classes, especially in those of the larger schools, the pupils become so familiar with the lessons that they know them off by heart, and I have not infrequently asked the pupils to close the books and to proceed with the lesson. This they have done as accurately as though the open book were before them, and proud of themselves are they when they go through from the beginning to the end without being prompted. In Standard II., in one of the largest schools, I had to mention only the number of the page in the book and the pupils could tell me the name of the lesson and repeat it almost word for word. One can imagine how monotonous it must be for pupils to keep repeating such lessons day after day for twelve months, and how uninteresting books must be to them. I do not think it is too much to require that in Standard I. and Standard II. in the larger schools two books should be read during the year, and in the higher classes that the History Readers should be used as supplementary books from which the pupils may be called upon to read at examination, but which they may not be required to prepare as regards spelling, &c.

With reading, the recitation is so closely associated that I will here say a few words with reference to it. In the earlier stages, the intelligent repetition of a piece of poetry depends upon the faculty of mimicry before referred to, and if good models are presented and are carefully imitated the pupils will gradually come to see how they can best express the ideas, the emotions, and the meaning of the writer. Too little intelligent instruction had been given, and consequently much poor recitation was heard. At the end of the text-books in use there are certain pieces for recitation in which the inflections are marked by a well-known authority, and yet I found school after school in which the pupils, in even the highest classes, could not tell me what the signs meant.

Spelling.—Although above Standard III. the spelling of selected words is no longer used as a test, still I usually gave a few words, and, when there was any doubt about the pass in dictation, I decided on the quality of the spelling. As a rule, however, I found that the selected words were better known than the passage for dictation, and this was due, I think, to teachers giving their pupils insufficient practice in the latter.

Spelling in the district as a whole was by no means satisfactory, and even in schools where it was satisfactory in the special tests I found that in the rest of the examination work the spelling was sometimes most careless, the easiest and most familiar words being misspelled even in Standard V. and Standard VI. Composition was often utterly valueless from this cause, although in such an exercise the pupils may choose their own words, and are not under the necessity of using any word of which they are at all doubtful.

I attribute this inferiority to the poor methods of teaching which are adopted, the ear being appealed to more than the eye, and the blackboard being seldom or never used. Teachers should remember that good spelling is the result of correct visual impressions, and is not so much dependent upon impressions received by the ear. How often does even an educated man hesitate over the spelling of a word, but when he writes it down his eye at once distinguishes the correct form of the word. If teachers recognise this fundamental principle, and apply it to the work of the school, less difficulty will be found in teaching the subject. Thus all words incorrectly spelled should be written neatly on the blackboard, and the pupils required to look at and spell the words. Any errors which have to be written on slates should be set out neatly—not scribbled, as is too often the case. Transcription should be carefully corrected, and an error made in such an exercise should be considered a serious one. Whenever new or difficult words occur, no matter in what lesson, they should be written on the blackboard, explained, and recapitulated at the end of the lesson.

I believe that perfunctory and careless correction of the pupils' exercises by the teachers may be held responsible for much of the poor spelling. The transcription on slates is very frequently scarcely glanced at, and I have found as many as five errors in the transcription of not quite three lines from the reading-book of Standard II., and this after the work had been corrected. At my inspection visits an examination of the exercise-books in many cases revealed to me a state of things I should have considered impossible, and this in some of even the larger schools. In composition and dictation error after error was passed uncorrected. Incorrect sums were marked correct, and the books were very untidy and dirty. Such exercises serve only to impress erroneous ideas more firmly on the minds of the unfortunate children, and help to lay a foundation of ignorance it is extremely difficult to displace. In order that teachers might have an opportunity for finding out the weak points in their classes they were asked to mark the papers handed in at the examination, but not very often could the correction be relied upon.

Writing.—As I have before stated, I had frequently on my first visit to find fault with the manner in which the copy-books were kept. As I now require all books used during the year to be shown at the examination, more care is being taken.

I should like to see evidence of more careful correction and supervision of the writing, and also of more teaching, this being a subject, like reading, in which there is a tendency to allow pupils to "go on working" instead of teaching them how to do it. Writing must be taught from the lowest class, and the infants should be as careful over the "stroke" or the "right-line" as the pupils in the higher classes are over the most complex letter. When some skill in making right-lines has been acquired they should be joined be simple curves, and so on by easy gradations till all the letters are mastered. It is not sufficient that a certain mark on a slate may be recognised as intended for a particular letter, it must bear analysis and inspection, and the slope, the joinings, the loops, the heights, &c., must be made as exemplified by the system of writing in the school.

In Standards I. and II. I have received some really excellent writing on slates, and even in some of the infant classes the pupils have made the letters very well indeed. At the examinations I hope to find a high standard of excellence in Standard I. to Standard III., for in these classes the principles of the synthesis of letters and words must be thoroughly grasped if the writing in the upper classes is to be creditable.

In Standard II. the capital letters were usually weaker than the rest of the writing. I wish to point out how necessary it is for teachers to be extremely careful of the ruling on the slates of the lower classes, for bad ruling means bad writing.

In classes Standard I. to Standard VI. I have frequently found that in the same class two series of copy-books and probably two or more numbers of each series are being used. Where this is the case there can be very little effective instruction. In the same school only one series of copy-books should be used, and all pupils in any one standard should at the same lesson write the same copy. The more difficult parts of the model should be written on the blackboard, explained, and, if necessary, practised on the slates before being written in the copy-books. Any fault that is at all general should be explained on the blackboard, and not to the individual pupils. In fact, the blackboard can scarcely be too freely used.

The writing on the examination-papers was uneven in quality, in a few cases degenerating into an untidy scrawl, but, as a rule, the papers were marked by highly creditable neatness and arrangement. I think that here a special word of praise is due to the young female teachers, who in many cases have been placed in charge of small schools, for their classes often sent in papers which were marked by excellent writing, neatness, and general arrangement of work.

Drawing.—In this subject there was sometimes a want of organization such as was referred to under writing, two series of drawing-books being used in the same class, and the pupils all working at different places. Very little class-teaching was possible, and very little was attempted, so far as I could see. In the schools in which better organization prevailed, and where the subject was properly taught, the drawing was very satisfactory indeed, and some really excellent work was shown by pupils in Standards II. and III., the figures being accurately drawn and nicely

finished off. In the upper classes there was a falling-off in the quality of the freehand drawing. Geometrical drawing was generally fair, and scale-drawing was very fair.

In the lower classes the teacher should draw on the blackboard the figure which is to be copied by the pupils, and should show how it is built up, which lines are drawn first and how they are drawn, and so on. After the copies have been drawn lightly they should be passed by the teacher before being lined in. In Standard IV. the geometrical drawing, and in Standard V. the earlier lessons in scale-drawing, should be taught in the same way. Model-drawing and solid geometry in Standard VI. require a free use of the blackboards. By means of the guiding sketches shown in the books the pupils in Standards IV., V., and VI. should be able to undertake much of the freehand with very little assistance from the teacher.

Arithmetic.—Except for Standard I. and Standard II., the test-cards in arithmetic are now issued by the Education Department, and therefore, as far as possible, the examinations in arithmetic are uniform throughout the colony.

In Standard I. the work was generally good, but in Standard II. there was much inferior work. In many cases failure arose from a want of thoroughness in the instruction, numeration and notation in particular being poorly prepared. Problems were very indifferently done.

In Standard III. the work was fair, but the marks were not so high as I should like to have seen them, for in this subject it is not sufficient that pupils should merely "scrape" through; they should have such a knowledge as will enable them to cope easily with the work of Standard IV., which is relatively much harder than that of Standard III.

In Standard IV., Standard V., and Standard VI., the work was fairly accurate. Some of the teachers adopt "rule-of-thumb" or cram methods in teaching the arithmetic of Standard V. and Standard VI. This is especially the case with interest and its modifications in Standard V., where formulæ and arbitrary methods are generally used, with the result that the pupils are quite at a loss when the wording of a question varies in the slightest from what they have been accustomed to. Arithmetic retains its prominent position in the curriculum chiefly on account of its value as a means of mental training, but by such devices as the above its value is nullified.

In introducing new rules teachers are often at fault in taking their pupils at once into the more difficult problems of the rule, or in taking only such introductory oral work as is to be found in the small text-books in use. New processes should always be preceded by sufficient oral instruction and simple graduated examples to give the pupils a good apprehension of what is required by the new exercise. For this the "oral work" in the books is insufficient, serving to show only the lines that should be followed in the introductory lessons. By taking small and manageable numbers, by varying the exercises on them, and by leading the pupils to recognise the underlying principle in all the different forms of the question, the teacher prepares his pupils for dealing with numbers of greater magnitude. Again, pupils will frequently say they cannot do a certain sum which may involve working with numbers up to hundreds of thousands or millions. The teacher works the sum on the blackboard and expects his pupils to remember how to work other sums of the same kind. He shows how that sum has to be worked, but it does not follow that he shows how similar sums have to be worked. "Take an easy example," is the maxim in such cases, and lead the pupils to see for themselves how the larger and more complex operations are to be performed. Moreover, pupils should be trained when puzzled to substitute easy numbers in a question. In such a sum as this: "What number must 8,963 be multiplied by to produce 5,869,763?" if a pupil says to himself, "What number must 3 be multiplied by to produce 18?" he knows that the answer is 6, and to get 6 from 18 and 3 he must divide, consequently the problem has to be worked by division. In time he comes to recognise this particular kind of sum, and is able to proceed at once without any substitution. In profit and loss sums this method of substitution is particularly efficacious.

I should like to impress upon teachers the necessity for a thorough preparation of the addition, multiplication, and division tables, as very many errors occurred through these being imperfectly taught in the preparatory and lower classes. Pupils in Standard I. are not required to multiply by numbers exceeding 5, and consequently the tables beyond "5 times" are not generally taught; but a teacher who displays foresight will require his P3 to know the tables to "5 times" at least. In Standard I. the whole of the tables should be thoroughly committed to memory. In fact, P3, Standard I., and Standard II. should be well beyond their own requirements in arithmetic when they come up for examination.

Mental arithmetic is weak in many of the schools, and is not sufficiently used in the ordinary class arithmetic, the pupils performing laboriously on the slate simple operations which should be mentally performed. Mental arithmetic might be more used for recapitulating principles already taught, short examples being given.

Some of the papers received by me at the examinations contained very neat work, all the steps being carefully explained in a way that showed that the pupils had thoroughly grasped the principles involved. In these cases I always made considerable allowance for any error that was obviously merely mechanical, and such not infrequently made all the difference between passing and failing. I should, however, like to see the ordinary work on the slates set out more neatly, especially in the lower classes.

Composition.—After leaving school few pupils have occasion to remember the capital of Turkestan, to find the present worth of a bill, or to remember the date of the Magna Charta, but all have to give expression to their thoughts and ideas, and all, in a greater or less degree, must put their thoughts on paper. If, then, for the practical purposes of life any one subject should receive great attention, it is composition; but here I do not limit the application of the term to the mere writing of essays and letters, but use it as embracing any part of any subject where the synthesis of sentences is needed. Composition should therefore be taught as early as possible, and this is where the majority of teachers fall into error. They presume—or the methods they adopt take it for granted—that the pupils know the English language, whereas their vocabulary is extremely

limited, their notions of the uses and meanings of words are extremely vague, and errors in grammar may have been impressed on their minds from the time they began to talk. It is obvious, then, that the pupils should be encouraged to talk under supervision as much as possible, so that the teacher may point out and correct any of the numerous errors or vulgarisms which are so frequently met with. To this end pupils in their oral work should be required to answer in sentences, or to give at least a few words in answer to a question. Thus, in answer to the question, "What is the capital of France?" the answer "Paris" is insufficient, and should be, "Paris is the capital of France." This, of course, is a very simple case. Take the following: "What kind of horses are these?" (the teacher pointing to a picture). Answer: "Wild." "Put it in a sentence, please." Answer: "They *is* wild horses." Instances similar to this have occurred again and again, and yet I have considerable difficulty in getting teachers to see the efficacy of this method of answering. By its means the pupils are taught unconsciously—and therefore most effectively—the meaning of a sentence, correct speech becomes a matter of habit, and when pupils reach Standard III. they need very little instruction to be able to write satisfactorily the simple tests required for a pass. Nor are its good effects confined to the special exercises in composition, but on the other subjects it acts beneficially. Pupils will have less difficulty in explaining the words and phrases in their reading-lessons, for I am convinced that they frequently have a general notion of a meaning, but from lack of practice, or from lack of confidence, are unable to express themselves; in history and in geography incomplete answering will be the exception, unless arising from ignorance; explanation of processes in arithmetic will be easier; the pupils will acquire greater confidence, and, not being so much afraid of hearing themselves speak, will be more plastic in the hands of the teacher.

But in the upper standards something more is needed, and the principles which govern the synthesis of sentences must be taught. Pupils must be shown the uses of conjunctions in combining sentences, the uses of the personal and the relative pronouns, the ways in which the words "only," "even," &c., may be used, the effect of the position of words and phrases in modifying the force of a sentence, and so on. This will require special well-prepared lessons. I have seen one or two such, but as a rule teachers are content to set the pupils to write ten lines or so on a given subject, and after correction to hand it back again, and there the lesson ends. If teachers adopted such plans as are shown in Longmans' "School Composition," and in Goyen's "Composition," they would more easily obtain satisfactory results in a subject that has always been full of difficulty to teachers of all grades, even to the best and most experienced.

In Standard IV. I have required the composition exercise to be written as a letter, with correct beginning and ending. As a rule the form of the letter was satisfactory, except that pupils had not been taught to end the letter in a manner appropriate to the person to whom the letter was addressed, a letter to a parent not unusually ending "Yours truly," possibly "Your's truely."

In Standard V. and Standard VI., business, social, and official letters were required, and were fairly satisfactory. Paraphrasing was very weak.

As I before pointed out, the bad spelling in the body of the composition sometimes spoiled the exercise, such words as their, there, were, where, being mispelled even in Standard V. and Standard VI.

Geography.—The first lessons in geography are given in Standard II., but, as a rule, with very poor results. The definitions were learned by rote without the pupils getting much of an idea of the actual objects, an island or a peninsula being to them merely a string of words they were required to commit to memory. A whole class would repeat word for word the definition, say, of the peninsula, but if a peninsula were drawn on the blackboard or pointed out on one of the school maps and the pupils were asked what they would call it, the chances were very much against their giving the correct answer—strait, gulf, and cape being favourite replies. At my earlier examinations, in school after school, the pupils informed me that they had never seen an ocean, but if asked if they had seen the sea, all hands would be held up. If the name of the sea were asked, a correct answer was rare, and I have been told that it is the Mediterranean Sea that surrounds our shores. Very few had heard of a volcano in New Zealand, and children who had lived on an island all their lives, and had seen the Sugar Loaves at Moturoa, could not tell me the name of an island they had seen.

To teach the geographical definitions the teacher should begin by drawing attention to the physical features of the country with which the pupils are familiar. Creeks, gullies, mountains, &c., should be pointed out, and when these are understood the teacher should proceed to show how they are indicated on maps, but as far as possible each geographical term should be associated with its corresponding local feature, and should call up a mental picture of that feature. This being done, it is easy to proceed from the known to the unknown, for the geographical features of the world are in the main merely a reproduction of the school district on a larger and grander scale.

In Standard III. the methods of teaching geography were unsatisfactory, with the result that, when pupils were placed before a map, they failed lamentably. If asked the capital of Russia most pupils would be able to answer "St. Petersburg," but if asked to point out St. Petersburg on a map they might not know in what part of the map of Europe to look for it. In the prescribed New Zealand geography the work was somewhat better, yet by no means satisfactory, even the capital puzzling many pupils, New Plymouth being frequently singled out for the honour.

In Standard IV. the general geography of the world was very fairly known, but a want of thoroughness was apparent in the preparation of the New Zealand geography—products, industries, means of communication, and places of interest to tourists being poorly answered. The geography of this class is relatively much harder than that of any other class, and teachers would do well to take in Standard III. a fuller knowledge of New Zealand than is required by the standard regulations, and thus lighten the burden in Standard IV.

In Standard V. and Standard VI. the general geography was as a rule fairly answered, but in very few schools was the answering in physical geography satisfactory, the excellent answering

of the pupils in Standard VI. at the Stratford School being an exception deserving of special mention. In some cases it was clear that pupils had copied into their note-books a few lines on each subject, and had reproduced these word for word, without any reference to the particular point in the question upon which stress was laid. This portion of geography seems to be very difficult to teach, for the inferiority in the answering is pointed out in many of the reports of other districts. This is to be regretted, for the principles of physical geography are of much greater value, both educationally and practically, than are many of the bald facts committed to memory in general geography.

Some of the teachers are now making on black silesia their own blank maps, which contain exactly what is required for each standard. This very much lightens the burden of teaching, as the ordinary maps contain so many names that confusion may arise in the minds of the pupils.

To the class-subjects and the additional subjects I shall very briefly refer :—

Grammar.—The best work was seen in Standard III. and Standard IV., that of Standard V. and Standard VI. being as a rule inferior. Since grammar has been placed among the class-subjects a general falling-off in quality is reported throughout the colony, and no doubt such has been the case here, the time taken from grammar being devoted to composition.

Science.—The schools are not provided with apparatus, which for much of the work in the syllabus requires to be specially constructed. As, however, the teachers are allowed the greatest latitude in the selection of subjects for study, they should choose those portions which can be illustrated by simply-constructed appliances, and if the pupils' faculties of observation and reason are trained, good work is being accomplished. The first and second courses in agricultural knowledge are favourite studies, and under skilful treatment prove very interesting and instructive.

Object-lessons.—These are often neglected, and the methods of treatment are frequently capable of improvement. Few teachers make collections of the objects that are required for illustrating the lessons, though such can easily be procured. If teachers encouraged the co-operation of their pupils, suitable objects would soon be found, and could be kept as a nucleus of a school museum to serve for future lessons and for use in revision.

History.—History is moderately taught. When questioning a class I usually showed the pictures in the books, and asked the pupils to tell me what they saw, what persons were represented, and so on. Except in a few schools the answering was very weak, and Julius Caesar would be confounded with an ancient Briton and the Duke of Wellington in a very ludicrous fashion.

Needlework.—Needlework is taught in all schools, and the report of the Sewing Committee will be found appended hereto.

Singing.—Singing is taught in comparatively few schools, a fact which is to be much regretted, as it has an important disciplinary value, and is liked by the pupils.

Discipline.—The order in most of the schools is satisfactory. During the examinations the pupils were obedient, attentive, and well-behaved. Disorder is sometimes noticeable at change of lessons and at dismission, and is due to the lack of proper class-drill. Every pupil should know exactly how to sit, stand, or move about, and all motions should be performed with precision and to appropriate words of command. In some of the schools the tone is capable of considerable improvement, and the pupils are not self-reliant in their work. The manners of the pupils vary very much indeed. At some schools the pupils were courteous and respectful, not only in the schoolrooms, but also in the grounds and on the roads and streets ; at others, again, courtesy, politeness, and respect seem unheard of.

In reporting on the different subjects I have several times mentioned the importance of paying attention to the methods adopted in the lower classes, and I should here like to point out how necessary it is for teachers to see that the elementary work is thoroughly and intelligently taught. As first impressions are often lasting impressions, it is essential that the early training should be good. Moreover, the work of one class should dovetail, as it were, into the work of another, otherwise the pupils are taught under a series of differing systems instead of under portions of one well-defined system.

There is another matter to which I must refer. The instruction is often given as though the subjects were utterly dissociated. Transcription is looked upon as a writing exercise and that only, and consequently if the writing be satisfactory the whole is satisfactory, even if error after error occur in spelling. In the same exercise, proper names may be written with small letters, and punctuation may be omitted altogether, but, as these errors do not come within the scope of a writing-lesson, little heed is paid to them. The weakness in spelling has been referred to, and permeates almost the whole of the work, composition in particular being frequently marred by it, an error not being heeded unless it occur in the dictation exercise. Again, an infraction of grammar is not corrected unless occurring in composition. Maps are used only in geography, and are neglected when places are mentioned in the history-lessons, the reading-lessons, or the object-lessons. There is thus an absence of coherence and unity militating against good educational results, to produce which it is better to teach well what is attempted than to attempt too much and to teach it badly.

I cannot fail to recognise the excellent efforts made by the Board to insure that, so far as possible, every child under its jurisdiction should receive the benefits of a primary education, and this in the face of great topographical and other difficulties. As Mount Egmont, with its radiating watercourses, is near the centre, it is absolutely necessary to place the schools closer together than would be required under other conditions. In trying to keep pace with the progress of settlement your Board must have been confronted with great difficulties, and how great these difficulties must have been one can estimate only after a careful perusal of the Board's previous reports and statistics. Again, in every school sewing is taught, and the remuneration of the sewing-mistresses withdraws a considerable sum from the funds of the Board. Other Boards, which are financially in a better position than the Taranaki Board, establish only aided schools when the attendance is below a certain number, and require the parents to contribute something to the support of the teacher, whereas your Board has borne the whole burden.

I have, &c.,

W. E. SPENCER, M.A., B.Sc., Inspector.

WANGANUI.

SIR,— Education Board Office, Wanganui, 20th February, 1896.

We have the honour to submit our report on public education in the Wanganui District for the year ending the 31st December, 1895.

SCHOOLS.—At the close of the school-year 116 schools were in active operation, of which nineteen had average attendances of under 20 pupils during the last quarter of the year—that is, were "aided schools." Of these nineteen schools, three had averages of under 10 pupils, nine had averages of over 10 and under 15 pupils, and seven had averages of over 15 and under 20 pupils. Some of these aided schools, as Mount View, Turakina Valley, and Glen Nevis, are in districts settled for many years, and so are conducted in buildings belonging to the Board. The majority, however, as Upper Pohangina, Mangaweka (when started), and Maungahoe, are situated in newly-opened country, and the buildings are of the poorest possible description. Upon one inspection visit a room was found with calico doing duty for glass in the window-frames; but it is only fair to say that this was a temporary arrangement. Frequently the rooms, while fairly watertight, are very inconvenient for school purposes on account of their shape and the relative position of door, fireplace, and windows; and much more convenient rooms might be got for the money spent. We would, therefore, impress upon the Board the importance of having every building, however small, or however roughly put together, made according to a suitable plan issued from the office. This is a matter the importance of which has been pointed out to, and universally acknowledged by, members of the Board for years; nevertheless, as yet attention to it has been honoured more in the breach than in the observance. We see no reason why a small, light building, which could readily be taken to pieces, should not be designed. This building would be conveyed in sections to the proposed school site, and could readily be put up—without skilled labour should occasion require; and when the district advanced sufficiently for the erection of a Board school it could be taken down and made use of elsewhere. How necessary it is to have the school material for the back districts easily portable is shown by the fact that more than one Committee of these small aided schools has asked that even the little dual desks *be sent in sections*. The Waipuru School material and furniture had to be carried on pack-horses up the almost perpendicular cliff of the Rangitikei River near Ohingaiti. That sometimes the little portable building mentioned would not long be required, but would soon have to give place to a permanent and more substantial structure, is shown in the case of Mangaweka. Here the school was started in a rough slab whare put up by the settlers, but in a very short time an average of over thirty pupils was reached, and now a building to accommodate sixty pupils has just been erected by the Board.

ROMAN CATHOLIC SCHOOLS.—Early in the year the Roman Catholic authorities requested the Board to allow its Inspectors to visit and report upon their schools, and, the Board having agreed to grant such request, the four Roman Catholic schools in the district—namely, two at Wanganui, one at Palmerston North, and one at Hawera—were duly inspected and examined, though it was difficult to find the fortnight necessary for the work.

The inspections were made very full and thorough indeed, for we recognised that the teachers were starting upon a syllabus and regulations somewhat new to them. We desired, therefore, not only to make everything as clear as we possibly could, but also to help the teachers as far as lay in our power in matters of method and class-management. And we were all the more anxious in our endeavours because the teachers showed the greatest eagerness to receive any hints or suggestions we were able to give them, and, in fact, heartily co-operated with us in every way. To the principal teacher of each school we sent samples of examination-tests and of worked papers, written descriptions of certain class-lessons and of school methods, and various school forms; and our examination visits showed that the trouble taken in this respect bore good fruit.

The examinations in standards were conducted in the usual manner, but, as we were of course unable to examine the four schools at the same time of year as they had hitherto been accustomed to, it followed that all had not received by the date of our examination a full year's instruction (Palmerston had about seven months). Considering this circumstance, and the fact that the schools were last year for the first time inspected and examined by public-school Inspectors, we do not purpose to comment in this report upon the examination results. We think, however, it is due to the teachers to say that, in the case of each school, our examination visit showed that they had loyally endeavoured to carry out any suggestions or instructions given at our inspection visit; and that the improvement for the five months interval between the two visits was very marked.

Before leaving this subject, we desire to place on record our thanks to the authorities and teachers for the cordial manner in which they received us into their schools and accepted and acted upon our criticisms and advice.

INSPECTION.—As we attach great importance to full and proper inspection (as distinguished from examination), we endeavoured to visit every school in the district open for a fair portion of the year, and we would have succeeded had it not been for some accidental circumstances over which we had no control. In all, 118 visits were paid, the highest number as yet accomplished. Six schools were found closed upon the Inspector's arrival, owing to the lately-initiated "train-excursions": five of these were inspected by subsequent visits, and an attempt was made to reach the sixth—Oroua Bridge—but the road was found impassable through floods. Rata School was closed on the two occasions when we were engaged in its neighbourhood, and on the day set apart for Hiwinui the Inspector had to give up work for a time owing to illness. Three schools were visited twice, with a view of giving extra help to new teachers.

With regard to school train-excursions, we may say that we are heartily in favour of them, for, apart from the pleasure they give, they must be distinctly valuable from an educational point of view. We would, however, point out that teachers ought to notify the Board's secretary as early as they can of the date of proposed excursions, and so save us purposeless travelling, and waste of time that can ill be spared.

Inspection is fast becoming a very heavy tax upon our time and energies. This is due partly to the gradual increase in the number of schools, but chiefly to the out-of-the-way position of the majority of those lately established. Thus, there are now several schools in the district, all with roll-numbers of under twenty, some with roll-numbers of under ten pupils, which are so situated that it is difficult to reach and inspect them in one day; while a second day is consumed in merely riding back to some starting-point for a similar excursion on the third day. Last autumn, to inspect a school of six pupils necessitated a ride of five hours, and fording a river over twenty times; while in another case, to get from a school of sixteen pupils to a starting-point for the morrow's school, an Inspector was riding from 2 o'clock to 10 p.m., and some of the road was more suitable for a goat than a horse. We confess that, when we were much pressed for time, and when the weather was bad, we felt inclined to let some of the aided schools go without inspection. However, not only did we not yield to the temptation—for all schools open during the inspection season, whether small or large, were duly inspected—but, of the three schools to which we managed to pay a second inspection visit during the first six months of the year, two had under twenty pupils on their rolls. Certainly, the length of time required for these trips seemed to us, before starting, out of all proportion to the numbers of pupils inspected; but on our return we invariably felt glad that we had made the trips, for, though everything in connection with the buildings and the furniture was, as a rule, heart-breaking, the help that we were able to give the lonely, struggling teachers was a pleasure and sufficient compensation. And here we may say that the teachers of these schools deserve all the sympathy and encouragement that can be given to them. Cut off from all intercourse with their fellow-teachers, they labour from Monday to Friday for a poor wage, frequently in a wretched room, and sometimes with poor appliances; and, when Saturday comes, there is no friend with whom to exchange a thought, and no amusement of any sort.

Examination of Schools.—The following table summarises the examination results for each standard, and for all standards, in the district. Another table, which gives every information with regard to individual schools, has not been printed on account of its great size, but it may be seen at the Board's office:—

Number of Schools examined in each Standard.	Classes.	Presented.	Present.	Failed.	Passed.	Average Age of those that passed.
						Yrs. mos.
...	Above Standard VI.	55	...	...	...	...
69	Standard VI. ...	301	290	93	197	14 2
83	" V. ...	630	578	216	362	13 8
95	" IV. ...	1,057	983	286	697	12 9
101	" III. ...	1,483	1,387	365	1,022	11 10
99	" II. ...	1,495	1,433	161	1,272	10 5
102	" I. ...	1,415	1,339	144	1,195	9 4
...	Preparatory ...	3,067	...	...	...	...
Examined in one Standard or more—106.	Totals ...	9,503	6,010	1,265	4,745	Mean—12 years.

All the schools open for twelve months, viz., 106—that is ten more than in 1894—were duly examined in standards. This number includes Upper Pohangina and Pemberton, which were closed before the end of the year. The twelve schools not examined were opened as follows: Waipuru, Paiaka, Riverton, and Poukiore during the first quarter of the year; Rangiwahia and West Waitapu during the second quarter; Tiritea during the third quarter; and Waitohi, Kawatau, Mangahoe, Parapara, and Awahou during the fourth quarter. Those opened during the first quarter will be examined next March.

On the days appointed for the examination in standards there were 9,503 pupils (4,947 boys and 4,556 girls) on the rolls of the schools examined. Of these, 6,381, or 67·1 per cent., were presented in the six standards, 3,067 were in the preparatory classes, and 55 had already passed Standard VI. We find this year increases of 505 on the number on the rolls, and 530 on the number presented in standards. Every standard shows a substantial increase, and for the first time in the history of the district the number of pupils in Standard IV. has reached one thousand (1,057).

Of the 6,381 pupils presented in the six standards, 6,010, or 94·2 per cent., attended and were examined; 371 were absent; 1,265 failed; and 4,745 passed the requirements and were promoted. Of the pupils absent, several had already passed a standard during the year, but, owing to change of residence, they found themselves at a second school during the course of the standard examinations; while not a few of those that failed were children in a similar position, but who elected to try to pass the second examination, though they had received only a few months' tuition since they had already passed one standard.

Percentages of passes are not now calculated for individual schools, but it is well to see how the district as a whole has fared in this respect. The proportion of passes to pupils examined for passes was as 78·9 to 100; that is, of the 6,010 pupils examined, 21·1 per cent. failed to qualify for a higher standard. Now, such a result must, on the whole, be considered satisfactory when it is remembered that all pupils must be presented in a higher standard than that already passed—no matter how irregular their attendance, no matter how physically and mentally weak they may be, and no matter how recently they may have passed their last standards. As for ourselves, when we remember such drawbacks as these to high percentages, and when we think of the large number of small bush schools opened in the past few years, we are of opinion that there is little to complain

of when just eight pupils out of every ten satisfy the standard requirements. People whose ideas of schools have been obtained from their experience of those in towns or on main roads can form no conception of the disadvantages under which teachers and pupils in the aided schools in the back districts suffer. School-sheds of corrugated iron, unlined and unceiled, or of roughly-hewn slabs; tracks so bad that the school furniture has to be "packed" in sections from the nearest town; treacherous rivers that have to be crossed on the way to and from school—these are some of the experiences of the children of the pioneer settler during their early school-days. Considering all these circumstances, then, we confess that, were a very high percentage of passes obtained, we should be inclined to look with suspicion upon the examination-test given.

While we consider the total percentage of passes for the district on the whole satisfactory, we certainly think that in some of the large schools the higher standards might well have done better, and so the percentages in Standard V. and Standard VI. would have been higher. The percentages in individual standards are as follows: Standard I., 89·2; Standard II., 88·7; Standard III., 73·7; Standard IV., 70·9; Standard V., 62·6; Standard VI., 67·9. Standard V. was thus the weakest class; and failures in this class and Standard VI. were caused by arithmetic and geography most frequently. It is worthy of note that as many as sixty-nine schools were represented by Standard VI., and as many as eighty-three schools by Standard V., and that these high standards were found in several very small schools. Further, it often was brought prominently before us that the number of pupils in Standards V. and VI. was comparatively higher in the small schools than in the large ones; and how varying was the proportion the numbers in these standards bore to the numbers on the rolls the following table will show:—

School.	Number on Roll.	Number in Standard V.	Number in Standard VI.
Feilding	353	16	6
Momohaki	65	5	5
Foxton	247	6	5
South Makirikiri	30	1	5
Marton	327	23	7
Waverley	212	27	9
Stoney Creek	48	6	4
Turakina	63	8	2
Matarawa	27	6	1

With regard to the preparatory classes, the number of pupils on the rolls upon the examination days shows a decrease of twenty-five for the year. We are pleased to notice that during the past few years a considerable improvement has taken place in the proportion between the number in these classes and the total number on the school-rolls. In the year 1891 the number of pupils presented in standards expressed as a percentage of the roll-number read 61·5, while for 1895 a similar calculation gives 67·1.

Of the 3,067 pupils in the preparatory classes, 694 were over eight years of age. In accordance with Regulation 5, the teachers interested gave us the necessary written explanations for the non-presentation of these children in Standard I., and on the whole such explanations were satisfactory. "Under two years at school since enrolment" was responsible for 474 cases, 77 children were Maoris, and "Irregular attendance" and "Dulness" accounted for the balance. With regard to irregular attendance, we may say that it appears to us that many parents consider that the attendance of their children should be regular only when the standards are reached, the children in the meantime being sent to school only when it suits the housewife "to get them out of the way." This is a grave mistake, for a good First Standard class depends largely upon sound grounding in the primer classes. Similarly, good higher standards depend in a great measure upon the foundation laid down in the lower standards.

The average ages of those pupils passing each standard may be seen in the last column of the table. We freely confess that we think these average ages are too high as they stand represented in that column; but we desire to point out that they are very misleading, and that under the attendant circumstances of the district we do not see how they could be much lower than they are. We say these average ages are misleading, because the children at the majority of schools are much younger than appears from them. At the newly-opened bush schools, and at some very small schools, however, it is quite common to find children over ten years of age in the First Standard—*e.g.*, Taikorea, 13 years 8 months; Pemberton, 12 years 2 months; Matarawa, 11 years 11 months; Moutoa, 10 years 11 months; Upper Pohangina, 10 years 10 months; Upokongaro, 10 years 7 months: and it is such schools as these chiefly that are responsible for the raising of the averages. We say "these schools chiefly," for there were two or three large schools where the average ages were abnormally high.

Instruction.—Owing to the changes in the Inspectorate during the year we do not purpose to write at length under this heading; also, reports in past years have been so full in this direction that there is nothing new to note about the work done in several subjects, and there is really no need for extended remarks from us. We will, accordingly, confine our attention to those subjects in which the work obtained at the examination was least satisfactory.

Arithmetic.—The examination-cards were issued, as in 1894, by the Education Department. In Standard VI. and Standard V. the failures were for the second time more frequent than they used to be when the tests were drawn up by your Inspectors. It is only natural that this should be so for a time, because, while the Inspectors did not demand in Standard VI. a knowledge of compound interest, present worth, and true discount, and in Stardard V. did not set questions in compound proportion, or in time, rate, and principal in connection with simple interest, the department not only exacted the fullest requirements of the syllabus, but also took, to our minds, a stringent view of those requirements. In Standard IV. the cards for last year were easier than

those for the previous year, so the passes were more numerous. Failure was found most frequently in some of the very varied examples in tables. The fact of some of the examples in reduction permitting of answers in several denominations caused us no small amount of trouble. In the examination-tests in this standard we think in future it would be well to give more prominence to bills of parcels and practice at the expense of some of the puzzles in tables. To expect pupils in Standard IV. to express in troy a weight given in avoirdupois is, to our minds, decidedly straining the regulations. In Standard III. the work varied very much, and this no doubt was partly due to the great unevenness of the tests. Some of the tests were so simple that it was possible for a pupil to obtain a pass by merely writing down a simple table and a piece of numeration and notation, and working a Standard II. sum in abstract numbers, which was not even in problem form. Or, again, it was possible for a pupil to work correctly four sums out of five and still not have done a money sum. Yet in this standard the four money rules are supposed to be known, and they are, in fact, the only new rules besides simple long division and simple long multiplication. But, easy as most of the tests were, the work far too often was very moderate. Gross carelessness, we think, was frequently the cause of this. We cannot, for instance, believe that many pupils were ignorant of the meaning of the terms "sum" and "product," for we ourselves invariably use these terms when setting questions even in Standard I. and Standard II.; yet more frequently than not they were misapplied. In some cases the wording of a sum was responsible for pupils not attempting it. When a Standard III. pupil reads such a sum as this: "An intestate estate was divided equally between the widow and two children, so that each got £873 6s. 5¼d.; what was the whole estate worth?" he passes it by because the "big word" frightens him. And in this connection we may say that we frequently received complaints about the wording of many of the cards in various standards.

In mental arithmetic we found a very decided improvement in all classes.

Before leaving the subject of arithmetic, we should like to point out, for the information of the authorities, that the sets of cards issued at different times varied very much in difficulty. Also, we desire to record our opinion that the time necessary to render Standard VI. pupils quite at home with the many varied questions now set in the so-called commercial rules—we doubt if there is a commercial man in the town knows what true discount is supposed to be—might be spent far more profitably in arithmetic affecting farming operations, for instance. In Standard V. we think compound proportion and difficult cases in interest might well be omitted, and so allow of pupils getting a thorough grasp of first principles and vulgar fractions.

Composition.—Upon this subject we regret we cannot report in favourable terms. The essays and letters often were of the briefest, and frequently they were evidently mere feats of memory—for which, by the way, little or no credit was allowed. At several schools the teachers submitted to us a list of a very few subjects upon which the pupils had written during the year; and when we included one of the subjects upon a list of four or five set on the blackboard, such one was invariably selected by all, or nearly all, the pupils, and the exercises were almost word for word alike. Again, when the subject of a reading-lesson was set, the majority of pupils wrote the exact words of the text, or produced almost verbatim the summary at the end of the lesson, instead of telling in their own words what they remembered of the story. In future, unless a fair number of subjects for a year's work is presented to us, we shall not consider ourselves justified in setting one of them. Carelessness frequently was very much in evidence in the essays, and it was of the kind that reflects adversely upon the teachers, showing as it did a want of thoroughness in their work in the direction of consistently and carefully marking all exercises, and requiring the pupils to re-write corrected passages. In Standard IV. the requirements of the syllabus with regard to sentence-making evidently had not received due attention, for very frequently the questions on the cards bearing on this subject were not attempted, or, when attempted, were poorly answered. At paraphrasing in Standard V. and Standard VI. poor attempts were made, the pupils not grasping the meanings of the passages given. So simple and so generally well known were these passages that we think mental laziness had something to do with failure.

There is no subject that requires more actual teaching than composition, and perhaps no subject that receives less, the pupils being left to themselves while the teacher is engaged with a reading class. It is not sufficient that exercises should be corrected privately by the teacher, and then be returned without comment to the pupils, who may know or may not know the significance of the marking. The exercises should be criticized before the class, the pupils' aid being largely invoked, and the blackboard being freely used for illustration. A good plan is to get the pupils themselves to read the exercises aloud, and to encourage criticism, with reasons, from all members of the class. Exercises should be written at some subsequent time in corrected form. In oral work teachers should insist upon the thoughts always being expressed in complete statements, for this is a powerful aid to written composition. Questions, accordingly, should be so framed as to elicit connected statements of some length embodying several particulars in one whole.

Geography.—The remarks made on this subject in the last annual report are again applicable. While political and commercial geography continue to be well taught in the majority of the schools, it is still necessary to urge the necessity for attention to physical and mathematical geography, in which more intelligent teaching, as opposed to memory work, is required. In physical geography, when descriptions of the river-systems of continents were required, we generally received merely lists of the names of the rivers; while descriptions of the surface features of continents were very meagre, and showed no intelligent grasp of the internal configuration of such continents. The causes of different climate were readily enough enumerated, but particular questions with reference to these causes were poorly answered. Thus, the effect on the climate of the west coast of New Zealand of the prevailing winds being westerly was very vaguely known. In mathematical geography a lack of intelligence in answers was still more evident. To the question "What alteration in day and night would occur were the earth to cease revolving, the rotation continuing?" hardly one correct answer was obtained. A very common answer to this question was that day

and night would be the same all over the world; while occasionally it was stated that there would be six months day and six months night. The varying length of day and night within the arctic circle was not understood. The impression on pupils' minds with regard to this appeared to be that all places within that circle were six months in darkness and six months in light. These matters are mentioned as they bear upon some of the chief features of the syllabus in mathematical and physical geography. In the geography of New Zealand, "interprovincial transit" was not well known in several Standard IV. classes.

The indefinite character of the answers in the geography papers is a frequent subject of complaint. Thus, we were often told that Calcutta was in Asia, and San Francisco in North America, but were left to imagine the country, not to speak of the position, of each. For some reason or another pupils seem to think that the names North America and United States are synonymous. Recent events in connection with Venezuela may, it is to be hoped, dispel this illusion.

ORGANIZATION AND METHODS.—At our inspection visits we gave considerable attention to matters coming under this heading, and in our reports we wrote very fully when occasion required. A few remarks here, however, will not be out of place.

The number of schools at which really good methods are employed increases year by year. At the same time, it was often brought forcibly under our notice that many teachers, while generally using good methods, failed somewhat in the application and proper carrying-out of such methods. "But," to quote from a former report, "of far more importance than the method is the intelligence of the teacher that employs it. As Herbert Spencer points out, the success of every appliance depends mainly upon the intelligence with which it is used. An unskilful workman, though having the choicest tools, will botch his work; and bad teachers will fail even with the best methods. Indeed, the goodness of the method becomes in such case a cause of failure; as, to continue the simile, the perfection of the tool becomes in undisciplined hands a source of imperfection in results."

Many teachers have still to learn that it is their pupils who should bear the brunt of the work. There is too much random talking, and too much telling of what might easily be elicited by skilful questioning. As has been well said, "The need for perpetual telling arises from our own stupidity, not from our pupils'." To quote Herbert Spencer again—"To tell a child this, and to show it the other, is not to teach it how to observe, but to make it a mere recipient of another's observations—a proceeding which weakens rather than strengthens its powers of self-instruction, and deprives it of the pleasures resulting from successful activity." In oral class-teaching we often noticed too much of this telling. When a question was put, a pupil would answer by a word, or by a word or two; and the teacher immediately accepted the answer, rendering it lucid by himself putting it into the form of a statement.

The blackboard is not made sufficient use of at many schools. In an oral lesson, as a rule, an abstract should be put on the blackboard as the lesson proceeds; and a certain amount of time should be allowed for recapitulatory questioning.

Failure to impress upon the class and emphasize what is desired to be taught has often to be pointed out. One pupil gives the answer required, and the teacher passes on without driving home in the minds of all the members of the class the information given.

The omission to form beforehand a definite plan of the intended course of instruction for some months is a fault very frequently found. Too often the first few months of the school year are frittered away; and, when the examination date draws near, it is found that even to go once through the prescribed course a great spurt must be put on, while no time whatever is left for recapitulation and revision. Then the time-table is suspended; cram steps in, and runs rampant for a few weeks; the approaching examination is constantly flaunted before the eyes of the unfortunate pupils, and a point made of the disgrace (?) of failing; and altogether a most unhealthy state of excitement is engendered. In a school where such practices as these obtain, when the examination day comes round the pupils are in a high state of tension, and, naturally enough, several fail to pass their standards. Some unsuccessful teachers are much given to declaim against the examination system on the ground that it is it that is responsible for this unhealthy state of affairs. We, however, are quite clear in our minds that it is not the examination *per se* that is responsible, nor yet is it the examiners; but it is the teachers themselves, who, in place of working steadily throughout the year, and letting the examination take care of itself, lose a great deal of time in the first few months, and then, in order to overtake all the prescribed work, they put towards the end of the school year an extra strain upon their pupils, and hold the examination and the Inspectors constantly before them as a menace. How different it is in well-conducted schools! In such the examination is looked forward to with feelings of pleasure, and on the appointed day there is an entire absence of nervousness and unhealthy excitement.

In conclusion we may say that, taking the schools as a whole, we consider they are doing sound educative work, and that the teachers as a body are anxious to employ the best methods, and to mould their teaching on inductive lines. In some schools, certainly, we find a tendency to superficial, ill-digested work; but these are the exception, not the rule. Again, some very earnest and deserving teachers are not as successful as they might be, because they do not recognise that, while some parts of the subjects of the syllabus demand truly inductive or intellectual teaching, there are others which require the purely *memoriter* system of instruction. In the case of the latter—say, for instance, tables in arithmetic—if the pupils's memory fails there must be a breakdown.

The number of subjects in the syllabus is sometimes pleaded in excuse for poor work. In the case of the smaller schools, especially those with all, or several, standards and only one teacher, it will readily be seen that it is difficult to find sufficient time to handle all the subjects in a thoroughly educative manner, and that the work in some of the subjects is apt to be superficial and ill-digested. On these accounts we are of opinion that it should not be compulsory for schools of the class specified to take up all the subjects of the syllabus (history, for instance, might well be omitted); but, while holding this view, we are satisfied that much of the ill-digested work is due not so much

to the number of subjects to be taught as to faulty arrangement of the course of instruction, an inferior treatment of the subjects. The fact that several of the very small schools, taught by young teachers not long out of their pupil-teacher days, did very fine work in all the subjects—pass, class, and additional—clearly shows that the syllabus is no more than can be overtaken in a year by a good teacher.

With regard to faulty arrangement of the course of instruction, we have already pointed out that the work intended to be done should be arranged for months beforehand, each subject, or portion of a subject, being assigned its proper number of lessons according to its importance. If a teacher arranges his programme of instruction in this manner, teaches honestly and steadily week by week from the beginning of the school year, and supervises his work at regular and frequent intervals, he will find that he will be able not only to overtake all the subjects without undue pressure or cram, but also to teach them in such an educative manner as will promote the mental training of his pupils. It is the trifling away, often unconsciously, the early part of the year, and the postponement of revision till close to the examination time, that lead to some of the work not being overtaken, and to a lack of mental assimilation—the condition of all educative study—of what has been attempted.

Of the order and discipline and general behaviour of the pupils we are glad to be able to speak in high terms of praise as far as the majority of schools are concerned. The attention at lessons, certainly, is not always as good as it might be; but this, while sometimes due to inferior treatment of the subject in hand, is more frequently the result of very large classes.

The manners of the pupils generally are most pleasing.

Before closing this report we desire to mention two things that interfere considerably with the educational progress of several schools—irregular attendance, and frequent changes of teachers.

With regard to irregular attendance, we may say that, while a gradual improvement in this respect has taken place during the past few years, there are still far too many schools—some of them large town schools, too—where the pupils attend most irregularly. In many districts, of course, the parents require at certain times of the year the help of their children in farming operations. With such cases as these we have no fault to find; but we desire to point out that irregular attendance is due most frequently to pure apathy and indifference on the part of the parents. At the same time, we are not prepared to say that there is not, in some cases, a certain amount of excuse for this apathy and indifference; for it is not unusual to find the attendance improve or fall off at a school upon a change of head teachers taking place. Such cases, however, are the exception.

With regard to frequent changes of teachers, it must be very evident that they cause much loss of time and waste of effort. Examinations take place, and results are poor; but no one is responsible. Parents, of course, are disappointed, and the whole management comes in for blame. We are not prepared to make any recommendation in connection with this matter, but will merely say that, while we should be sorry to see deserving teachers fail to obtain promotion, we think it would be possible to effect all genuine promotions without as many changes as usually take place.

This report has been written under difficulties, owing to the additions that were being made to the Board's offices while we were engaged upon it.

We have, &c.,

W. H. Vereker-Bindon, M.A., Chief Inspector.
James Milne, M.A., Assistant Inspector.

The Chairman, Board of Education, Wanganui.

WELLINGTON.

Sir,— Wellington, 28th February, 1896.

We have the honour to present our report on the work and condition of the primary State schools of the Wellington District for the year 1895.

The number of schools maintained during the year has increased from 94 to 100. New schools were opened at Makairo and Nikau, near Pahiatua; at Aohonga, on the East Coast; at Maungapakeha, near Tinui; at West Taratahi, in the Wairarapa; and at Mitchelltown, near Wellington. Since its erection the Maungapakeha schoolroom has been burned down, and the school at present is not being carried on. All the previously-existing schools are being maintained. During the year many school buildings and grounds have been improved. The enlargements at Pahiatua, Mangatainoka, and Petone, the recent renovations of the Te Aro School, and the refurnishing of the Mount Cook Boys' School have much improved their working condition. The Newtown School, only recently enlarged, is again almost unworkably congested with over a thousand children in attendance; but a new school is in course of erection on an excellent site more removed from the centre of the city, which will soon relieve the pressure. The schools in the Te Aro end of the city are all full, with the exception of one or two classes in the Mount Cook Girls' School. These include the Clyde Quay, Mount Cook, and Te Aro Schools. Very soon, if not immediately, some additional accommodation will be required in this part of the city. In other parts of the district the available seats in existing schools are fairly sufficient for present requirements; but there is now demand for several aided schools in remote parts of the district, and, as settlement progresses, this demand may be expected to continue for some time.

Our summary of the examination returns shows that 13,236 children were on the books of the schools, as compared with 12,643 last year—an increase of 593. The number of children actually examined in six standards, exclusive of infant classes and 344 now in the class above Standard VI., was 8,592, of whom 7,185 passed. This is an increase on last year's returns of 466 pre-

sented and 727 passed. Owing to the number of children who, for reasons given in our last report, were not then promoted in the standards, the average age this year in most standards is about four months higher. We consider the results as to number (84 per cent.) and quality of passes satisfactory as a whole; but improvement will be looked for in certain schools, at least in certain sections of the work.

We have for several years classed the schools for comparison of results, and we shall continue the practice, as it must be apparent to all that the same proportion and quality of passes cannot be looked for in schools of disproportionate size.

Of the ten largest schools in Class A of the appendix* to this report, all but one have improved in working condition; and the improvement in two of them, which last year were below average merit, is very marked.

The results of many of the nineteen important schools in Class B were fairly good, and in many cases commendable; and, although in some cases there were weak points here and there which we trust will be set right before next examination, there is no school which is altogether unsatisfactory. The low results of the Upper Hutt School are due to the closing of the school for nearly two months; and a change in the management at Pahiatua temporarily affected that school.

Of the twenty-four schools in Class C, which are large enough to require more than one teacher, most of them are doing good work. There have been changes in the management of eight of them; but only in one or two cases has the change been attended with any drawback.

In Class D are twenty-six schools under one teacher, with from fifty-nine to twenty-four on the books. These vary considerably in efficiency, but most of them are doing fairly satisfactory work.

In Class E are eighteen aided schools, showing still greater disparity in their conditions and state of efficiency, and three of them are decidedly weak.

The infant schools and infant departments in large schools are working well; and new kindergarten occupations, more musical drill, and better wall-furniture are features of our best rooms. Much of the kindergarten material is now made by the pupils or their teachers, especially in the Masterton infant department. Mrs. Francis, of the Mount Cook Infant School, and Miss Page, of the Thorndon infant department, are specially commended for the efforts made by them to fully furnish their schools; and these teachers, together with Miss Watson, of the Te Aro Infant School, and Miss Parsons, of the Clyde Quay infant department, are doing excellent work as teachers of class-singing. Many other teachers are doing good work in these directions.

Here we may report that the effect of Mr. Parker's work in the training of teachers in singing is apparent in all our larger schools, and in many smaller ones. Whereas, before his classes were begun, the class-singing in many large schools was taught by one of the staff only, if one could be found who possessed sufficient musical skill and confidence, now many of the junior teachers are able to take their own classes in the subject, and most of our head-teachers are competent directors.

In reading, spelling, composition, and recitation the quality of the work is satisfactory, and generally improving. Little formal grammar is now required by departmental regulations, but the parsing and analysis of sentences is hardly so well done as in former years, when grammar was a pass-subject. As year by year the composition shows considerable improvement, there is a probable gain on the whole by the change. We would, however, remind teachers who are remiss in this matter that it is quite easy to meet all requirements, and that the teaching of analysis, as low down in the school as the Third Standard, is the best aid to composition; and a knowledge of the true functions of the several parts of speech is both useful and educative, and invaluable to pupils who go forward to secondary work.

On the subject of the extension of reading matter we are pleased to report that several of the largest schools and a few smaller ones are using three class reading-books; and the use of two such books is becoming general. We have so often tried to impress upon teachers and School Committees the importance of this that it is quite gratifying to find the need is now recognised, although the practice is still far from general. The recent issue of several very suitable books mentioned in our "Suggestions to Teachers" should further encourage the movement.

In many schools handwriting is much improved—chiefly because a round, bold, and more upright form of letters has generally commended itself to teachers. We recommend the general use of the newer style of copybooks.

In many of our largest schools drawing is in advance of departmental requirements, and it is undesirable that more time should be given to this subject in such schools. It is, however, very desirable that no pressure should be exercised, and that pupils should not be presented for first-grade freehand sooner than on the point of presentment for Standard V. In any other subject twenty per cent. of failures would indicate no great success, but failures in freehand for several years past have reached forty per cent. This arises from the needless presentation of candidates in Standards III. and IV., thus causing unnecessary trouble to the examiner, useless waste of paper, and considerable needless disappointment to the unfortunate examinees. On investigation we find that much of the disappointment in freehand results is due to want of proportion in the figure drawn rather than to crudeness of lining. The first-grade passes this year, as compared with last year, are thus stated:—

Year.	Freehand.	Geometry.	Scale.	Model.
1895	... 777	1,263	689	387
1894	... 711	1,233	613	326
Increase ...	... 66	30	76	61

* Not reprinted. The schools are classified as follows: Class A, ten schools, each presenting over 300 children; Class B, nineteen schools, each presenting from 100 to 300 children; Class C, twenty-four schools, each with less than 100 children, taught by more than one teacher; Class D, twenty-six schools, each with only one teacher; Class E, eighteen aided schools; Class F, three infant schools.

Geography and history, as now taught with the aid of geographical and historical readers, are subjects of greater interest to pupils; and the education derived is more realistic. Also, experimental teaching in science and object-lesson work, although still capable of extension, is making good progress. It will, we think, soon be quite easy to distinguish a really painstaking teacher from a more perfunctory one by the care shown in experimental-lesson work. Indifferent teachers are full of excuses for not doing their work as thoroughly as is desired, and in a few of the poorest schools the object-lesson work is still taught on lines twenty years old.

The officers sent by the military authorities continue to give instruction in squad and physical drill in the city schools, which is much appreciated. Exercises in clubs and poles for girls is now taken by the class-teachers. It remains to be seen, in the absence of a special instructor, whether the school staffs can efficiently maintain the drill, and the result will largely depend on the efforts of the head-teachers.

This year special attention has been called to the teaching of arithmetic; and, in our "Suggestions to Teachers" last year, Mr. Lee formulated a syllabus of mental work for each standard, which we are pleased to find has been accepted and acted upon by almost every head-teacher. The effect of this has been to greatly extend a knowledge of ready methods and of the treatment of decimals on the metric system. In our last report we expressed the opinion that it was quite possible to reconstruct our arithmetical course with greater gain to the development of the reasoning faculties, and with a great saving of time and labour to the teacher and scholar. Apart from these considerations the tests as at present issued are open to the following objections: There is more than ever a disparity in the calibre of the sets; weights and measures occur which are not in actual use; there is less scope for taking methods of working into consideration; the questions are occasionally set outside requirements; three problems out of five questions are excessive; and the questions are not sufficiently in touch with practical life. We think the whole arithmetic syllabus can be much simplified. Mr. Lee has devoted much thought for several years past to the subject. He has this year examined all the large schools *viva voce* in arithmetic, and he has now formulated a suggested amended syllabus, a copy of which is appended to this report. Time will show how far these suggestions will prove of practical value; but the effort marks a further step in the direction indicated in our last report, and we still hope to see it further demonstrated before long that more mathematical and more practically useful work in arithmetic can be taught in all public schools with less expenditure of time. To bring this about it will be necessary to amend the departmental syllabus, and to set the test-questions exactly on lines which indicate the right kind of work, for arithmetic is taught so as to meet the requirements of the tests. As are the tests, so is the style and amount of work. Nor can teachers be blamed for this, for how otherwise can they see their way to meet requirements? Hence it is most desirable that the requirements be rational, suitable to the actual business of life, and so formulated that they encourage the use of the best methods of working.

We have, &c.,

ROBERT LEE,
T. R. FLEMING, } Inspectors.

The Chairman, Education Board, Wellington.

SUMMARY OF RESULTS FOR THE WHOLE DISTRICT.

Standard Classes.	Presented.	Present.	Passed.	Average Age of those that passed.
				Yrs. mos.
Above Standard VI.	344	...	...	...
Standard VI.	814	799	607	13 9
" V.	1,199	1,174	873	12 11
" IV.	1,633	1,594	1,220	11 11
" III.	1,843	1,795	1,470	10 11
" II.	1,748	1,705	1,552	9 10
" I.	1,548	1,525	1,463	8 9
Preparatory	4,107	...	...	...
Totals	13,236	8,592	7,185	11 4*

SUGGESTED AMENDED SCHEDULE OF STANDARD REQUIREMENTS IN ARITHMETIC.

Standard I.

1. Write hundreds.
2. Addition of hundreds (five numbers).
3. Multiplication by one digit.

Class Mental Work for Standard I.—Components and factors of numbers up to 100. Easy exercises in four rules of such numbers. Add up or down at sight a column of five digits on blackboard. Multiplication table to 9 times 9. Parts of a shilling.

Standard II.

1. Write thousands.
2. Subtraction.
3. Long multiplication.

* Mean of average age.

4. Division (short and long) by numbers up to 12, and short division by numbers (up to 144) which can be broken up into two factors.

5. Ready methods of multiplication by 5, 9, 10, 11, and 12; and of division by 5 and 10.

Class Mental Work for Standard II.—Components and factors of numbers as in Standard I., somewhat higher, but not exceeding 1,000. Relative values of shilling, florin, half-crown, and sovereign. Pence and shillings tables. Four rules applied to easy money calculations—*e.g.*, 6½d. + 2½d. + 3d.; 1s. − 7½d.; 5 @ 1s. 6d.; 4 cost 2s., how much for 1? Work at sight from blackboard easy sums in four rules—*e.g.*, 40 + 20 + 18 + 19; 200 − 85; 145 × 4; 620 ÷ 5.

Standard III.

1. Write millions.

2. Long division.

3. Addition and subtraction of £ s. d.; tons, cwt., qr., lb., oz.; miles, chains, yd., ft., in.; years, days, hr., min., sec.; gallons, qt., pt.; and acres, rd., po. (two or occasionally three terms or parts only of one weight or measure being dealt with in one operation).

4. Multiplication and division of money, and of two or at most three terms or parts in weights and measures by one digit and by easy factors.

5. Reduction of two or three such quantities to one denomination, and the reverse process.

Class Mental Work for Standard III.—More advanced money calculations than in Standard II. Days in each month. Easy reduction exercises (two stages) and fractional parts (not usually less than one-tenth) on tables given.

Standard IV.

1. General principle of extended numeration.

2. Long tots.

3. Easy problems in money rules, including simple calculations in weights and measures given in Standard III.

4. L.C.M. and G.C.M. (factors).

5. Four rules of decimals and simple common (vulgar) fractions.

6. Conversion of common fractions into decimals and of decimals into common fractions.

Class Mental Work for Standard IV.—Calculation of dozens at price for one given in pence, and of scores at price for one in shillings. Fractional parts of £1 and exercises thereon. Calculations by ready methods of easy items as for invoices—*e.g.*, 30 @ 1s. 11d. = 30 @ 2s. less 30 pence; 59 at 7d. = 5 doz. @ 7d. less 7d.; 25 @ 5d. = 5 at 2s. 1d.; 16 @ 5s. 6d. = 16 at 5s. + 16 sixpences.

Standard V.

1. Find at sight value of a decimal of £1 (metric system).

2. Conversion of £ s. d. to a decimal of £1 (three places).

3. Expression of weights and measures given in Standard III.; and of oz., dwt., gr., scru., drams; square and cubic yd., ft., in. (not more than three terms or parts being taken in one measure) as a decimal of one of these.

4. Application of decimals thus found to ordinary work, including multiplication and division of money, and weights and measures, and also the calculation of simple interest.

5. Application of fractions to proportion (three terms only being given).

6. Application of common fractions to practice when advantageous.

Class Mental Work for Standard V.—Advanced tables—*e.g.*, lbs. in ton; square yards in acre; acres in square mile; grains in lb. Troy and Avoir.; lbs. in ton of flour, N.Z. Calculation of items as for invoices, including easy common fractions. Simple interest on a given number of £ at 1, 2½, 5, 7½, and 10 per cent. for years, and easy fractions of years. Easy exercises in four rules of decimals and common fractions.

Standard VI.

1. Methods of extending decimals to more than three places.

2. Short methods of multiplying and dividing to three places of decimals only.

3. Extended knowledge of metric system, including metre, litre, and gramme.

4. Compound interest by the method of finding the interest on £1.

5. Simplification of complex fractions—decimal and common.

6. Compound proportion, using either fractional or ratio statement.

7. Areas of rectangle, triangle, and circle. Comparison of similar areas.

8. Contents of simple solids with plane surfaces, including timber measure. Comparison of similar solid contents.

9. Square root, cube root (model worked example given).

10. The working of ordinary business transactions in averages, exchanges, shares, and stocks.

Class Mental Work for Standard VI.—Rapid conversion of money to a decimal of £1 (metric system). Ordinary cases of application of decimals and common fractions to easy problems, including proportion, averages, percentages, exchanges, timber measurements, superficial and cubic areas. Given the weight of a cubic foot of water 1,000oz., of a gallon of water 10lb., and of a cubic foot of air 1·3oz., to find the weight and contents in gallons or cubic feet of any substances whose simple dimensions and specific gravity are known.

SPECIMEN TEST QUESTIONS (TWO SETS).

Standard I.

1. Add together five dozen, one hundred and eighty, nine hundred and twelve, 609 and 889.

2. 628 × 6.

3. 68 + 105 + 993 + 19 + 760.

4. Eight times nine hundred and seventeen.

5. In 4 rows of trees, 25 in a row, how many trees altogether?

1. Add together four score, two hundred and seven, 890, 649, and 17.
2. Multiply four hundred and sixty-one by 9.
3. Find the sum of 619, 805, 219, 50, and 887.
4. 398 × 7.
5. I have 3 shillings, 4 sixpences, and 4 threepences. How many pence?

Standard II.

1. From eighty thousand and sixty-one take away 6940.
2. 29108 × 1905.
3. Divide one hundred and fifteen thousand and three by 7 (long division).
4. From the sum of 6920, 17080, 289, 728, 9375, and 19918, take away 2507.
5. In an easy way multiply 62895 by 9.

---

1. 61085 – 19708.
2. Multiply twenty-nine thousand six hundred and eight by nineteen thousand and six.
3. In an easy way find the product of 48901 and 11.
4. 17082 ÷ 6.
5. 6705 times 801 + 17928 × 690 + 4801 × 500 + 19708 + 619.

Standard III.

1. Eighty millions five thousand × 650.
2. 2′ 6″ + 4′ 9″ + 7′ 8″ + 2′ 3″ + 13′ 7″ + 8′ 0″.
3. 3ac. 2ro. 13po. × 24.
4. Reduce 620lb. to cwt. qr. lb.
5. 18 yards at 3s. 7½d. a yard.

---

1. 106004 × 1000 ÷ 75. Write answer in words.
2. Ounces in 16lb. 10oz.
3. 10 books at 11s. 8½d. each.
4. From 18 miles 13 chains take 11 miles 40 chains 20 yards.
5. £145 11s. 6d. ÷ 42 (factors).

Standard IV.

1. 2s. 9d. + 5s. 8¼d. + 6s. 11½d. + 18s. 3d. + 4s. 2½d. + 3s. 6d. + 17s. + £1 10s. + 12s. 9½d. + 13s. 6d. + 3s. 10d. + 2s. 7½d. + £2 2s. + 3s. 4½d. + 17s. 6d. + 5s.
2. $\frac{3}{8} \div \frac{5}{6}$. What decimal is $\frac{3}{5}$?
3. 301·5 × 16·8. G.C.M. of 615 + 360.
4. By both common fractions and decimals, $\frac{1}{2} + \frac{3}{8} - \frac{2}{5}$.
5. £65 a mile is how much a chain?

---

1. Add 16ch. 10yd., 40ch. 18yd., 53ch. 5yd., 17ch. 11yd., and 27ch. 30ft.
2. $2\frac{1}{2} \times \frac{3}{5}$. Express 0·0125 as a common fraction (lowest terms).
3. 874·25 ÷ 12·5. L.C.M. of 12, 15, 80.
4. By both common fractions and decimals, $\frac{7}{10} - \frac{3}{8} + \frac{2}{5}$.
5. 4s. 6d. a day is how much for June?

Standard V.

1. Value of £0·531.
2. By decimals, 6185 at £1 14s. 6d. each.
3. By decimals, £716 18s. 3d. ÷ 25.
4. Bill: 6lb. 10oz. at 4s. a lb.; 200yd. at 1s. 9d. a yard; 79⅞ at £2 8s. 6d. each; and 60 at £1 19s. 10¾d. rod.
5. S. interest on £680 for 8 months at 6 per cent.

---

1. Value of 0·725 ton.
2. By decimals, £2 11s. 7½d. × 600.
3. By decimals, £3,725 13s. 6d. ÷ 12½.
4. Bill: 110ac. 2ro. at £14 10s. an acre; 600ac. at £3 12s.; 100 at £6 18s. 3d.; and 50⅕ at £5 8s.
5. 2½ yards cost £1 10s., find the cost of 4⅙ yards.

Standard VI.

1. Simplify $\frac{8{\cdot}016 \times 20 \times 0{\cdot}3625}{0{\cdot}0018 \times 2{\cdot}5 \times 40{\cdot}08}$
2. 5 dekagrammes 8 centigrammes at 8s. 6d. a gramme.
3. Compound interest on £1,260 for a year and a half at 8 per cent., interest paid half-yearly.
4. Value of contents of a tank 4ft. 6in. high, 2ft. 8in. long, and 2ft. wide, at 6s. a gallon.
5. 50 boards each 1in. thick and 6in. wide cost £1 at 8s. a 100 running feet. Find length.

---

1. Add together $\frac{3\frac{3}{8}}{4\frac{1}{4}}$ and $\frac{1\frac{2}{3}}{2\frac{5}{6}}$ and $\frac{\text{of } \frac{9}{16}}{\frac{3}{8} \text{ of } 11}$

2. 4 millimetres 6 decimetres at £13 10s. a kilometre.

3. Sold 113½ acres at £45 14s. an acre, invested in shares paying 6½ per cent. and selling at 105. Find income.

4. By short method, to 3 places of decimals only, 0·037125 × 1800·75.

5. The diameter of a circle is 8 chains, find its area in acres. How much more water runs through a pipe ½ inch in diameter than goes through a ¼-inch pipe under the same pressure and in the same time?

HAWKE'S BAY.

SIR,— Education Office, Napier, 11th March, 1896.

I have the honour to submit a general report on the condition of education in the public schools of Hawke's Bay for the year ending 31st December, 1895.

The number of schools in operation at the close of the year was fifty-eight. This is the same number as at the date of my report last year. In January a new school was opened at Papakurau, and for the greater part of the school year fifty-nine schools were in operation, but in November the small subsidised school at Waerenga-o-kuri was closed, and I doubt whether any attempt will be made to reopen it for some time to come. Although no increase has taken place in the number of schools, the children returned as belonging to the schools at the date of my annual examination shows an increase of 351 compared with the corresponding period of last year. Most of the available accommodation in the larger schools is now taken up, and, should the same rate of increase continue during the present year, further school places will be wanted in the larger centres of population.

With few exceptions the school buildings throughout the district are in good repair, and some of them are models of neatness and good arrangement. Among the better class of school buildings may be mentioned Patutahi, Gisborne, Port Ahuriri, Napier (side), Hastings, Waipawa, Waipukurau, Norsewood, Danevirke, and Woodville. All these are in excellent order and repair, and several of them are ideally perfect in their external arrangements. I wish the same remark could be made of all the schools in the district. In many the school grounds are not kept as neatly as they might be. The growth of grass on the school walks and about the buildings often gives an untidy appearance to the surroundings, and too often supplies evidence, if not of indifference, certainly of defective supervision on the part of teachers.

The number returned on the examination schedules as belonging to the schools is 7,086. This gives an attendance for each school over the whole district of 122·2, supposing the children to be equally distributed. In the arrangement of the schools according to size, six of them contain an attendance of over 300 pupils; twelve have an attendance of more than 100 and less than 300; fifteen have each an attendance of between 50 and 100 pupils; whilst the remaining twenty-five vary in attendance from 12 to 50. The number of teachers engaged in the schools is 176—viz., 59 males and 117 females. Most of the principal and assistant teachers possess certificates of competency from the Government. The new regulation which requires pupil-teachers to obtain the Class E certificate at the close of their four years' service is likely to have a very beneficial effect upon the work of the younger teachers, and the time will soon arrive when none but teachers holding certificates of competency will be employed in the schools. At present a few remain who have no certificate, but it arises either from the fact that they are in charge of schools for which certificated teachers cannot be obtained, or because old and experienced teachers are in charge but who are unable to pass the ordeal of a certificate examination such as is required by the Central Department. To the small remnant of faithful workers that now remain I should be glad to see certificates of competency issued by the Government, especially as they have proved by practical skill, extending over a long period of service, that they are well qualified to discharge their duties as teachers in the smaller country schools.

The regularity in the attendance at school shows an improvement of exactly 3 per cent. for the year. In 1894 the average regularity of pupils at school was represented by 80·3 per cent. of the roll-number, and last year it reached 83·3 per cent. Considering that four of the large schools in the Poverty Bay district were compulsorily closed owing to the appearance of diphtheritic sore-throat among the children, the improvement in the regularity at school may be deemed satisfactory. The results, however, would have been much better had there existed no sickness in schools like Gisborne, Waerenga-a-hika, and Matawhero, where the school attendance has always been very good. During the year the regularity at Gisborne fell 7·4 per cent.; at Napier it improved 4·2 per cent., Woodville 4·4 per cent., whilst Wairoa and Taradale improved their regularity 6·5 and 2·2 per cent. respectively.

I believe that truant officers have been appointed by the Board in each of the districts named, but I am uncertain whether the improvement in four of the districts is the result of such appointments having been made. As already explained, the gross increase in the attendance for the year is 351, or one less than for the previous year, and it no more than represents what may be expected in the ordinary annual increase of the district. After another year's experience of the work of truant officers it may be possible to estimate in some measure the effect of such appointments upon the school attendance, and I shall rejoice should it be found that their efforts result in improving the attendance at schools like Taradale, Wairoa, Woodville, and Danevirke. There is plenty of room for improvement in each of these places, but especially at Taradale and Wairoa, where the attendance is represented for the year by 70·7 per cent. at the former and 77 at the latter, although the compulsory clause is supposed to be operative in each district. Attendances such as these can never make a school successful, and it is useless to expect anything more than mediocrity and disappointment in schools which are carried on under such conditions.

The examination and inspection of the schools were finished somewhat earlier than usual, although more visits of inspection were made to the schools than at any former period. By means of a slight rearrangement in my work, combined with the fact that all the arithmetical tests for the standards are issued by the Central Department, there is much more time available both for inspection and examination, and I was able to visit certain of the outlying schools three, and several of them four, times during the year.

The following table gives in summary form the examination results from all the schools with the exception of the Meanee Catholic Mission School, which was examined by me in December at the request of the authorities. The presentations in standards, including thirty pupils in the class above the Sixth Standard, numbered 4,463, or 62·9 per cent. of the total number enrolled. There were ninety-seven absent from examination, 880 failed to reach the requirements, and 3,456, or 79·7 per cent. of those examined, passed the necessary tests.

For purpose of comparison the results are added for the corresponding period of 1894:—

Classes.	Presented.	Examined.	Failed.	Absent.	Passed.	Percentage of passed to examined.	Average Age of those that passed.
							Yrs. mos.
Above Standard VI.	30	...	...	...	...	...	...
Standard VI. ...	255	251	72	4	179	71·3	14 0
" V. ...	474	468	177	6	291	62·2	13 1
" IV. ...	784	726	200	22	562	77·4	12 4
" III. ...	920	895	191	25	704	78·4	11 0
" II. ...	963	944	104	19	840	90·0	10 0
" I. ...	1,037	1,016	136	21	880	86·6	8 11
Preparatory ...	2,623	...	...	...	...	...	...
Totals ...	7,086	4,336	880	97	3,456	79·7	11 6*
Totals for 1894	6,735	3,961	797	192	3,164	...	...

The total number belonging to the schools as shown in the table is much lower than the average weekly roll as shown in the quarterly returns of attendance; but it may be assumed that the number entered on the examination schedules represents the normal attendance of pupils at the schools for the year. Excluding those examined in the class above Standard VI., the passes for the year reach a satisfactory percentage, but the most favourable circumstance in the presentations is the fact that 63 per cent. of the pupils belonging to the schools are doing work in one or other of the standards. Those who fail in the examination are simply unable to claim promotion to a higher standard, but it is assumed that they are able to do the work required for the standard below that in which they were severally examined. Five hundred and twenty of those in the preparatory classes were over eight years of age. The causes alleged by teachers for the non-presentation of so many children in one or other of the standards are similar to those stated a year ago. As usual, irregular attendance is the chief cause, whilst "natural dulness," "wanted at home," and "recently admitted," account for the remainder.

In the above table it is interesting to notice the proportion of passes in the different standards. Of those examined in standards 79·7 per cent. pass the requirements. In Standards I. and II. the percentages are 86·6 and 90 respectively. Standard V. shows very low results, but this is probably the most difficult standard under the present syllabus. Standards I. and II. were examined in pass-subjects by the principal teacher in each school, and the above results represent the sum of their judgment. On examination day I usually test some of the pass-work in my own way, but in every instance the results submitted by the teachers have been accepted without demur, after forming my judgment upon the efficiency of a standard, from an inspection of copy-books and drawing-books, followed by an oral examination of the children in class and additional subjects. Nor have I any reason to think that the large majority of teachers accept other than a fair standard of attainments from those whom they examine under the regulations: and yet I doubt the wisdom of the course that is being adopted. The fifty-eight schools in the district have each a different ideal as to what should constitute a pass, and there are certainly wide differences in the attainments of Standards I. and II. pupils in the different schools. I ventured last year to express a somewhat strong opinion against taking up the time of the principal teachers in examination-work for pass purposes to the neglect of higher and more important duties, and careful observation during the past year has further strengthened me in my objection. The lessening of examinations, improved methods of organization, and the better utilisation of the services of headmasters in the larger schools are matters that call for most serious consideration if the schools are to become something better than places for the pursuit of mental gymnastics. It was one of the aims of the Inspectors when in conference to minimise the examinations as much as possible, and thereby benefit all concerned in them. But the examinations continue in an intensified form, the only difference being that the principal teachers are withdrawn from their legitimate duties to do the work of examiners and supervisors. I desire particularly to bring this matter under the notice of the Board, because I am satisfied that the best work of the best teachers in the district is being lost by the new system which is coming into fashion. It is teaching and not examination that will improve the condition of education, and I am anxious to see this aspect of school-keeping enforced in all the schools of the district.

* Mean of average age.

In my inspection visits to the schools a good deal of time has been taken up with the work of the pupil-teachers. The new regulations relating to them give much greater prominence than formerly to their technical training. Criticism-lessons are being given in the larger schools, at which the assistant-teachers are required to be present. This is having an excellent effect upon the younger teachers, and I regret that the plan cannot be applied in the case of the smaller schools. Possibly the Board might be able to devise a plan whereby the pupil-teachers in the smaller schools could be transferred to the larger schools for a year's special training on the completion of their term of service. Such a plan need cost no more than the present arrangements, but it would prove of much benefit to the teachers, who often see no other school than their own during the course of their training.

The results of the standard examinations supply evidence of fair average progress in most of the schools. As may be expected where teachers carry on their work under so many varied conditions, the methods employed and the results achieved differ a good deal. The plan of supplying tests in arithmetic by the department widens the means of judging as to the efficiency and soundness of the instruction, as it enables pupils to be tested more thoroughly than was possible under the old conditions. In several schools the blackboard has been used for tests, and in others the questions have been dictated; these plans have generally been used as alternatives to the cards. A mental paper is always set as part of the arithmetic test in the upper standards, and I usually find that those pupils who are strongest in mental arithmetic send in the best papers in the ordinary test. Dexterity in the use of figures by frequent and varied oral teaching is one of the best means I know of paving the way to the proper solution of more difficult problems, and this can always be attained by proper and systematic instruction in the lower classes. The failures in the higher standards in this important subject are somewhat numerous. Questions of a mechanical character were usually attempted with fair success, but when problems requiring a little thought had to be done the weakness of the teaching often became apparent. The style of the paper work, including the shape of the figures, does not satisfy me, and there is need of improvement in this direction. The disuse of slates in the upper standards is a step in the right direction, and I look forward to the time when slates for purposes of instruction will be things of the past in this district. Reading still continues to be taught with little apparent intelligence. It is true that in most schools two and even three books are taken for each standard above the second, but they are used as means of information rather than as helps to intelligent reading. I believe that most of the defects in reading which are met with in the upper standards arise solely from the fact that young and untrained teachers are placed in charge of the preparatory classes. Proper pronunciation, correct emphasis, and intelligent reading have their origin in the lower classes, and if those who are placed in charge to lay a foundation in language are inexperienced and ignorant as to the course to be followed, it can hardly be expected that intelligent reading will be heard in the higher standards. The use of the school and class library is extending among the schools, and I shall rejoice when a school library is deemed to be as necessary as a map or diagram in helping on the training and intelligence of the children. In the neighbouring education district grants are made to foster the encouragement of school libraries, and were a similar plan adopted here much good would ensue, as the Committees would be thereby encouraged to assist in promoting so laudable a work. Writing is beginning to receive more attention than was given to it a few years ago. No subject is easier to teach successfully by adopting proper methods, and yet one seldom sees traces of systematic instruction in the schools. Good writing, like good reading, has its origin in the lower classes, and this fact is coming to be recognised in most of the schools. In the Napier and Port Ahuriri infant schools slates are not used by the children when learning to write, it being found that the use of the pen induces care and attention among the children, and that writing and spelling are vastly improved thereby. The styles of writing most in favour are the Jackson "Upright" and the Vere Foster "Bold," but any other style may be used as long as it is in accordance with the regulations. In Standards V. and VI. formal handwriting from copies should give place to rapid transcription of poetry, copying commercial papers, letter-writing, and all such matters as require legibility and induce freedom. Drawing is, on the whole, in a very satisfactory state, more especially the freehand, which is well and carefully taught throughout the schools. Geometrical, including plane, in Standards IV. and V., and solid in Standard VI., is not so well done, except in the larger schools, where much of the work is of excellent quality. Most of the schools have availed themselves of the regulation by which exemption may be claimed for girls in geometrical drawing, and as a consequence scale-drawing showed signs of weakness among the girls in all cases where exemption was claimed. Composition is one of the best-taught subjects of the syllabus at the present time. Original compositions, reproduction of a story, and paraphrasing are all given as tests above Standard IV., whilst in the latter standard and in the one below it two tests are set, one being based on the work taken by the teacher during the year, and the other being the reproduction of a simple story read over twice to the children, either by the teacher in charge or by myself, as the case may be. In some of the schools very simple exercises in composition are given even to First Standard pupils. The work is based on the object-lessons, and the results are very encouraging. I have read many of the compositions done by the children in one of the largest infant schools, and they show much promise and intelligence. When based on simple objects with which children are personally acquainted, such tests are sure to be productive of good, as they tend to lead children to express themselves in simple and intelligent language. I have again to express general approval at the way geography is prepared in the majority of schools. Defects are met with here and there, and several very bad cases came before me during the year of neglect and careless preparation, but fortunately such cases are of rare occurrence. In Standards III. and IV. my tests were oral and individual, and a full knowledge of the maps mentioned in the regulation requirements was demanded from each. Generally the answering of the children was clear and intelligent, and showed careful preparation by the

teachers. Standards V. and VI. were not so strong in mapping and in the mathematical and physical division of their work, and increased attention should be given to these during the present year. History, grammar, and science do not flourish in the schools; the powers conferred on the teachers of selecting for themselves the historical subjects of instruction for their classes has certainly not improved the teaching of history in the schools—it is too often the standard of mediocrity rather than the standard of intelligence that is reached; whilst in Standard VI. the teaching of social economy as defined in the regulations is quite neglected. I regret that more fostering care is not given to the teaching of science in the Board's schools, such as is given in the Wellington District. Help such as the teachers in the latter district receive would encourage the practical teaching of science in all the larger schools. At present experimental science is attempted in only two schools, although nominally science is taught in all. Even good diagrams would be of some help, but simple scientific apparatus would be better. A little encouragement in either direction would prove of value to the schools at the present time. Grammar, though it has suffered somewhat, is still taught with fair success in the majority of schools. In the higher classes derivation and roots are too often "crammed" for examination purposes, but Standards III. and IV. usually prepare the requirements well. Oral and written tests are set without the intervention of printed cards, which tend, so I imagine, to limit the means of finding out the actual knowledge of the children in any subject. The additional subjects, as usual, are among the best work of the schools. Recitation, needlework, and drill are taught in most of them with commendable success. Swedish drill is taught in some and in all the larger ones. Dumb-bells and calisthenic rods are in common use for the physical training of both boys and girls. Sewing maintains a high standard of excellence, and it is taught, without exception, in all schools.

I am able to say very little as to the work of School Committees. Formerly members of Committees were always present on the day of examination, but, except in a few districts, I do not even know the name of a Chairman. Whether interest in school matters is dying remains to be seen, but it seems to me that Committees are less active in school matters than they were a few years ago. It may be they have less work to do now that schoolhouses have been built, grounds fenced, and schools organized and in working order. I would remind them, however, that their duties are by no means ended. School grounds need many improvements. Gymnastic apparatus has yet to be provided, drainage and sanitation require attention in many districts, and school attendance wants to be encouraged and fostered everywhere; and these can only be done effectively by means of local Committees working under proper guidance and control.

The tone and discipline of the schools continue satisfactory, and much may be set down to the credit of Committees. In one case a serious complaint was made against a school, but inquiry found the charge to be unfounded. The fullest attention is paid by me at each visit to a school to inquire into the morals of the pupils, and, considering the circumstances under which so many children are brought together, it is gratifying to report so much that is morally sound and good in the schools. The behaviour of the children at inspection and examination is generally commendable, and there is evidence that the moral training of the children receives the careful attention of teachers. The tabulations contain a summary of the examination results for each school, and of its general condition under the heading "Manners and Tone."

I have, &c.,

The Chairman, Board of Education, Napier. H. Hill, Inspector.

MARLBOROUGH.

Sir,—

I have the honour to lay before you my fifth annual report on the public schools of Marlborough.

During the year 1895 sixty-three schools have been in operation in the district, this being an increase of eight upon the previous year, as one of the small schools reported as temporarily closed at the end of 1894 has not since been reopened. Of these, fifty-three were examined, with the results shown in the table accompanying this report. Five of the remaining schools had been recently opened at the date of the examination; two had been closed before that time; one remote school will be examined shortly; another (Stephen Island) is practically inaccessible; and the scholars from one household school in Queen Charlotte Sound could not reach the place appointed for the examination on account of tempestuous weather.

The number of children on the rolls of the schools at the date of their respective examinations was 2,169, being ninety more than were presented in 1894. The number absent from the examination was sixty-two—an increase of eleven. The number of scholars passing the examination (including those in Standards I. and II.) was 1,288, or 122 more than passed in the previous year. This is equivalent to an increase of 2 per cent. on the number examined, and 3 per cent. on the roll-number. The scholars in the class above Standard VI. number forty-eight, having increased by six; whilst the preparatory class numbered 599 this year, as against 634 in 1894. The proportion of scholars below Standard I. in the whole district is about 28 per cent. In the Board's schools (as distinguished from the aided and household schools) the proportion varies from 19 per cent. at Marshlands and Deep Creek to 42 per cent. at Cullensville. At the four largest schools in the district the proportion of scholars below Standard I. is—Blenheim, 28 per cent.; Picton, 32 per cent.; Grovetown, 24 per cent.; and Springlands, 41 per cent. The average for the whole colony, as given in the Minister's last report, was about 25 per cent. There is a gratifying diminution in the number of children above eight years of age not presented in Standard I. Last year these numbered 197. This year only ninety-two were detained in the preparatory class, and the reasons given for such detention were—"recently admitted," 34; "dull," 20; "irregular attendance," 18;

"illness," 2. No reason was given in eight cases, and the same may be said of eight others who were described as "unfit"; and seven at another school were "to be promoted" at some future time. At the school with the largest proportion of children below Standard I. there were only three above eight years, but several had been nearly three years at school, and ought to have been ready for presentation in Class I. No reason was offered in these cases.

The number of small (household) schools added to the list this year more than comes up to the average of the last five years; and there is no doubt that this rate of increase will be maintained for several years to come. It is therefore to be hoped that the appeal shortly to be made to the Government by the smaller districts may result in some arrangement by which this very useful class of schools may be provided for without the necessity for crippling the operations of the Boards in other directions.

All the Board schools received visits of inspection during the past year, and the inspection reports were laid before you. The proposal made in my last report to provide for the regular inspection of the Sounds schools was adopted by your Board, and many of these schools were visited accordingly, the results of such visits being duly reported. Last year, however, the time available for the work was rather unsuitable, as many of the schools were closed for the midwinter holidays, thus rendering my visits fruitless. This fact caused the expense of the trip to be less than it would have been if every school had been in working order at the time, as in that case the round trip would have occupied at least twice as much time, and have been correspondingly costly. The regular inspection of these small and remote schools is quite as necessary as it is with the nearer and larger ones, which, moreover, can be visited, if necessary, at any time and in any weather. I therefore venture to hope that the Board will make suitable and adequate provision for the continuation of the work in the future.

The results of the examinations have been, on the whole, very satisfactory, only four schools having failed to any serious extent. As regards the efficiency of most of the small aided schools, the opinion I formerly expressed has been once more confirmed, as nearly all of them are doing valuable work as far as they have hitherto gone, whilst at some of them the results are in no way inferior to the best obtained in the district. Two prizes given through a member of your Board (J. A. Lambert, Esq.) for the best paper on political economy were both gained by scholars from one of these little schools.

The treatment of the pass-subjects this year shows an improvement all round, varying from 4 per cent. in drawing and arithmetic to 9 per cent. in geography, the last, with arithmetic, being, as usual, the least satisfactory of the pass-subjects. Comparing my own report for 1894 with the reports of other Inspectors for the same year, I find that in six other districts geography was pronounced to be more or less unsatisfactory—especially physical geography. These districts were Auckland, Taranaki, Wanganui, Nelson, Otago, and Southland.

Reading appears to be fairly well taught in most of our schools, but, as in no school is there more than one reading-book used, the contents of which are, in the lower classes, almost "known by heart," the results must be considerably discounted. It is now, I think, about two years since the Education Department first expressed an intention of providing a set of reading-books for New Zealand schools, and on that account the introduction of another reading-book for this district was from time to time postponed. It is now, however, evident that the Board must take independent action if our schools are to be furnished with a second set of suitable readers. The book that has at last been issued by the department is no doubt a very interesting compilation, but (with the exception of a few chapters) as regards its fitness for its intended purpose there is much room for argument. But, were it ever so good a book, it only professes to be suitable for the Fifth and Sixth Standards, whilst the lower classes, in which the want of additional reading matter is most pressing, are still unprovided for. Seeing the number of admirable books published by such firms as Blackwood, Chambers, Macmillan, Nelson, and others, it seems to be a "work of supererogation" to attempt to provide locally what can already be obtained of better quality and at less expense from any one of the publishers mentioned. As far as reading is concerned, the requirements of the British codes are practically the same as those of the New Zealand syllabus. The occasional references in the English books to circumstances which are changed or reversed on this side of the equator, so far from being objectionable, are, in my opinion, a positive advantage, as supplying the intelligent teacher with an additional motive for a careful explanation of the principles of physical and mathematical geography and other matters. But, whether obtained from Wellington or elsewhere, the great obstacle to the introduction of a second reading-book still remains the same—and that is, the question of cost, and by whom it must be borne. To supply each school with a complete set of books gratuitously would be the easiest method if the funds of the Board will permit. I estimate that, allowing one copy for the use of every child on the school-rolls, the expense of furnishing the necessary books would be £100. Such books (kept, of course, in the school) should last with ordinary care for at least five years; so that the annual cost would be about £20, or possibly even less, as many parents might be willing to provide their children with such books, thus proportionately reducing the number to be supplied gratuitously.

With regard to the methods of teaching this subject, as observed at the inspection visits, there is, in the majority of the schools, little or nothing to be desired. Simultaneous reading might with advantage be more generally adopted in large classes, as without it the scholars can scarcely be given sufficient practice in the limited time available for the purpose.

Writing, as shown in the copy-books, is generally good, and in some schools really admirable. The practical application of the subject to the written work of the examination (after making due allowance for the limited time available) seldom realises the expectations raised by the appearance of the copy-books; and this seems to bear out the complaint so frequently made by business men as to the indifferent handwriting of lads engaged from our public schools. Although I have no faith in any particular system of teaching writing, having met with most admirable, as well as most

execrable, specimens of penmanship from every variety of systems, I feel satisfied that the books in use here are as good as any, in the hands of a painstaking teacher; but, as there seems to be a desire on the part of some teachers to adopt the vertical style, and seeing that such books have now been authorised by the department, I beg to recommend that the Board should place them on the list of books that may be used in this district.

Arithmetic.—Considering the time generally devoted to this subject, the results at first sight seem very unsatisfactory, as, with the exception of geography, it yields more failures than any other pass-subject; but, when we consider the great extent of the ground to be covered in the higher standards, the very limited choice given to the scholars at the examination, the necessarily short time that can be allowed for the work, and the well-known liability of the ablest scholars to err through the hurry and excitement of an examination, I am not disposed to attribute the low position the subject generally occupies to any lack of care or ability on the part of the majority of our teachers. The cards supplied by the department are on the whole very reasonable tests, though in the preparation of such a number a certain amount of inequality is unavoidable. The cards for Standard V. would appear to have been rather more severe this year than those set for the other classes, since only 32 per cent. of the scholars in this standard gained half-marks for arithmetic.

The chief faults I have observed in the teaching of this subject are usually predominant in the preparatory classes, where the first foundation is laid. Oral addition is not unfrequently too soon abandoned for the multiplication tables, and the introduction of mental arithmetic too long delayed.

Geography.—Though still very low down in the scale, the improvement in geography this year is encouraging, and is, perhaps, partly due to the issue of Geographical Readers to many of the smaller schools.

Composition and *Drawing* are both steadily improving—the latter stimulated by the examination held under the auspices of the Wellington School of Art.

Class and Additional Subjects.—Of the "class" group, grammar again occupies the lowest place. In last year's report I remarked upon the deterioration of this work since its removal from the pass-subjects. On looking through the Inspectors' reports from the other education districts I find that the same opinion is expressed in ten other reports out of twelve. As, perhaps, these reports are not generally read out of the districts to which they refer, I will quote briefly the opinions expressed on this subject by the several writers. Auckland: "Grammar is now everywhere a class-subject, and has not gained by the change." Taranaki: "Except in a few schools the instruction in grammar may be said to be confined to the work done in Stardard III." Wanganui: "In Standard V. and Standard VI. grammar has shown a great falling-off since it was placed in the class-subject group." Hawke's Bay: "Grammar is not taught as it used to be when a pass-subject." Nelson: "When this subject is not neglected, its treatment is too often unscientific, the work rarely rising above what is expected from the Fourth Standard." Grey: "Grammar is generally on the weak side." Westland: "In grammar the results are on the whole only fair." North Canterbury: "The mental arithmetic we expect to see much better; of the grammar we have no such hope." South Canterbury: "Not only in smaller schools, but also in two or three of the largest, the quality of the work has been marked down as worthless" (this refers to the work of the two higher standards only). Otago: "The results in grammar are very disappointing." The Wellington Inspectors are silent on the subject, while in Southland alone the report says, "Grammar is taught in a fairly satisfactory manner in most of the schools."

In view of the remarkable concurrence of opinion shown in the foregoing quotations, it is impossible to resist the conclusion that grammar—"one of the most truly educative subjects in the primary course of instruction"—has ceased to be regarded as important in the majority of New Zealand schools, and that its removal from the pass to the class group has been the reverse of beneficial to the cause of true education throughout the colony. Pointing out a defect is, however, always far easier than suggesting a remedy; and in the crowded condition of the New Zealand syllabus the latter task is beset with peculiar difficulties. Should the reports on this matter for the year now under review be anything like as unanimously unfavourable as they were last year, the department will surely give the matter some reconsideration, or otherwise such reports may as well be committed to the flames, and the expense of reprinting them at Wellington avoided.

Singing was presented at only eight of our schools, the subject having been dropped at one or two that formerly took it up. The most marked improvement has been effected at the Blenheim schools, and at Renwick the subject was taken up this year for the first time with most satisfactory results.

With regard to the other subjects of the class and additional groups I have nothing to say this year except to remark that there seems to be a small but steady improvement in mental arithmetic, and that needlework, though very good at several schools, is at the others very far below the standard expected in other education districts. In repetition and recitation there is room for much improvement, and only nine schools have been awarded "good" marks in this subject, and five of these were small aided schools.

The instruction and training of the preparatory classes at the larger schools are usually satisfactory; it is at the smaller schools with a single teacher and with all the standards represented that the preparatory class is at the greatest disadvantage; and the experiment of introducing some of the kindergarten occupations into such schools will be tried during the coming year on the arrival of the necessary material from England.

Supervision in the Playground.—Although at my inspection visits I seldom have to report unfavourably upon this topic, yet circumstances occasionally reveal the fact that there is in some cases room for great improvement in this respect. The expense to which the Board is frequently put in repairing what may be styled preventable damage is far greater than it ought to be, and might be very considerably reduced by the exercise of more constant vigilance on the part of the teaching staff.

The growing importance of shorthand-writing in commercial and other occupations, and the great advantage those proficient in the art have over others not so qualified, seem to indicate that before long this subject must be added to our school course, although some class or additional subject must be sacrificed to make room for it. Stenography has been for some time past one of the extra subjects of the English code, and in a few years' time no youth will have much chance of promotion in any mercantile or official pursuit unless he is proficient in shorthand-writing.

In conclusion, I desire to express my satisfaction with the work of our schools in general. I believe all our teachers are actuated by a sincere desire to do their utmost for the mental and moral improvement of their scholars; and that on the whole the public is receiving full value for the expenditure involved. The conduct of the children out of school, so far as it comes under my notice, is indicative of a wholesome influence exercised upon them by their teachers.

I have, &c.,

The Chairman, Education Board, Marlborough. JOHN SMITH, Inspector.

SUMMARY OF RESULTS FOR THE WHOLE DISTRICT.

Standard Classes.	Presented.	Present.	Passed.	Average Age of those that passed.
				Yrs. mos.
Above Standard VI.	48	...	...	...
Standard VI.	118	111	103	14 2
" V.	182	175	144	13 2
" IV.	269	253	202	12 4
" III.	341	331	282	11 3
" II.	295	283	262	10 7
" I.	317	307	295	9 0
Preparatory	599	..	...	...
Totals	2,169	1,460	1,288	11 9*

NELSON.

SIR,—

We have the honour to submit to you our annual report on the Nelson public schools.

In addition to the number reported last year, two new schools—Win's Valley and Griffiths' Mill—have been at work during the year, so that the total number examined was 109. Three others are being built, and will be opened in the first quarter of the coming year. Visits of inspection have been paid to ninety-nine schools. The growth of so many small and necessarily expensive schools in outlying settlements must, for the sake of more economic administration, sooner or later induce the Board to adopt a policy of amalgamating adjoining schools in the older settled districts in which means of communication are easy. As instances where such amalgamation is practicable, and would be attended also (as has already been the result at Charleston and at Motueka) by greater economy of teaching-power, we quote the two Wakefield schools—Brightwater and River Terrace—and the two Richmond schools. The excess of small schools in this district necessarily entails a low average salary, and as those having more than 200 pupils in average attendance (a size which, in larger districts, would not be considered of much importance) are only two, the chances of even a very successful teacher ever attaining a good position here are very few, so that there is little cause to wonder that several of our most intelligent and most capable young teachers have left this district for others in which there is a better prospect of promotion. In establishing new centres a limit of distance should be definitely fixed, and no new school should be erected within at least four miles of another previously existing.

In addition to the examination of the Board's schools, the work of the last half-year has been further increased by the examination of four large schools (the two Roman Catholic schools at Westport and Reefton, and St. Mary's Orphanages at Nelson and Stoke), by the inspection and examination of one small private school at Motupiko, and by the examination of the Whakarewa Orphanage, as well as by the usual probationers' and scholarship examinations.

There were 6,033 names on the rolls of the schools on examination day, and, though the number present (5,708) shows an increase of 146 on the corresponding number last year, we do not yet consider the attendance entirely satisfactory, as no excuse for absence except that of actual illness is admissible. Reefton, Waimangaroa, and Fern Flat are responsible for the largest number of absentees. Most of the schools in which this fault was noticed last year have shown marked improvement this time. In twenty-eight schools every child was present. The average attendance for the year was 4,807, the number on the rolls at the close of the December quarter being 5,995.

The following list shows the number of teachers in the employ of the Board on the 31st December:—

	Certificated.	Uncertificated.	Total.
Head-teachers	38	2	40
Assistants	25	10	35
Sole teachers	31	37	68
	94	49	143

*Mean of average age.

Four of the uncertificated teachers hold licenses to teach. Of thirty-seven probationers four are fully certificated, and these undoubtedly could have obtained permanent employment had they desired it. Our whole probationer system needs remodelling, special consideration being given to the following particulars: Selection, scope of examination, practical training and determination of engagement. We are pleased to note that recent accessions to our teaching staff have consisted almost entirely of young, willing, energetic, and intelligent teachers from whom good work may be expected in the future.

As a result of the year's operations the district as a whole appears to better advantage, but we cannot yet congratulate the schools upon any very widespread improvement. We confess that the arithmetic especially has proved disappointing, when we take into consideration the large number of pupils who have been re-presented for the same standard examinations, and the fact that in many schools special attention has been paid to this one subject to the neglect of others. In the case of eleven schools our reports have expressed such dissatisfaction with the results and with the methods of instruction that in four instances these strictures have already led to a change of teachers, which we are confident will conduce to greater efficiency. The schools which have been most successful this year, and from which it would be almost unreasonable to expect better work, have proved to be Waimangaroa, Motupipi, Lower Moutere, Addison's Flat, Westport Girls', Lower Takaka, Motueka, Charleston, Wai-iti, Lower Wakefield Boys', Waimea West, and Capleston. Of the small schools under sole teachers we specially commend Ferntown, Merrijigs, Summerlea, Upper Motupiko, Kongahu, Sunnyside, Anatoki, Gordon, and Brighton.

The following table, being an abstract of the annual return, gives a general summary of results for the whole district:—

Classes.	Presented.	Present.	Passed.	Average Age of those that passed.
				Yrs. mos.
Above Standard VI.	147	...	...	...
Standard VI.	450	439	333	13 10
" V.	509	494	324	13 2
" IV.	792	762	550	11 3
" III.	868	841	631	11 1
" II.	811	785	713	9 7
" I.	787	748	688	8 10
Preparatory	1,669	...	...	...
Totals	6,033	4,069	3,239	11 3*

These figures, when analysed and compared with those of last year, show an improvement in every class examined by the Inspectors, and especially in Standards VI. and IV., whilst in Standard V., decidedly the weakest this year, there has been but little advancement. The pass list is consequently higher, being now 79 per cent. of the number present as compared with 74 per cent. in 1894, which, so far as the numerical record can be taken into account, is an indication of progress.

In the number of children (221) who were over eight years of age and yet not presented for Standard I. we find little variation as compared with previous years, and we feel quite satisfied with the reasons usually given for non-presentation. Irregularity of attendance fully accounts for seventy-five, and shortness of school life for sixty-nine, seventy-five being returned under the head of "exceptional dulness." For two the very reasonable excuse was given that they were the children of foreigners and possessed very little knowledge of English.

The indiscriminate passing by head-teachers of children in Standards I. and II., of which we complained last year, has in some cases had a disastrous effect upon the work of Standard III., but a perusal of the papers set this year has satisfied us that as a rule carefully-prepared and more searching tests are now being applied.

The following list of subjects in which most failures occurred shows their comparative difficulty so far as the Inspectors' tests are concerned, and may prove of interest to teachers:—

	Number present.	Reading.	Composition.	Geography.	Spelling.	Arithmetic.
Standard VI. ...	439	16	15	51	44	227
" V. ...	494	29	48	76	94	282
" IV. ...	762	46	87	134	128	307
" III. ...	841	78	50	153	225	249
	2,536	169	200	414	491	1,065

The failures in arithmetic still greatly exceed those in any other subject, being in fact nearly equal to those in all other subjects put together; but, as the arithmetical tests are set by the Inspector-General, and the scale for judging them is also prescribed by him, it is evident that the heavy record of standard failures cannot fairly be attributed to undue severity on the part of your Inspectors.

We append a brief criticism on the treatment which the different subjects in the syllabus receive:—

* Mean of average age.

Reading.—More attention is now being paid to the preparation of the lessons; but we find here a complaint which appears to be very general throughout the colony, that the course of reading is not nearly wide enough. Our recommendation to teachers *re* the use of extra readers, though followed by many, has not been universally adopted, and consequently we feel constrained to insist next year upon the full preparation, both for reading and spelling, of two books at least in each of the following standards: I., II., and III. Though this course may appear heavy at first, especially in Standard III., the results should be a more thorough grounding in the lower classes, and, consequently, greater ease and pleasure in the work of the higher. A wider course of reading should give a greater command of English, be an additional aid to composition, increase the child's general knowledge, awaken his intelligence, induce him to read for pleasure, and develop a taste for literature. We beg to call the attention of Committees to the matter of school libraries, towards the general extension of which much remains to be done.

On our inspection visits we find that too little teaching is given, the children simply being made to read and re-read selections from their books till in the lower classes they know them by heart, and yet no indication of the correct phrasing or grouping of words is given, little model reading, and in the higher classes no questioning to elicit the meaning of a phrase or passage as distinct from that of a word. As extra readers for the use of the higher classes we recommend, in addition to our stock of geographical and historical readers, three recent publications—the "New Zealand School Reader," Longmans' "Geographical Reader for New Zealand," and Nelson's domestic-economy reader entitled "Girls at Home." Committees would be doing good work in providing a small stock of extra readers for each school; and, as the children would not be required to make a special preparation of the matter contained in them, it would be always fresh, the books would be always available, being never allowed out of the schoolroom, and they should, with care, last for many years.

Spelling.—In addition to the dictation tests prescribed, a few words of spelling selected from the reading-books were given this year, and for these a proportionate allowance was made. In a few schools we found the more difficult words correctly spelt, whilst mistakes in the simpler passages of dictation were numerous. This would show that likely words had been specially prepared for examination to the neglect of transcription, or that the children had not paid sufficient attention to or had their powers of observation awakened in the reading-lessons. The best results were produced in Standard VI., and the reduced number of failures in the higher standards may be taken as a proof that the natural difficulty which so many experience with this subject is year by year being overcome.

Writing.—Legibility, neatness, and cleanliness may be fairly said to characterize the writing in almost all our schools, the exceptions being few and far between. What is now chiefly to be desired is a closer attention to the rules for forming and joining the letters. In using Jackson's Vertical copy-books, which are generally adopted throughout the district, it is imperative that the letters shall be so joined that the pen need not be raised until a word is completed, the dotting of the *i's* and the crossing of the *t's* being done at the conclusion of the word. This ought to be insisted on in the preparatory stages when the whole of the writing is done from the blackboard, so that when the children make a beginning in copy-books they have nothing to unlearn. The transcription generally gave satisfaction, although some teachers had not closely adhered to the syllabus, which prescribes a different kind for each standard.

Drawing.—From the books produced for our inspection and containing the year's work of the pupils we see that the children are trained to work neatly and carefully, but too often with a laboured stiffness and lack of boldness and freedom that betray little facility of hand; and many of the freehand and model-drawing tests done before us showed that it is one thing to produce under the eye and correction of the teacher a neat and faithful copy, and another to make a pleasing picture without such supervision. The child's unaided effort is the best test of his proficiency, and unless he is therein successful the chief aim of the study, the training of the eye, has not been accomplished. Although in the main the syllabus is carefully followed by the teachers, in many cases they appear to have overlooked the regulation providing for the enlargements and reductions of copies in Standards V. and VI. We are pleased to note some improvement in model-drawing, and capital work is often produced in scale and geometric drawing, the latter branch being sometimes taken by the girls as well as the boys.

Pupils from Richmond Boys' School competed in the first-grade examinations held by the Wellington Technical School, and were very successful in each of the four branches. We regret that more do not avail themselves of these examinations, and would strongly advise all teachers and probationers who do not possess a certificate for drawing to compete for the second grade certificate. We take this opportunity to remind teachers that these examinations may be held in their own schools, for the first grade usually in September, and for the second in November, provided that written notice is given to the secretary before the close of July or October respectively, and that suitable arrangements are made.

Arithmetic.—As the use of the term "pass" in any subject draws no distinction between work that is merely satisfactory and work that is really excellent, a list of passes or failures is not by any means an accurate criterion of the quality of the work produced; but, as such a numerical estimate has a certain value, we hope we may be excused for again quoting figures in order to show the progress made during the year.

The number of failures in arithmetic as a percentage of the number present in each standard:—

	Standard VI. Per Cent.	Standard V. Per Cent.	Standard IV. Per Cent.	Standard III. Per Cent.
1894...	69	61	55	39
1895...	51	57	40	29

That considerably over half of our children in Standards V. and VI. are still unable to do a fair proportion of the questions set is discreditable both to the children and their teachers. Though the errors were sometimes due to inaccurate work (the result of careless grounding in the simple rules), the failures were too often owing to inadequate comprehension of the problem set or failure to grasp the point of the question. All of these faults were painfully apparent in Standard V., where we often found mechanical work, such as simplifying a complex fraction, clumsily set out and full of errors, whilst the problems were seldom attempted. We admit that Standard V. is a difficult stage, requiring at the outset a thorough grasp of simple fractions and of the principles which their working involves, so as to form a basis for all the operations not only of the one year but of the next, and that the questions set were somewhat difficult; but these excuses do not by any means fully account for the miserable results. We fear that too little real teaching is done, its place being frequently taken by supplying examination and test cards, and that our best teaching often degenerates into the mere explanation of rules, the teacher's mind being rarely in sympathy with the minds of the children, so that he may fully realise their difficulties and lead them by inductive reasoning from stage to stage. If they are led in this manner to obtain a grasp of the underlying principles, they will more readily see their way through problems involving those principles, and will find to their delight that arithmetic is not a bundle of rules, but, as a brother Inspector has aptly put it, "merely common-sense expressed in figures." As it is, we fear that the subject is taught almost entirely with a view to passing the examination, whilst one of the greatest benefits which a thorough arithmetical course should confer—the training of the reasoning powers—is completely ignored. Diagrams and concrete illustrations, not even excepting the ball-frame, may be used with great advantage in Standard V.

Mental arithmetic is often neglected, and rarely deserves commendation. We have no doubt that all classes would gain in facility and accuracy by the oral practice of even simple exercises in addition and subtraction.

Composition.—This important subject now receives more systematic treatment than was formerly the case, most of our teachers devoting a portion of their time to giving model lessons, and this with the best results. It is now at last recognised that composition is an art, and does not, as Dogberry would have said, come by nature. The exercises in the amalgamation of sentences and in paraphrasing of verse were only moderately well done, but now that teachers are better acquainted with the requirements in these matters better work will be looked for. We propose to test the composition of the Fifth and Sixth Classes by asking them to reproduce in their own words the substance of a narrative read out to them by the Inspector. Paraphrasing will also be expected from the Fifth Standard, as provided by the syllabus.

Geography.—During the last two years, since geography has been made a pass-subject in all the higher standards, its study has been improving. The Third Standard children usually get up their modest programme really well, but they are often weak in questions relating to their immediate surroundings. The principal features of the district should be studied first, and from the knowledge the child possesses of those that come under his own observation he will be able by comparison to form an idea of those of other parts of the world. In the Fourth, map-drawing should be more systematically taught, and the children should be trained to keep before them a mental map of the country or part of the world with which they are dealing. Places of interest along the principal trade-routes of the world are apparently learnt disjointedly by rote, for a general hotch-potch of them is often served up when a particular route is asked for. In the Fifth and Sixth most improvement is noticeable, but there also weakness was often betrayed in questions requiring a little thought, especially those in mathematical and physical geography.

Grammar.—We regret that in this subject no improvement is observable. The papers submitted to us can only be characterized as a farrago of absurdities, and if nothing better than this can be achieved it would be an unmixed benefit if the subject were excised from the syllabus. If the answers to our questions are to be taken as a test of the quality of the instruction given, and if we have no other criterion, the teaching, especially in analysis and parsing, must be sadly wanting in intelligence. We have no reason to think that grammar is neglected because it has been reduced (or elevated) to the rank of a class-subject, since history and science, which hold the same position, are often admirably taught, even in schools which are in no way distinguished for their success in the matter of passes. It is therefore impossible to avoid the conclusion that the methods of teaching are at fault, the children being allowed to trust to memory and guess-work, and to regard the exercises more in the light of a Chinese puzzle than something to be understood by the application of common-sense. It is much to be regretted that this subject should be thus neglected and misunderstood, since it is, with the possible exception of arithmetic, the one which, if properly treated, is the most useful as a means of developing the reasoning powers, thus taking the place which Euclid occupies in a more advanced course. We strongly advise all teachers to read the remarks on this head in the last report of Mr. Petrie, the Chief Inspector of the Auckland District. The shortcomings noted by him are precisely those we meet with everywhere, and we heartily indorse his recommendations as to the remedy to be applied.

History is now generally and successfully taught, but in the lower standards dates are sometimes learnt apart from the value and importance of the events with which they are connected, and the list of events often include unimportant and trivial occurrences which outrage one's sense of proportion, whilst their order and arrangement completely ignore the sequence of history.

Science is usually as well taught as can be expected considering the difficulties under which most of the schools labour from want of apparatus. From the nature of the course selected for this year—physiology—this want was not felt so much as usual, and consequently excellent work was done in several schools.

Object-lessons.—Although we called attention last year to deficiencies in this branch of instruction, object-lessons strictly so called are still rarely given, their place being taken by a few

either chatty or learned lectures on common things, which we suspect are often hurriedly rushed through in the last few weeks preceding the examination. We expect each teacher to draw up and carry out a more thorough and systematic course for the ensuing year.

Recitation.—The importance of storing the memory with a few great masterpieces of English poetry should not be lost sight of. Unfortunately, the pieces in the children's reading-books are too often of second- or third-rate merit—good enough in many cases for reading and even for re-reading, but hardly worth committing to memory to the exclusion of those classics the possession of which should be "a joy for ever." Teachers are recommended to go outside the class-books for suitable pieces, and to carefully consider their permanent value before making a selection. A list should be kept of all the year's work in this department.

Music.—With a few exceptions singing is taught wherever the teacher has an ear, and especially when some elementary knowledge of music has been acquired. Little advance, however, has been made in this art except in the City of Nelson, where a number of the younger teachers have recently qualified themselves to take it up. It is now taught systematically in the two central schools, the work of the year, though not of a showy character, being calculated to be of great value as groundwork for future efforts. The tonic sol-fa system is in general use throughout the district.

Drill is now becoming more general, but in very few instances can it be said to be well taught. Those who attempt to teach military drill are often as much as twenty years behind the times, and we doubt whether some of the orders we hear ever had their origin in any existing drill-book. "What is worth doing is worth doing well," and it especially behoves those who are training the "coming race" to be progressive. The latest authorised book on the subject, "Infantry Drill, 1893," is used by all Volunteers in the district, and should be readily procurable. Its first forty-two pages give sufficient instruction for imparting a good military and physical training, and, if desired, Indian-club exercises will add a pleasing variation. Through the wise liberality of some Committees, several schools have been supplied with gymnastic apparatus, but we have not yet had the pleasure of seeing any training given in the right use of these machines. Except in a very few schools little is yet done for the girls, for whom pole and Indian-club exercises, as well as general calisthenics, are so well adapted.

Needlework.—We desire to express our thanks to the ladies who, in most of our schools, gratuitously examine the sewing. In many cases their criticisms are of great value, and with the reports form powerful incentives towards the maintenance of efficiency.

In conclusion, we desire to touch upon a subject the importance of which it is difficult to overestimate, and upon which it is yet more difficult to form a definite opinion—namely, the training in manners and morals which our children are receiving. As far as our limited opportunities enable us to judge, there is reason to conclude that these important matters are by no means neglected. The conduct of the children at inspection and examination visits is almost invariably good, instances of misbehaviour being rare indeed. The discipline of the schools appears to be maintained without undue severity, and it is hoped that the teachers are, in most instances, thoroughly alive to the importance of that moral training and discipline which are nowhere more needed than in a community like ours, where it is notorious that "home rule" is, for various reasons, considerably relaxed.

We have, &c.,

G. A. Harkness, M.A.,
W. Ladley,
} Inspectors.

The Chairman, Education Board, Nelson.

GREY.

Gentlemen,— 28th January, 1896.

I have the honour to lay before you my annual report on the Grey public schools for the year ending the 31st December, 1895.

There were at the close of the year twenty-five schools at work under the Board, being one in excess of the number for last year. The one to which I refer—Blackball—was opened with a roll-number of about twenty, which increased steadily until the end of the school year, when the roll-number was forty-five—a very gratifying result, and on which the Board decided to complete the building according to the original plan. I consider this school is destined to become one of the most important under the Board.

During the year inspection visits were paid to twenty-four schools, the one omitted being Barrytown; this building having been blown down during a gale, all school work was necessarily suspended for a time. The building, reduced in dimensions, has been re-erected on a better and more convenient site, and is now a very nice school, being quite large enough for the requirements of the place.

The inspection visit disclosed some laxity on the part of a few teachers in keeping their registers fully written up, and serious negligence on the part of one in not keeping any register with the exception of that for the daily attendance. I found in several instances no entry had been made under the heading of "Progress" in the admission-register for some years. In each of such cases the teacher was instructed to fill these particulars in as far as possible.

Detailed reports on the buildings (included in inspection reports) were laid before you during August last. The various repairs and improvements effected during the year placed most of the smaller country school buildings in a fairly satisfactory condition. The two large schools, viz., Grey and Taylorville, to either of which little was done last year, will be found to need a considerable outlay to put them in an efficient state, and I would strongly urge the Board to deal with these during the year. In my report on each building I have suggested further repairs and improvements

as I considered necessary, including new fences, repairs to fences, improvements to grounds, &c. I have also added a list of necessary requisites for each school, and I should be glad if the Board would supply these as soon as possible; for, where some teachers are to be found who, with commendable zeal, always make the best of everything, taxing their inventive powers to supply any deficiency in teaching materials, and who always do good work even in adverse circumstances, there are others who, for lack of some requisite, will be ever ready to make that an excuse for their shortcomings.

The Health of the Teachers and the Taught.—Notwithstanding the very severe winter that was experienced this year, the health of all has been very good. In one or two instances country schools were closed for the midwinter vacation rather before the prescribed time in consequence of a falling-off in the attendance caused through some epidemic, which, however, speedily passed away, and I do not think the attendances were very materially affected on that account. In no case has a school been closed owing to ill-health on the part of the teacher. In order to guard against an event of this kind occurring, the health of the teacher should be studied as far as possible, especially where so many females are employed, as is the case in this district. With this object in view I would ask the Board to consider the advisability of supplying schools with high desks and stools, which should be placed on platforms, conveniently situated and raised slightly above the level of the floor, in lieu of tables and chairs as at present. Teachers would then be able to rest, and at the same time have a complete view of their classes—impossible under present conditions—and such signs of physical and mental strain as haggard and weary faces, hands involuntarily raised to the head, &c., which I have constantly observed, especially with regard to our female teachers, and which must eventually have some effect on their constitutions, would be at least mitigated.

School Attendance.—Irregular attendance still plays an important part among our schools, and the Act whereby Committees are empowered to enforce attendance is practically a dead-letter. I see it is now suggested to transfer the power from the Committees to the Boards, and I think if this is effected it will go far towards remedying the evil from which all teachers suffer, more or less. I should like to see another column inserted in the present examination schedules in which the total number of attendances made by each child could be recorded. I find having this very necessary information under my eye at the time of examination a great convenience, and the work of the teacher for the year is not prejudiced by any ill effects which might otherwise be produced by the quality of the work of those pupils whose names appear in the bad-attendance list.

The Annual Examination.—All the schools under the Board were examined. The results obtained were in most cases better than those of last year, and the quality of the work was of a much more uniform character. Schools where little or no method was shown last year in setting out work have made vast progress in this respect, and anything like slovenly work is now rather an exception throughout the district. The syllabus is fully complied with in our largest school, and almost all the country schools have made strenuous efforts to work as near to the full requirements as possible. I may here state my appreciation of the manner in which the teachers, as a rule, have received suggestions from me with reference to various improvements in their schools, and of the way in which they have endeavoured to meet my wishes.

The following is a summary of results: Total presented for examination, including infants and class above Standard VI., 1,684; total presented in standards, 1,066; total present in standards, 1,007; total passed, 829.

Attendance.—The attendances at the examinations were exceptionally good, there being but few absentees throughout the district, and where these were recorded very satisfactory reasons were forthcoming in every case.

Teachers' Examination of Standards I. and II.—With but one or two exceptions (these in the very small schools) the discretion displayed by the teachers in their examination of Standards I. and II. was very satisfactory indeed.

The Infant Classes.—In our larger schools these classes receive excellent instruction, and the children are well advanced in their work; but in the smaller ones, where there is only one teacher, sufficient time cannot be devoted to these classes to bring them to anything like such an efficient state; in all these schools teachers would find it advantageous to have their primer classes more advanced.

The Pass-subjects.—*Reading.*—In most schools a great improvement has been effected in this subject, and the pupils show by their reading they have a good grasp of the matter contained in the lesson. In a few of the smaller schools, however, the reading is still utterly devoid of expression.

Writing.—I should like to see a more uniform improvement in this subject. Whilst some schools, notably Greymouth and Ahaura, produced exceptionally fine writing, others, chiefly the smaller schools, produced quite the reverse.

Arithmetic.—This subject was as a rule well treated, a more extended use of the unitary method having proved most beneficial. In almost every school all the questions were attempted, thereby showing faithful and honest treatment of the subject.

Spelling.—This is still well treated, and, as a rule, the children proved themselves quite equal to the tests imposed.

Composition.—Satisfactory progress may be recorded with reference to this subject. I might, however, point out that the teacher's aim should not be so much that the pupils should be able to write a certain number of lines on some one of half a dozen subjects, as that they should be able to express their own ideas simply and grammatically. A much larger variety of subjects would afford greater facilities for teaching this subject, and the work produced at examinations would not have such a mechanical appearance.

Drawing.—Perhaps greater strides have been made in this subject than in any other. Teachers have endeavoured to recover the lost ground caused by non-compliance with the syllabus in former years, and I am pleased to state they have been generally successful in their efforts. One school—namely, Greymouth—took advantage to enter candidates for the first-grade drawing examination conducted by the Wellington Technical School, and the results were very satisfactory.

Geography.—This subject was well treated in most cases, and the maps were, as a rule, well drawn and had a neat appearance.

Class and Additional Subjects.—Singing and drill have been introduced in several schools with good effect. The latter subject is such a vast aid to discipline that it should in no case be omitted in the school programme. Several country schools took advantage of my suggestion, made in last year's report, with reference to recitation, and the results were encouraging. Grammar, though still very weak in a few cases, shows satisfactory improvement; and history, where taught, is generally good. Science and object-lessons receive considerable attention in all schools, and where these lessons are made interesting to the children very good results were produced, and the pupils absorbed a great deal of very useful information.

By direction of the Board, I this year, for the first time, both inspected and examined the Roman Catholic schools within the Grey District. Reports were prepared and sent to them in every respect similar to those furnished to the schools under the Board.

Technical Education.—Mr. W. Arnott has with untiring zeal continued to conduct the carpentry class at the District High School, and the thanks of the Board are again due to him for his praiseworthy and gratuitous services. As showing the popularity of this class among the pupils, I may mention that Mr. Arnott has at the present time over forty boys under his charge, and could he spare the time he might have as many more. The work is done out of school hours, and the full class is invariably present. Perhaps, now that an Act has passed granting a small amount of capitation for technical education, some of the other schools may take the matter up. Of course, the difficulty is to provide funds for starting such a class. However, the late Mr. W. C. Smith, and a few more energetic gentlemen who were on the Grey Committee during his time, were able to overcome this stumbling-block; and I feel sure that parents, seeing how well the present class has succeeded, would be all the more ready to contribute towords so laudable an object.

I have, &c.,

William L. F. Fetch, Inspector.

The Chairman and Members, Education Board, Grey.

Summary of Results for the Whole District.

Classes.	Presented.	Present.	Passed.	Average Age of those that passed.
				Yrs. mos.
Above Standard VI.	33	...	...	...
Standard VI.	98	92	70	14 6
" V.	146	140	104	13 5
" IV.	229	221	158	12 6
" III.	183	179	137	11 2
" II.	203	194	183	10 2
" I.	188	181	177	8 10
Preparatory	604	...	...	...
Totals	1,684	1,007	829	11 9*

WESTLAND.

Sir,— Hokitika, 2nd March, 1896.

I have the honour to present the following report on the schools of the district for the year 1895:—

The schools of South Westland were examined in February, and the remainder during the last four months of the year. Inspection visits were paid early in the year to all excepting the smaller aided schools. Separate reports have been presented on the examination of the scholarship candidates, the pupil-teachers, and the secondary class of the Hokitika District High School. In addition, the four Catholic schools at Hokitika, Kumara, Ross, and Kanieri were, by direction of the Board, examined during November and December.

The schools of the district may be classified as follows: Household schools, 8; other schools under sole teacher, 16; side schools, 2; schools with staffs of two or more teachers 9: total, 35.

The teachers employed by the Board at the close of the year were: Head-teachers, 9; sole teachers, 22; assistants, 15; pupil-teachers, 14. The certificated teachers include all the head-teachers, 13 assistants, and 9 sole teachers. With the exception of two assistants no uncertificated adult teacher is employed in any school of more than fifteen pupils. The teaching power is, except in a few small schools, competent and effective, and to a very large extent any weakness to be recorded in the work of the schools is due to causes beyond the control of the teachers.

* Mean of average age.

The condition most detrimental to the efficiency of the schools is irregular attendance, which must be due to the necessities or lack of interest of the parents. In an agricultural district children share to a large extent the occupations of their parents, and the value of their services affects the regularity of the attendance. The necessary sacrifice is, however, frequently made. In this district the most regular, as well as the most irregular, attendance is found in places where all the parents are engaged in farming pursuits. In a mining community there is not the same reason for the absence of pupils; yet the attendance in the Board's schools is frequently very irregular without any adequate cause.

The influence of regular attendance and parental interest is very noticeable when comparison is made between the household and the other aided schools. In Westland the maintenance of a large proportion of aided schools is rendered necessary by the exigencies of settlement. Suitable land for small farming and payable grounds for mining in portions of the district are wide apart, and families are frequently separated by distance or dangerous rivers, so that the appointment of itinerant teachers is impracticable. It follows that if these miniature schools are not maintained a large number of children will be deprived of education, or the parents must refrain from occupying these outposts of settlement. The teacher of a household school, often an elder sister of the pupils, has no special qualifications besides a pass in Standard VI., and shares the disadvantage of other sole teachers in having to devote separate attention to several standard classes. Yet such is the effect of regular attendance secured by the anxiety of the parents to obtain for their families the full benefit of the school that results are produced equal in many important respects to those of the best schools. But in the remaining aided schools, although the work is but little increased and the teachers are usually better qualified, the average results suffer greatly in comparison. It would seem that, when a separate building is used and the institution is shared by several families, the interest is weakened, and regular attendance is not maintained. While there are exceptions in both the attendance and success of these schools, the impediment to progress thus arising necessarily lowers the average result.

In the larger schools, where the teachers are more experienced and the staffs approach or reach the stage where each standard class is in charge of a separate teacher, difficulties are more easily overcome. The attendance of the scholars is, however, not satisfactory in several districts, and the Board has recently endeavoured, by the appointment of paid truant officers, to improve the conditions in this respect. During the year 1895, notwithstanding, no serious action has been taken by the local authorities to utilise the services of these officers and to enforce the clauses of the School Attendance Act. When it is distinctly understood that irregular attendance is the chief impediment in the progress of education in the district, it is reasonable to hope that greater efforts will be made to effect an improvement.

During the past year the Board has arranged for an increase in the supply of appliances of the schools. This includes a set of extra readers for each of the six standards, the "New Zealand Reader" being provided for Standard VI. The wider course of reading thus secured, if combined with continued attention to phrasing, expression, and comprehension of the reading matter, cannot fail to produce important results. Natural history and number charts and gymnastic apparatus have also been furnished to the principal schools, in order to afford opportunity for greater efficiency in the instruction in the corresponding subjects of the school course.

The passes secured during 1895 in the various pass-subjects may be represented by the following percentages of the number present at the examinations: Reading, 97; spelling, 80; writing, 95; arithmetic, 68; composition, 92; drawing, 93; geography, 82. This statement shows that arithmetic, spelling, and geography are the chief causes of failure. As the arithmetic tests are now set by the Education Department it will perhaps be of value to add in detail the percentage of passes in this subject compared with those of the previous year:—

	Standard VI. Per Cent.	Standard V. Per Cent.	Standard IV. Per Cent.	Standard III. Per Cent.
1894	... 68	71	82	70
1895	... 75	49	74	77

It will be seen that slightly more than half the pupils in the Fifth Standard failed in arithmetic during 1895. This fact should impress on the teachers the urgent necessity for the adoption of thorough methods in the preparation of this admittedly difficult year's course.

In the class and additional subjects general improvement must be recorded, except in grammar, which in many instances was insufficiently prepared. A decided improvement was apparent in the amount and character of the teaching of object-lessons.

With the exception of those in charge of schools with a roll-number of more than 120, the headmasters at the examinations of the year preferred to leave the promotion of pupils in the First and Second Standards to the Inspector, and the passes recorded in the larger schools coincided with sufficient exactness with the results of my examination. It would appear that the privilege of classification in the lower standards is regarded as of doubtful benefit by the teachers of the smaller schools, where parental influence is likely to be exerted with greater effect to secure premature promotion.

The number of pupils over eight years of age presented in the infant classes is 14·5 per cent. of the number forming these classes and 5·4 per cent. of the total roll-number. No returns are available for comparison of these percentages with those of other districts; but there is little doubt that room exists for a reduction of the number by improved methods of teaching as well as by the more regular attendance of the pupils.

I have, &c.,

The Chairman, Westland Education Board. A. J. Morton, Inspector.

SUMMARY OF RESULTS FOR THE WHOLE DISTRICT.

Classes.	Total presented.	Presented in Standards.	Present.	Passed.	Average Age of those that passed.
					Yrs. mos.
High School class ...	18	...	...	...	...
Above Standard VI. ...	39	...	...	...	...
Standard VI. ...	85	85	82	72	14 1
" V. ...	169	169	162	121	13 5
" IV. ...	195	195	183	151	12 3
" III. ...	200	200	194	170	10 6
" II. ...	202	202	200	181	9 0
" I. ...	169	169	169	148	8 6
Preparatory	485	...	...	...	...
Totals ...	1,562	1,020	990	843	11 4*

NORTH CANTERBURY.

SIR,— Education Office, Christchurch, 31st January, 1896.

We have the honour to submit the annual return of the year 1895 for the schools of the North Canterbury District, as required in section 12 of the regulations under the Education Act.

The lists appended contain practically all the information in regard to individual schools required by the regulation. In addition, summary tables are here furnished, presenting the general statistics in a form convenient for comparison with past results, and, as far as figures go, providing a means of estimating what is done in the chief groups of subjects.

The routine of inspection and examination has very closely followed the lines of the previous year. The schools have never been more fully inspected, and examinations have been conducted in all but one small aided school, where shearing operations suspended school work at the time the Inspector gave notice of his intended visit. In addition, the usual examination of children in the Burnham Industrial School was conducted for the Department of Education, and four small schools in an outlying part were examined a second time to make the annual date more convenient for the local residents. The second examination of these schools is not included in the statistics.

In the 185 schools examined, 21,227 children were presented, the highest total yet reached, and 20,028 were present. In the standard classes, 12,373 were reported as satisfying the tests at the different stages, and 2,239 failed. Of the latter number, 314 had made less than half attendances during the three quarters preceding, and under the old regulations would have been returned as "excepted."

I.—PASS-SUBJECTS: NUMBERS.

Classes.	Presented.	Present.	Did not Pass.		Passed.	Schools presenting.	Average Age of those that passed.
			Excepted as under old Rule.	Failed.			Yrs. mos.
Above Standard VI. ...	256	...	...	...	...	74	...
Standard VI.	1,342	1,309	26	150	1,133	142	13 10
" V.	2,156	2,061	44	401	1,616	170	13 1
" IV.	2,904	2,813	73	536	2,204	180	12 1
" III.	3,222	3,132	103	611	2,418	177	10 11
" II.	2,821	2,746	53	144	2,549	181	9 9
" I.	2,621	2,551	15	83	2,453	174	8 8
Preparatory	5,905	5,232	...	...	...	...	...
Totals for 1895 ...	21,227	20,028	314	1,925	12,373	185	11 5*
Totals for 1894 ...	21,095	19,795	397	2,030	11,814	179	11 5

* Mean of average age.

II.—Pass-subjects: Numbers reduced to Percentages.

Classes.	School-roll.	Class-roll.		Passed, 1895.		Passed, 1894.	
	Presented.	Present.	Did not Pass.	School-roll.	Class-roll.	School-roll.	Class-roll.
Above Standard VI. ...	1·2	71·9	...	...	...	...	...
Standard VI.	6·3	97·5	13·1	5·3	84·4	4·5	80·7
" V.	10·2	95·6	20·6	7·6	74·9	6·9	72·4
" IV.	13·7	96·9	21·0	10·4	75·9	9·7	70·1
" III.	15·2	97·2	22·2	11·4	75·0	11·1	73·7
" II.	13·3	97·3	7·0	12·0	90·0	12·0	89·4
" I.	12·3	97·3	3·8	11·6	93·6	11·8	92·7
Preparatory	27·8	88·6	...	...	...	...	...
On totals	100·0	94·4	14·8	58·3	84·7	56·0	79·8

III.—Class and Additional Subjects: General.

Class-subjects.						Additional Subjects.	
Subject.	Average Marks (0–100).	Number of Schools obtaining Marks.				Subject.	Number of Schools.
		60 and upwards.	50 to 60.	30 to 50.	Under 30.	Total.	
Grammar ...	42·8	32	40	72	37	181	Repetition of poetry 184
History	45·1	46	43	64	28	181	Drill 136
Geography ...	63·1	115	35	27	3	180	Singing 148
Science, object-lessons, &c.	46·3	51	50	60	23	184	Sewing 179
Mental arithmetic	35·0	17	29	76	62	184	Subject-matter and comprehension of reading-lessons 184

IV.—Class-subjects: Comparison of School Groups.

Subject.	In Twenty-three "Town" Schools.			In Eighty-nine Schools of Intermediate Size.			In Seventy-two Single-handed Schools.		
	Average Marks (0–100).	Obtaining Fifty Marks and upwards.		Average Marks (0–100).	Obtaining Fifty Marks and upwards.		Average Marks (0–100).	Obtaining Fifty Marks and upwards.	
		Number of Schools.	Proportion of Schools.		Number of Schools.	Proportion of Schools.		Number of Schools.	Proportion of Schools.
Grammar	45·4	10	0·43	44·2	37	0·43	39·7	26	0·36
History	58·3	20	0·87	45·6	44	0·51	40·3	25	0·35
Geography ...	70·0	23	1·00	65·1	77	0·87	58·2	50	0·74
Science, object-lessons, &c. ...	58·3	22	0·96	49·6	56	0·63	38·5	23	0·32
Mental arithmetic ...	40·0	6	0·26	38·2	29	0·33	29·5	11	0·15
All subjects ...	54·4	15	0·65	48·9	38	0·43	41·2	16	0·22

NOTE.—A "town" school is taken to be one with at least three adult or certificated teachers employed in it. In defining "single-handed" schools, a sewing-mistress is not reckoned.

V.—Statistics of Classification.

	Standard IV. and upwards.	Standards I., II., and III.	Preparatory Division.	Mean of Average Age, Standards I. to VI.
				Yrs. mos.
1886	17·1	45·5	37·4	11 10
1887	18·2	45·9	36·0	11 9
1888	19·3	45·9	34·7	11 8
1889	20·4	44·6	35·0	11 8
1890	22·4	44·8	32·3	11 8
1891	24·4	44·3	31·3	11 7
1892	26·1	43·9	30·0	11 6
1893	28·2	42·3	29·5	11 6
1894	30·1	41·2	28·7	11 5
1895	31·4	40·8	27·8	11 5

The figures in the tables referring to pass-subjects show generally an improvement, if the mere success in passing the children through standard tests is to be regarded as such; but we do not desire to lay much stress on this feature, since the conditions have been slightly altering in favour of greater facility. Generally we have no reason to suppose any material alteration in the character of the instruction the children are receiving, and on the whole we are quite satisfied that in its teachers the Board possesses a body of earnest and capable public servants, whose personal character exercises a good influence over those in their charge, and whose professional duties are carried out with as much zeal and (amid many difficulties) with as much efficiency as in any other branch of the public service.

Of the principal subjects taught, reading necessarily occupies a foremost place in importance, since it provides the means by which improvement is chiefly effected when school days have come to a close. It opens wide the portals of knowledge and rational entertainment, and places the humble toiler for a daily wage on a level with those more favoured by worldly circumstances in starting the race of life. Unfortunately, this is just the subject in which our schools have been able to do least in the mental equipment of the bulk of their attendants. With an infinity of pains and daily lessons for a series of years, a child at the Fourth Standard stage is able to read with fluency and fair comprehension a familiar class-book of average difficulty; but it is more than doubtful whether the power acquired is sufficient to enable a boy after leaving school at this stage to do more than make out with difficulty some passages from a newspaper, and it certainly falls far short of the ease and unconscious ability which leave the mind free to appreciate the mental attitude of the writer. The teacher in this matter is scarcely to blame. In the initial stages the irregularities of the language make systematic training in the recognition of words necessarily more or less imperfect; the ordinary vocabulary of children in their spoken language is very limited, and determined mainly by their home surroundings, and the range of their personal experience gives many of them a very imperfect grasp of expressions which carry their ideas beyond the narrow horizon of their daily life.

Much, however, may be done to improve matters, and among the first of the expedients to be suggested is a wider range of reading. We are sure that teachers would find it quite as easy to get through two reading-books in the lower stages in the year as it has been found to get through one; and when the incubus of a spelling test is removed from the second reader we have good reason to believe that the task is even easier, while the advantage of more varied practice still remains as the basis of further development. In the two highest classes we think the pupils of every school ought to be able to read readily at sight any book of ordinary difficulty presented as a test, and to secure this proficiency nothing can be better than the formation of a school stock of several sets of the readers now issued in such abundance and excellence of execution by a number of publishers. Without, however, going quite so far as to apply this opinion to the annual examinations, so long as "pass" conditions prevail, we should be satisfied for the present if the choice of two reading-books were here also offered to the Inspector for his annual test. In the lower classes we are glad to say a substantial number of good schools has for the last year or two adopted the plan of alternative readers with the happiest results. A few have also done so in all classes, and it only remains that the practice should be made authoritative and general. The issue of the new Government reader now gives an excellent opportunity of extending the practice at a very moderate cost.

Arithmetic comes next in order of importance to reading. It occupies a large share of the pupil's school time and of the teacher's attention. Daily, during practically the whole course of a pupil's attendance at school, one and a quarter to one and a half hours are given to "sums," and the teacher's reputation for successful work depends largely on the general accuracy or skill he secures in the subject. It is well that successful teaching in arithmetic should be rated high. Apart from the question of its practical utility, good arithmetic cannot be secured without at the same time exercising qualities in both teacher and pupil that on the one hand are essential to good service in any sphere, and on the other play an important part in the child's mental and even moral training. There is, however, much reason to fear that in our system of education this subject, and other features which, like it, are of a mechanical type, occupy too large a space in the teacher's mental horizon, and that elements of culture springing from the refining influence of an active intelligence in close association with growing minds have been too often regarded, if the matter has been thought about at all, as not seriously within the scope of the elementary-school teacher's

duties. We do not wish that a shorter time should be given to arithmetic. Indeed, in the matter of "mental" arithmetic there is much need of more attention; and, so long as the "pious opinion" of the advantages of a decimal system remains only an opinion, the subject as a whole cannot do with less. But we plead for a fuller recognition of the fact that the master's best mental work in a school is to be found in the evidences of his influence on the general intelligence of the children —in other words, in the degree of culture he produces. The influence may not be easily expressed in terms of "passes," or by way of numerical estimates of the value of subjects taught; but it is very real all the same, is readily recognised by the Inspector, and, whether referred to in his report or not, forms one of the chief factors of the estimation in which he holds the teacher.

Grammar and composition are connected by an indissoluble tie, though the subjects are differently treated in the regulations. We do not question the wisdom of the dissociation. Circumstances have made it necessary, and the result is that, while composition has improved very materially up to a certain stage, approximately that of the Fourth Standard, and to a less extent in the higher stages, the grammar has gone sadly backward. The lessons given have been commonly reduced in number; the treatment in a great majority of cases is of a very perfunctory kind, or dependence may be found placed on written exercises alone without any set lesson at all. We regret very much the loss of the mental training that grammar affords. Our school work will find it difficult to supply its place as a means of constant training in simple reasoning, and as the instrument by which clearness of perception and habits of careful discrimination are secured. Grammar, however, as a disciplinary exercise must now be regarded as a thing of the past, if it ever was really well enough treated for this purpose, and it remains only that we should so adjust its study as to bear most directly on its practical application in composition. With our present syllabus in the subject we cannot continue much longer. The difficulties in the Fifth and Sixth Standards are growing year by year, and, however anxious a teacher in these classes may be to do justice to the prescribed programme, the want of a solid foundation on which to work meets him on every hand. To sketch out a new scheme is not now our province, and we can only suggest that in any modified plan the structure of sentences (including those of some complexity) treated by way both of analysis and synthesis, and the use of a few simple rules of syntax dealing with the concord of verb and subject, and with the relations of the pronoun, should form very prominent features. At present the general structure of the complex sentence is the feature which is worst appreciated, and in the composition blunders in concords are much too frequent when the evidences of literary ability and of other technical details are most satisfactory.

At inspection our attention has chiefly been directed to the usual features, and we have been asked to take special notice of the means adopted to make the rooms cheerful and attractive. In this respect there is often much to commend, and generally we may say that, in our opinion, the surroundings of the children during their life in school, and the attention given to their physical comfort, are such as older countries might envy.

We have, &c.,
L. B. Wood, M.A.,
W. J. Anderson, LL.D., } Inspectors.
Thos. Ritchie, B.A.,

The Chairman, Education Board, North Canterbury.

SOUTH CANTERBURY.

Sir,— Education Office, Timaru, 3rd March, 1896.

I have the honour to present my report on the schools in this district for the year 1895.

Sixty-five schools have been in operation during the year. Details of the examinations of these schools will be found in the tables attached to this report.

In accordance with the Board's instructions, I paid a visit without notice to each of the five Roman Catholic schools in this district, and afterwards conducted their examinations in the manner prescribed for the public schools. The numerical results are stated in Appendix III.; but, with the exception of what is stated therein, any tables or remarks that I may bring forward in the course of this report deal exclusively with the public schools.

The following table shows the results of the examinations for the whole district:—

Classes.	Presented.	Present.	Passed.	Average Age of those that passed.
				Yrs. mos.
Above Standard VI.	93	...	...	...
Standard VI.	279	273	233	13 11
" V.	453	441	342	13 1
" IV.	671	647	490	12 1
" III	796	764	617	11 0
" II.	722	699	670	9 9
" I.	622	615	607	8 9
Preparatory	1,587	...	...	...
Totals for 1895...	5,223	3,439	2,959	*11 5
Totals for 1894...	5,111	3,358	2,733	*11 6

* Mean of average age.

The number of pupils presented on the examination schedules was 5,223, of whom 93 had already passed the Sixth Standard, 1,587 were in the preparatory classes, and 3,543 were entered for examination in Standards I. to VI. Of the 3,543 in Standards I. to VI., 3,439 were present on the day of examination, and 2,959 passed. The increase for the year is 112 in the number of pupils presented for examination, 81 in the number of pupils present in Standards I. to VI., and 226 in the number of those that passed.

In 1894, of the children examined in the standards, 81 per cent. passed; the percentage of passes this year has risen to 86. This percentage is higher than that reached in any previous year. Compared with last year, the percentage of passes is higher in Standards IV., V., and VI., there is a slight falling-off in Standards II. and III., and there is no change in Standard I.

Of the 1,587 children in the preparatory classes, 239, or 4·5 per cent. of the school-roll, were over eight years of age at the time of examination. It is satisfactory to note that, though there is an increase of 60 children in the preparatory classes, the number of those over eight years of age is less by 23. The reasons given for not presenting these children in the First Standard were in the main satisfactory.

As was the case last year, the passes in Standards I. and II. were determined by the head-teachers; but in all but a few of the largest schools the Inspector has to conduct the examination of these standards very much in the same manner as when the passes were in his own hands. In a specially-reserved space of the official form of examination report he has to enter "Notes on the Passes in Standards I. and II."; and the report is also to contain an expression of his judgment of the degree of discretion displayed by the head-teacher in determining these passes. The percentage of passes is no doubt somewhat higher than if the passes were marked by the Inspector. The teacher, knowing the special circumstances of each child, may rightly allow in some cases for shortcomings that an Inspector could not overlook. It appeared to me that in some of the smaller, and in one of the larger, schools the teachers had not aimed high enough in preparing the children, and had been too lenient in the examination tests. Greater proficiency would have insured stronger and pleasanter going in the rest of the standards. Teachers are every day face to face with the experience that whether the child's school-life is to be one of irksome drudgery or of lightsome labour largely depends on the equipment provided in the First and Second Standards.

Among the pass-subjects reading is given the first place in the syllabus, and it is well to remember that it is also first in importance. In about one-fourth of the schools the children read well from the prescribed reading-book. This leaves about fifty schools in one-half of which the reading may be described as fair, while in the other half it is poor. In the schools where I have classed the reading as "poor," I found the children so much occupied with the trouble of telling the words as they came to them that it was in vain to look for correct phrasing and intelligence; in those where the reading was described as "fair" there was not wanting a certain degree of fluency and ease, but the reading came short of the merit mark, because it lacked clearness and crispness of articulation, and that firm grip of the words which shows that the reader knows thoroughly what he is reading about. As I understand it, the syllabus prescribes one reading-book for Standards III., IV., V., and VI. respectively. Were the reading of two or three books a year prescribed, and the test in reading in the upper standards to be an "unseen" passage from a suitable book, then, unless the testimony of educational experts in England is to count for nothing, we might begin to look for great improvement in the children's power of reading. With the power would come the pleasure in its exercise and the growth of the reading habit.

Spelling and dictation were very well done in a large majority of the schools. In the few schools where the spelling was bad there was seldom much to recommend in the rest of the work. That so many of the schools showed to advantage in spelling is a sure proof that the teachers have given their best attention to the subject, and have been careful in the marking and revisal of misspelt words. It may also be taken as a proof of the children's diligence. All this is in the highest degree creditable; and yet it may be questioned whether the children are really good spellers. The words for spelling and the passages for dictation are selected from the reading-book in use. How the pupils would fare in writing passages of equal difficulty from "unseen" books would be an interesting experiment. It would certainly be a truer gauge of the children's ability to spell than we have in our present mode of testing. It would compel attention to systematic word-building lessons as an exercise of the greatest utility for every class throughout the school, and not one simply for the infant classes, to which such lessons are now almost altogether confined. Wider reading would also be imperative.

In about one-third of the schools the handwriting of the scholars as a whole is very good; in the others it does not possess much merit. In general, however, even where the formation of the letters leaves much to be desired, all work on paper is clean and neat. In our second-largest school the "upright" style of writing was introduced about seven months before the examination. The result was an improvement which I had not anticipated. Indeed, the school was classed at once among the best in writing, though this subject had not previously been one of its strong points. The improvement was no doubt due in some measure to the style itself; but the real cause of success was that the children were *taught* to write, and not left simply to copy the engraved head-lines. The latter practice, with more or less strict supervision, is, I fear, a common one; but the bulk of the scholars cannot be made good writers in this way, whatever style is adopted.

More schools have done well in arithmetic than in any other of the pass-subjects; and in very few were the results unsatisfactory. There is still much to be desired in the way of setting down the work so as to make the reason of every step of the process intelligible. The teachers should aim also at making their scholars rapid as well as accurate workers; a card that in one school will be cleared by the children in three-quarters of an hour will give occupation to those of another school for an hour and a quarter. Mental arithmetic properly treated should be the most effective instrument for the attainment of speed and accuracy.

The least successful of the pass-subjects was composition. In not more than a dozen schools was it generally good throughout the classes. The exercises in the Third Standard were in a great many cases so well done that we may look for steady improvement as the younger children pass on to the higher classes. Not enough has yet been done in the practice of constructing complex sentences by the blending of given simple sentences. This exercise is prescribed for Standard IV.; but its importance as one of the ways the teacher can make use of in dealing with a subject of special difficulty to the majority of school-children should insure its continuance in Standards V. and VI.

The teaching of geography continues to improve. It was quite exceptional to find a class badly prepared, and the full and intelligent knowledge shown in a great many schools made the work of examining the classes light and pleasant.

Freehand drawing is fairly satisfactory in most schools, and exceedingly good in the upper classes of some of the larger schools. Plane geometry in the Fourth and scale-drawing in the Fifth Standard were generally well done. In very few schools did the model-drawing of the Sixth Standard possess much merit, but it was not uncommon to find the boys of this standard with a good understanding of the principles of solid drawing. The junior classes were usually well prepared for the examination in knowledge of geometrical form.

Class-subjects.—Among the class-subjects grammar is the most important and the worst taught. The weakness did not show itself in Standard III.; it was distinctly manifest in Standard IV.; it was so pronounced in Standards V. and VI. that it was a pleasant experience to come on a set of good papers amid the waste of worthless rubbish, and one was heartily glad to accept this evidence that the skilful treatment of the lessons in grammar—the logic of the common school—was not altogether a lost art. In history the scholars answered fairly well when questioned on one of the lessons of the prepared list; but under the present system, though they may carry away a varying amount of historical information, they are not likely to have established in their minds "an outline that may be filled in by later reading." Some good work was done here and there in elementary science, and something of the nature of science-lessons was professed in every school. A well-given object-lesson is still a rarity.

Additional Subjects.—The scholars have drill and extension exercises in fifty-three schools. In the large schools particularly the movements are done with precision and vigour. The senior boys of the Timaru Main School go through a useful series of setting-up drill with dumb-bells, and the girls are expert in Indian-club exercise. In twenty-two schools the children work on day after day and week after week without once singing a song. In most of the others a few songs are fairly well sung, while in some the singing is exceptionally good. Needlework is for the most part very well taught. The scholars usually do well in recitation. A good deal requires to be done in training the scholars to answer well during the oral examination on the meaning of the language of the reading-lessons.

On more than one occasion in previous reports I have commented unfavourably on the position we occupied relatively to some other education districts, and to the colony as a whole, in the matter of regularity of attendance. Our reproach is taken away. In 1891 and 1892 we were almost up to the average for the colony, which was 80 per cent. of the roll. In 1893 the average for the colony declined to 78·5; in that year we stood at 79·6. In 1894 the average for the colony was 80·6; our average was 82·6, second to Otago with 84·9. Our average for the past year is 84·2, and with this we should be able to hold our second place. This is an honourable position to have attained; let us try for the most honourable.

I have much pleasure in again reporting favourably on the order and discipline of the schools, and on the manners and general behaviour of the scholars.

I have, &c.,

JAMES GIBSON GOW, M.A., Inspector.

The Chairman, Education Board, South Canterbury.

OTAGO.

SIR,— Education Office, 14th March, 1896.

We have the honour to submit our report on the schools of the district for the year 1895. Owing to causes already explained to the Board, forty of the schools remained unexamined at the end of the year. These have now been examined, but the statistics of their examination are not included in those given below. Table I. summarises the examination results of the Board's schools, and Table II. those of the Catholic schools, for the year 1895.

TABLE I.

Classes.	Presented.	Present.	Passed.	Average Age.
				Yrs. mos.
Above Standard VI.	555	...	...	...
Standard VI.	1,282	1,254	1,188	14 1
" V.	1,975	1,920	1,668	13 2
" IV.	2,683	2,607	2,205	12 3
" III.	2,902	2,830	2,507	11 1
" II.	2,710	2,672	2,571	9 11
" I.	2,470	2,445	2,415	8 10
Preparatory	6,581	...	...	...
Totals	21,158	13,728	12,554	11 6⅔*

* Mean of average ages.

Table I. shows that 91 per cent. of the children examined in the standards satisfied at least the minimum requirements for a pass. From the point of view of standard passes this result is very satisfactory. We are responsible for the "passes" of the four highest standards, and the headmasters for those of the two lowest. The mean of our percentages of passes is 88; the mean of theirs is 97. In the majority of schools the passes awarded in Standards I. and II. were well earned; but in some children were passed whom we should certainly not have passed. On the whole, however, these classes are kept up to a good general level of attainment. Though we do not award the passes in these classes, our examination of them is as searching now as ever it was. The percentages of passes for the several standards are: Standard VI., 94; Standard V., 87; Standard IV., 84; Standard III., 88; Standard II., 96; Standard I., 98. These percentages are very high; but, in estimating their value as indices of efficiency, we must bear in mind that a "pass" means in many cases only that a child did correctly not less than from one-half to two-thirds of the work set him to do in all the pass-subjects, or in all save one. The proportion of children who, though passing the standard for which they were presented, failed in one subject, in many cases an important subject, is high: 37 per cent. in Standard VI., 44 per cent. in Standard V., 43 per cent. in Standard IV., and 33 per cent. in Standard III. It is obvious, therefore, that the "pass ratio" is not a very accurate index of efficiency, for it does not indicate the *quality* of the passes. The quality of the passes does not depend entirely on the teacher. In nearly all schools it is affected by two circumstances over which he has little or no control: the irregular attendance of a minority of the pupils, and the presence of from 10 to 15 per cent. of dull children. Only the teachers and ourselves can realise how much the progress of bright and regular children is retarded by dull and irregular ones.

The proportion of children taught in preparatory classes is slightly lower than that of last year, and about 2 per cent. lower than that of 1893. Of the 6,581 pupils, 1,129 were over eight years of age when the schools in which they are taught were examined. The reasons assigned for their non-presentation in Standard I. appeared to us to be, in most cases, sufficient. In many small schools the pupils of this class do not—we may even say, cannot—receive sufficient attention; but in most schools in which there are two or more teachers they receive a good training in the standard work. They learn to write on slates, to sing, to do physical exercises, to spell words of one and two syllables; they learn more or less about common objects; they are taught the elements of number, the addition table, to add numbers orally and on slates, and to read the primers, the Infant Reader, and No. 1 Standard Reader of at least one series of readers. In the infant classes of some of the larger schools they read more than one set of introductory readers, a practice that might with advantage be adopted in all. Though not examined in Standard I., these children are, at any rate in the larger schools, receiving a sound preparatory training for the work of the standard classes.

The syllabus does not prescribe any kindergarten work for this department of the schools; nevertheless two or three mistresses have introduced several of the more useful of the hand-and-eye occupations. We are of opinion that kindergarten exercises should be introduced into all schools in which there are two or more teachers. We give the following as a suitable list of such occupations: Games with music; games without music (guessing games, taking messages); stick-laying (safety matches with the heads cut off); threading beads in twos, threes, fours, &c.; counting with sticks and beads; picture-lessons, flower-lessons, object-lessons; matching colours (*e.g.*, picking out from a heap the same shades of coloured papers, wools, &c.); paper-folding and paper-plaiting; working patterns with needle and worsted; drawing and ruling geometrical forms; measuring and estimating length; weighing and estimating weight; basket-work; tablet-laying. To these we wish to add story-telling and recitation.

In a fair number of schools satisfactory work was done by the pupils of the class above Standard VI. To make the work of this class definite we beg to suggest the following syllabus: 1. English, including reading (say, Chambers's Advanced Reader), spelling, grammar, and composition. 2. Arithmetic: To keep up the standard work. 3. Euclid: Book I. to proposition xxvi., with exercises. 4. Algebra: Fundamental rules and easy simple equations. 5. Commercial geography. 6. Optional subjects: (1) Latin: Smith's Principia, Pt. I. to the verb *sum*. (2) French: Macmillan's First Course.

In schools in which there is but one teacher we should be satisfied with less work than this. Except in the normal school, the headmaster should be held responsible for the work of this class. Should our suggestion be adopted the headmasters should be relieved of the subjects now prescribed for them.

TABLE II. (FIVE CATHOLIC SCHOOLS).

Classes.	Presented.	Present.	Passed.	Average Age.
				Yrs. mos.
Above Standard VI.	...	...	...	...
Standard VI.	9	8	8	14 9
" V.	49	47	37	14 7
" IV.	57	51	40	13 0
" III.	95	85	64	12 1
" II.	111	107	93	11 0
" I.	117	116	109	9 8
Preparatory	138*	...	...	...
Totals	576	414	351	12 6⅙†

* Return of infants from one school not entered in this examination schedule. † Mean of average ages.

We now proceed to make a few observations on some of the subjects of instruction.

With regard to reading, we have little to add to what we said last year. So far as the prepared books are concerned, it is in quite a large proportion of schools distinctly good. The chief faults in those in which it does not satisfy us are indistinct enunciation (due generally to too rapid utterance), defective modulation and phrasing, and inaccuracy in small words. The definite article, when the first word of a sentence, is frequently omitted altogether; "adjective" is pronounced "adjetive," "surprise" is pronounced "supprise," "usually" is pronounced "usully," "family" is pronounced "famly," "Arctic" is pronounced "Artic," and so on with other words in which, unless resisted, the law of economy of effort will assert itself. It is to our thinking unwise to insist on fluent reading in the junior classes, for fluency there comes not from ready recognition of the words, but from too frequent repetition of them in the same sequence: it is recitation rather than reading. This practice certainly tends to blunt the child's power of observation; and we have no doubt that the frequent inaccuracy in small words in the middle and upper classes is a legacy of this faulty beginning in the junior. We feel sure, too, that the frequency with which the lessons are read and reread also tends powerfully to induce this fault. From the point of view of education it is a blunder to attempt to make every child letter and word perfect in every lesson, yet this is what we try to do. In future examinations we intend to test every class in unseen reading books. This will no doubt lead to wider reading during the currency of the year. We are pleased to be able to report marked improvement in the treatment of the meaning of the language of the reading-books. Instead of, for example, asking the meaning of "ajar," of "ungrateful," of "victim," the teacher now makes the children put the door ajar and say what they do, tell how they feel when they are grateful, and name animals they have seen the victims of others. This is undoubtedly the natural method. It is surprising how few are the words in the reading-lessons that denote things wholly unfamiliar to the experience of the children. The things have been seen, or felt, or heard, and the teacher's work is to make the children observe that this new word and that are simply names for things they have had experience of. This makes the study of language a training in observation of experience, induces the mental habit of looking through the words to the things that lie behind them, and tends powerfully to enlarge the children's vocabularies.

In the lower classes and standards spelling continues to be very good; but in Standards IV., V., and VI. it is not so good as it used to be under the old regulation. Many pupils pass on the maximum number of errors—in Standard IV., three in eight lines of prepared matter. The children learn, but they are not taught, spelling.

Vertical writing is taught in a good many schools, but it is a real success in very few. To teach it well teachers must themselves learn it, and this is what many of them have not done. Four styles of writing are in vogue in this district. We do not advocate any of them; but, when consulted by teachers as to their relative merits, we advise them to choose the one they consider the best, and, having chosen it, to adhere rigorously to its slope, spacing, turns, and relative lengths of letters. Copybook-writing we regard as an exercise in form, a species of drawing from the flat, and pronounce it good or bad according as it is or is not an imitation of the model. Judged in this way much of the writing we examine is not good.

In nearly all our large schools and in many of the small ones the drawing is good, often very good, and in very few does its quality fall below fair. We find the weakest work in model and plane geometrical drawing.

So far as blackboard exposition is concerned, arithmetic is one of our best-taught subjects; but in the majority of schools there is altogether too little concrete illustration of principles and processes. We are apt to forget how limited is the experience of children, and how difficult it is for them to interpret what is said to them about subjects of which they have little or no experience. Without previous sense-impressions there can be no ideas, and in much of their arithmetical work children have had no sense-experience at all. They have neither measured, nor weighed, nor traded, and consequently what is said to them about these operations is for the most part words and nothing more. So long as they remember the rule they will arrange words and symbols as they are taught to arrange them; but from want of experience of things they are unable to look through the words and symbols and see what lies behind them; hence, when there are placed before them problems differing not in principle but only in form from those they have been accustomed to solve, only the cleverest of them know how to proceed with their solution. To render vivid what is meant by arithmetical phraseology and symbols we must do what we can to supply an ample background of experience. To this end the children should, from the beginning of their course, be made to perform on objects the operations that correspond to those they perform on their slates. In the little arithmetic-books used in most of our schools there is a large quantity of "oral work"—concrete examples involving numbers so small that they can be easily represented in the concrete by marbles, small stones, nuts, sticks, pence, &c. These objects can be imagined to be anything—sheep, pounds, half-pounds, ounces, what you like—the important thing being to make the abstract slate-work rest upon a concrete foundation. It is not enough for children to *see* this kind of work done by their teachers; they must do it for themselves. In this way they would gain sense-impressions of magnitude, of number, of the numerical relations implied by the expressions "so much more," "so much less," "so many times as much," of relative number and magnitude, and so on, that would enable them to realise vividly the effect of each operation upon the things denoted by the symbols they have to manipulate. Treated in this way arithmetic is an exercise in handling, in *observing* quantitative relations of weight, of value, and of magnitude—an exercise, indeed, in the methods of science applied to number and magnitude. This kind of work may, of course, be overdone. It should be discontinued as soon as it has created a sufficient background of experience to enable the children to realise vividly the nature of the work they are called upon to perform. "It is," says Fitch, "a sure test of a good teacher that he knows when and how

far to employ such artifices and when to dispense with them. The moment that concrete illustrations have served their purpose they should be discarded." At examination time we frequently have to complain of the illogical manner in which the steps of the working of the examples are set out. The solution of a problem involves an exercise in logic, and it is but reasonable to expect that the steps by which the answer is obtained should conform to the methods of logic. Mental arithmetic is still a weak subject in most schools.

Composition continues to vary very widely in quality, but in the majority of schools it is a weak subject. If we may judge from the exercises we examine, no inconsiderable proportion of our children are unable to write from fifteen to twenty lines, even on a prepared subject, without making one or more gross blunders in grammar. They use possessive cases for plurals, and plurals for possessive cases, double possessives for possessives ("your's" for "yours," "her's" for "hers," "it's" for "its"), singular nouns with plural verbs, and singular verbs with plural nouns, the pronoun "their" for the adverb "there," the preposition "to" for the adverb "too," the past tense for the past participle, and *vice versâ*. These errors are not confined to Standards III. and IV.; they frequently occur in the work of Standard V. and Standard VI., and, indeed, are not unknown in that of pupil-teachers. Composition is, we know, a very difficult subject to teach; and with children, errors, even gross errors, in arrangement, are, in spite of good teaching, sure to occur; but we do not think the children's capacity to blunder should be regarded as a sufficient excuse for errors such as those specified above. They undoubtedly indicate inefficient or insufficient teaching in grammar. The remedy is obvious: intelligent and systematic drill in grammar and in the correction of errors of the kinds most frequently occurring in the written and *spoken* speech of the children. We are sure that thorough and systematic drill in the correction of such errors would effect great improvement in the composition of all the classes, and especially of Standards III. and IV. In most of our schools oral composition is almost entirely neglected, the teachers seldom exacting from the children full and well-expressed answers to their questions. It is, no doubt, difficult to get children to talk, but the difficulty does not relieve us from the duty of compelling them to try. Nor should we always be satisfied with answers given in simple sentences. In their confidential chat with one another they frequently use sentences consisting of two or three clauses, and they should be encouraged to do the same in their spoken answers to their teachers. Persistent and well-directed practice in oral composition could not fail to improve the written exercises, and to remedy what is at present a serious defect in most of our schools—the speechlessness of the children in oral lessons. Punctuation continues to be exceedingly faulty. To children well drilled in sentence-structure, the proper employment of the comma, semicolon, and period should not be difficult; but this is precisely the department of instruction in which they are not well drilled, and, therefore, working without guiding principles, many of them point their composition exercises most faultily. Not a few teachers continue the useless—we had almost written stupid—practice of correcting the errors of their pupils instead of simply marking them and training their pupils to correct them. In our best schools the teachers indicate by well-understood marks the nature of the errors, enter the more important errors in a note-book, and at some future time place them on the blackboard and make them the subject of a good lesson in grammar and composition. They then make the children correct their own errors. This is acting on the principle that what the children do for themselves is of immensely greater importance to them than what their teachers do for them. The principle is sound, and we commend it to those who vainly cherish the notion that children pay attention to the corrections that are made for them.

In Standard III. the prescribed grammar was generally well known; in Standard IV. it was not so well known; and in Standards V. and VI., though there was some improvement on last year's work, there was a large amount of very inferior answering. The course of grammar prescribed by the department appears to us to be faulty. Instead of beginning with the classification of the ultimate parts (single words) of the sentence, the course should undoubtedly begin with the study of the main parts of the sentence—in technical phraseology, the logical subject and the logical predicate. The beginner should first be trained to observe that every simple statement consists of two parts—one part denoting the thing or things spoken of, and the other what is said about the thing or things; and, when this is vividly realised, he should learn to call the first the subject, the second the predicate. From this logical analysis of simple statements the child should proceed to the function and classification of the words forming the subject and the predicate. For the sake of composition, prominence should be given to what is technically known as the agreement between the nominative and its verb, and the pronoun and its antecedent; and there should be given for correction copious examples of departure from this agreement, and abundant exercise in writing original sentences after given models. This would form a suitable course for Standard III. In the higher standards the instruction should follow the same lines, and here should be added inflexion and its uses, the study of equivalent constructions, and the meaning and function of connectives. The relation of clause to clause and of sentence to sentence is one of great importance, and the study of this relation is even more important than that of the elements of the clause, for upon the perception of it depends the reader's power of understanding a sentence of some complexity, or of gathering up the value of the paragraph. The relations of the sentences of the paragraph are, so far as we have observed, seldom considered. For purposes of grammar, every sentence of it is considered as a principal, and is studied as a thing apart from its context. A good sentence has, of course, a felicity of its own apart from its setting in the paragraph; but its setting in the paragraph is as worthy of study as is the setting of the constituent clauses of the sentence. It is a serious blunder to regard every sentence as a principal, for the sentences of a well-built paragraph are, like the clauses of a sentence, interdependent, and come under the laws that regulate the clauses of the sentence: they are not so many co-ordinate independent units; their relations to one another are much the same as those of their own clauses, and without a perception of this mutual bearing one cannot appreciate the value of the paragraph. "The art of speaking and writing the English

language with propriety" is the old definition of grammar, a definition that obviously includes the arrangement of the parts, not only of the sentence, but also of the paragraph. It is unfortunate that grammar is, by the public, considered to consist in parsing and analysis—mere classification, or, as it is sometimes irreverently called, "gerund-grinding"—dry bones that have no connection with the living tissue of the written page. For this view there is, no doubt, ample justification; but, if our teaching answered to the old definition, the public would, we feel sure, be quick to recognise both its educational and its practical value. It is easy to say, "Let the children read and read, soak them in literature, in the best that has been said, in the noblest thoughts of the noblest men in their noblest moments, and they will imbibe a knowledge of the qualities of good style." In the first place, the teacher cannot soak in literature the minds of boys and girls who leave school at thirteen or fourteen years of age; and, in the second place, most children, like most adults, are (metaphorically) blind. They have to be taught to see as well as to read; and the teacher who does not train them to see what conduces to good form in the sentences and paragraphs he selects for his grammar exercises does not give his pupils the training in the principles of English composition that we ought to expect him to give them. A scheme of grammar-teaching that does not rise above mere classification ought not to be regarded as a satisfactory one; and classification is all our syllabus provides for in the two highest standards. It ought, we think, to provide also for the study of the laws of arrangement both of the parts of the sentence and of the sentences of the paragraph. Grammar in this wider sense, the sense of the old definition, is, apart from its usefulness, an instrument of mental discipline not inferior to physical science. It was, our experience has convinced us, a profound mistake to remove it from the pass-subjects. Undoubtedly it ought to go with composition, and we hope the Department will yet see its way to revert to this grouping.

The treatment of object-lessons and elementary science is not what it might be made if teachers were less dependent on what the books say about this subject and that. With both teachers and taught there is insufficient contact with things, insufficient personal observation and comparison of and reasoning about things and their qualities and relations. The spirit of the teaching is, not "*Do* this and *observe* what follows, *examine* this and *tell* what you *see*," but "*If* you do this and observe what follows, or *if* you examine this, you *will see* so-and-so." This is in no sense the spirit of science, which is, "*Do* and *observe*, *examine* and *see*." The distinction is important; it is the distinction between good teaching and bad in all subjects alike, for science is not, as some seem to think, the only subject that affords a training-ground for observation, comparison, and induction. It is not what we learn, but how we learn, that should be our chief concern. The spirit of science is of more importance than science, and the spirit of science does not belong to science alone. The teaching of arithmetic, of English, and of other subjects, by some contemptuously called "book-subjects," can and should be made as scientific in spirit as the teaching of botany and physics. We are, of course, aware that much of the teaching of "book-subjects" is in spirit not scientific; but we are also aware that the teaching of botany and physics is in spirit not infrequently not scientific. The truth is, all depends on the teacher. Where he is a man of accurate *first-hand* knowledge of the subjects he teaches, and of abundant resource, you will have teaching that is truly scientific; but where he is without these qualifications, no matter what the subjects, the teaching will be devoid of the spirit of science.

The sewing continues to reflect great credit upon the female teachers of our schools. During the past year we have been especially pleased with the large amount of excellent knitting presented for examination by many of the schools.

In the schools the manners of the children are generally good, and the children of many schools are well-mannered outside the schools; but good manners in the road and in the street are not so general as they should be. In many parts of the district we never meet the children without receiving a polite salutation, but in others we receive no response, or only an awkward one, to a polite "Good morning, children."

Some of the school properties are not so well cared for, and some of the schoolrooms and out-offices are not kept so clean, as they should be. We have frequently to call attention to black, greasy floors after dancing.

The following table shows the percentages of attainable marks gained by the several classes of pupil-teachers in the examination for 1895:—

Class.	Subject.									
	English.	Grammar.	Dictation.	Geography.	History.	Arithmetic.	Latin.	French.	Mathematics.	Latin.
Fourth ...	45·6	42·2	89·5	57·6	43·6	48·5	63·3	60·5	...	86·6
Third ...	54·5	52·1	78·4	65·7	55·6	39·4	54·5	73·4	76·1	76·8
Second ...	58·3	57·3	66·4	69·9	...	44·4	78·9	73·2	69·4	61·1
First ...	70·8	51·7	63·1	68·9	...	43·3	61·5	65·0	63·7	80·3

These figures disclose weak work in English, grammar, arithmetic, and history, and work ranging from satisfactory to good in the other subjects. Owing to the death of our late lamented colleague we are unable to give the percentages of marks for teaching. We may say, however, than many of the pupil-teachers examined by us did not acquit themselves to our satisfaction. They had obviously had too little training and practice in the work prescribed by the Board.

According to the Board's regulations, a boy or girl who has passed Standard VI. has a sufficient literary equipment to enter upon the pupil-teachers' course. To our thinking the literary equipment denoted by such a pass is, in most cases, very inadequate, and in the amended regulations we intend shortly to submit to the Board we propose making it compulsory on all candidates for the office of pupil-teacher to undergo a literary as well as a practical examination. This will add considerably to our work, but it is, we feel sure, work well worth doing.

We have, &c.,

P. Goyen,
W. S. Fitzgerald, } Inspectors.

The Secretary, Education Board, Otago.

SOUTHLAND.

Sir,— Education Office, Invercargill, 30th January, 1896.

We have the honour to lay before the Board our report on the state of primary education in this district for the year ended the 31st December, 1895.

All the schools in the district were examined, the total number, including the five Roman Catholic schools, being 138; all were also inspected, except two or three that were closed for sufficient reasons when we were in their respective districts. The departmental examinations for teachers' certificates in January, the examination of pupil-teachers in June, the scholarship examination in December, and attention to the other matters that fall to be sifted by the hands of the Inspector, make the complement of our employment for the year.

A review of the educational work done in our primary schools during the past twelve months, so far as it came under our observation, leads us to speak approvingly of the present and hopefully of the future. There has been, we think, a genuine effort on the part of the majority of the teachers to make their schools more efficient in every department, an earnest desire to secure a good moral tone, as well as to cultivate intelligent method, wherein lie, as every true teacher knows, the alpha and the omega of school-keeping. That the teachers are not alone in the forward movement is shown by the fact that apparatus for the rational teaching of elementary science and object-lessons, as well as kindergarten gifts for the training of infants on natural principles, continue to be procured by the Committees for schools in every part of the district. Then, again, there is the establishment of the central technical school, from which in time there will no doubt be various offshoots. There is only wanting the establishment of an efficient art school to bring us into line with the most advanced educational districts in the colony.

The following table gives a summary of results in the standard subjects for the year for the whole district. The column headed "Present" shows the number actually examined in each standard, while the column headed "Passed" shows the number actually promoted on the result of the examination to higher standards:—

Summary of Results for the Whole District.

Standard Classes.	Presented.	Present.	Passed.	Average Age of those that passed.
				Yrs. mos.
Above Standard VI.	155	...	...	...
Standard VI.	451	442	371	13 11
„ V.	757	727	522	13 3
„ IV.	1,333	1,241	892	12 3
„ III.	1,428	1,369	1,073	11 5
„ II.	1,341	1,305	1,235	9 7
„ I.	1,188	1,150	1,086	8 9
Preparatory	2,830	...	...	...
Totals	9,483	6,234	5,179	11 11

Each pupil of Standard I. and Standard II. must satisfy the examiner in five subjects—namely, reading, spelling, drawing, writing, and arithmetic. The passes in these classes are awarded by the head-teachers, and, as our re-examination showed, the awards were, in by far the greater number of instances, made for substantial reasons. In a few schools, on the other hand, the power delegated to the teachers was certainly abused, and promotions were made that could be justified neither by the attainments of the pupils nor by any other circumstance whatever. It is to be feared that in dealing with this matter the better judgment of teachers sometimes gives way to more or less pressure on the part of parents, who are not infrequently blind to the fact that it is far better for a child to master thoroughly the elementary parts of school-work than to have an indifferent knowledge of more advanced parts. It may be in place here to note, (1) that only a relatively small proportion of pupils of eight years of age was withheld from presentation for Standard I., while for such as were withheld sufficient excuse was tendered, and (2) that the average age of passing has this year been lowered in every standard except the fourth.

Each pupil in Standard III. to Standard VI. must satisfy the examiner in seven subjects—namely, reading, spelling and dictation, writing, drawing, arithmetic, composition, and geography. Speaking generally, we are pleased with the instruction of the pupils and their attainments in all the subjects except arithmetic and geography—though, of course, in a large number of schools these subjects too are taught with enthusiasm and success.

The test-cards in arithmetic secured the uniform approbation of the teachers; yet in many cases where at the beginning of the examination the teacher was hopeful of the issue, the performance of the pupils came lamentably short of every one's expectations. In most cases the source from which failure in arithmetic springs is not difficult to trace. Children come to school associating numbers with things; here by a strange perversion they are allowed to drift into the habit of dissociating what they had previously associated, and presently numbers become to them but empty abstractions. Nothing is more certain than that the youngest pupils reason quickly and accurately about easy concrete numbers, whether the principle involved be addition, subtraction, multiplication, or division, or even a combination of these; and nothing is more patent to an observer than the fact that the opportunity to do so is, in many schools, persistently denied them. And so the dreary work goes on, carrying the pupils from class to class alive to mechanical processes but dead to rational principles. In the upper standards the same blemish is perpetuated in the fatuous and slothful habit some teachers have of allowing pupils while doing sums to cover their slates with figures unaccompanied by the terms denoting the quantities represented, with the result that in the end hopeless confusion will in all probability have usurped the place of transparent reasoning. That all sums, whether direct or problematic, should, as far as possible, be set out in a self-explanatory way has been dinned into the ears of certain teachers year after year, and when the Inspector in despair at last puts the matter in a strong light in his report to the Board such teachers have no good grounds for thinking themselves hardly dealt by.

Geography continues to receive very niggardly treatment in far too many schools. It is to be feared, indeed, that not a few teachers but ill comprehend the paramount importance of the subject, and consequently fail to give their pupils the slightest clue to its bearings on individual, social, and national life. For this failure to entertain the vital aims within the scope of the subject there appear to be two chief causes—an abuse of the text-books, and a narrow interpretation of the syllabus. The text-books in use furnish one way of conveying geographical information; but there is reason to suppose that, in the hands of some teachers, they afford all or almost all the means, and in some cases also the end, which is merely to answer a certain number of questions. No text-book or combination of text-books, however excellent as an aid, can take the place of systematic oral instruction. Again, the outline of the subject given in the syllabus appears to be, in the eyes of some teachers at any rate, the measure of the subject. In one way, such teachers are perfectly right; in another, entirely wrong: for the point is not what is the most expeditious way in which a certain definite number of facts can be packed into a pupil's mind, but how can his mind be prepared for the reception of facts—how can a knowledge of them be imparted with such a measure of intelligence as to secure permanent abode among, and assimilation with, pre-existing facts, so as to form part and parcel of an organized body of knowledge. But let us not be too exacting. There is a real difficulty here, which only one teaching the subject single-handed to five different classes can fully appreciate. For the guidance of such we offer the following hints: First, the teacher should sedulously endeavour to lodge in his pupils' minds at the earlier stages of instruction clear mental pictures of the geographical features under observation; second, at every geography-lesson there should be map- or feature-drawing by the teacher or pupils, or by both; third, opportune lessons should put the pupils on the right track, and they may then be left to cover what of the ground remains with the aid of their maps, atlases, and text-books. In his set lessons the teacher might proceed on some such lines as the following: The pupils are studying, let us say, the towns of some district: one—or more if there is time—will be selected by the teacher, who notices (1) its absolute physical setting, by which is meant its position with regard to the factors determining its climate, from which may be deducted the characteristic products of the adjacent region; (2) its relative physical setting with regard (*a*) to the country in which it is placed, and (*b*) to foreign countries, near or remote, in which connection would be studied roadways, waterways, and railways; (3) its action and reaction (*a*) on the country in which it is placed and (*b*) on foreign countries, under which heading would be fully dealt with its exports, imports, and the characteristic industries both of itself and the adjacent region; (4) its municipal as reflecting its central government; (5) its population as compared with some well-known place fixed upon as unit; (6) its historical or military importance. This scheme, which is not a university method, and by no means so formidable as it looks, may be varied, abridged, or expanded to suit the feature studied and the experience and capacities of the pupils. Of one thing there can be no doubt: either the teacher must proceed on some such lines, or the pupils must leave school destitute of true geographical knowledge.

To enable the different schools to ascertain their relative positions as to proficiency in the class and additional subjects, we have compiled the following table, which shows approximately the standard in all the schools of the district:—

CLASS-SUBJECTS.

Subject.	Inferior.	Fair.	Satisfactory.	Good.	Very Good.	Excellent.
Grammar	19 schools	44 schools	30 schools	19 schools	20 schools	1 school
History	17 "	24 "	30 "	30 "	27 "	5 "
Geography	27 "	33 "	23 "	23 "	18 "	9 "
Elementary science and object-lessons	16 "	31 "	39 "	25 "	21 "	1 "
Mental arithmetic ...	32 "	45 "	27 "	23 "	6 "	0 "

ADDITIONAL SUBJECTS.

Subject.	Inferior.	Fair.	Satisfactory.	Good.	Very Good.	Excellent.
Poetry	23 schools ...	34 schools	27 schools	24 schools	20 schools	5 schools
Drill and exercises ...	19 " ...	19 "	45 "	26 "	19 "	5 "
Singing	Not taught in 35 schools	17 "	29 "	25 "	19 "	8 "
Needlework ...	Not taught in 61 schools	6 "	28 "	17 "	15 "	6 "
Comprehension of language of reader	Inferior in 25 schools	31 "	30 "	24 "	21 "	2 "

We offer some short comments on the results here shown, premising, however, that where there is censure it is supposed to fall on those teachers whose schools do not reach the satisfactory standard.

The result in grammar is not such as one can view with complacency. Failure in this subject is due almost entirely to mental confusion begotten of ill-directed, spiritless teaching. So long as teachers will not take sufficient trouble to go to the heart of the matter, so that children's first notions may be clear and firmly grounded, so long will grammar be a subject hateful in school and futile as a means of mental discipline. The greater success achieved in history is in some measure due to the fact that the teaching of the subject makes a less rigorous demand on the teacher's power, and in some measure to its popularity with the children. The outcome of the examination of Standard II. geography supports the opinion expressed on the same subject as taught to the upper standards. As in the case of grammar, unless first notions are clear and fixed further progress is difficult and uncertain. Among the class-subjects the relative importance of elementary science and object-lessons appear to be fully appreciated by the teachers—a matter, certainly, for congratulation. As to mental arithmetic, we offer no comment beyond pointing out that the result squares with the remarks concerning arithmetic as a standard subject.

Touching the additional subjects, we are of opinion that too many schools come short of the satisfactory standard in poetry. This is the more disappointing in that the chief fault—viz., mechanical sing-song—is one of easy remedy. By no one would the remedy be hailed with more delight than by the children themselves. In drill and exercises the district appears to stand well, but it should be noted that in most schools only the disciplinary exercises are taken up. We again observe with regret the apathy shown in the district in the matter of military drill: in only one or two schools do the children receive such instruction as would enable them to become a serviceable volunteer company. The time may come when those in authority will marvel why such sleepiness had been shown in a concern so vital to the national existence. As to singing, we believe this district compares favourably with others, but there are still too many schools in which the subject is not taught. With regard to needlework, we note with satisfaction that the ladies of the Southland Educational Institute recommend that the Inspector should, instead of examining elaborate finished garments, examine samples of work done during the year, and see the pupils practically do some prescribed portion of work. This method would be at once a relief to the teachers and a much surer test of the proficiency of the pupils. We confess ourselves disappointed with the standard of proficiency attained by the pupils in the comprehension of the language in their reading-books. Generally speaking, one might hazard an opinion on the degree of intelligence ruling in a class or school on this very matter; for, if pupils have clear and readily-expressible notions regarding the language of the reading-books in daily use, they are not likely to be backward in other subjects.

In the great majority of our schools the general tone is very good; in no small number it is excellent. In a few, however—in some even in which very different things might be expected—we have noticed shortcomings so serious as to raise doubts in our minds as to whether the prevalent tone will exercise an entirely healthful influence on the lives of the pupils. At more than one school we have seen a lamentable want of punctuality, a detestable habit of loitering, a depraved tendency to scribble on, cut, and carve school property, want of respect towards teachers, and habitual attempts to practise dishonesty at the annual examinations. Nor does the fault lie to any great extent with the pupils; it lies almost entirely in the instability of the school *régime*—an instability induced by the absence of that firmness, vigilance, and determination which alone, in primary schools, afford a true basis for the exercise of gentleness, goodness, and mercy. Breaches of moral order in a school must be reprobated in no measured terms, and we shall, as in duty bound, continue to wage uncompromising war on any school government that makes such breaches easy.

We are, &c.,

JAMES HENDRY,
GEO. D. BRAIK, } Inspectors.

The Secretary, Education Board.

Approximate Cost of Paper.—Preparation, not given; printing (3,000 copies), £46 3s.

By Authority: JAMES BURNS, Government Printer for the time being, Wellington.—1896.

Price 1s.]