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NEW ZEALAND.

EDUCATION:

REPORTS OF INSPECTORS OF SCHOOLS.

[In continuation of E.-1B, 1902.]

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

AUCKLAND.

SIR,— Education Board, Auckland, 20th March, 1903.

I have the honour to submit a general report on the public schools of the Auckland District for the year 1902.

The number of schools in operation at the close of the year was 414, including seventy-six half-time schools. The number is nine more than at the close of 1901. Of these 370 were inspected, besides twenty-one Roman Catholic diocesan schools. In half-time schools only one of the schools was visited for inspection. In all 430 schools have been examined, including twenty-one Roman Catholic diocesan schools and the Parnell Orphan Home. The following newly opened schools were not examined: Awanga (Great Barrier Island), Tiri Tiri (aided), and Te Matai. The examination statistics of the public schools for the year are shown in summary in the following table. Except in very rare instances, the passes in Standards I. to V. were determined by the head teachers. Those in Standard VI. were determined by the Inspectors:—

Classes.	Number on Roll.	Present at Inspector's Annual Visit.	Passed.	Average Age of Pupils in each Class.
				Yrs. mos.
Standard VII.	373	222	...	14 8
" VI.	2,035	1,971	1,496	14 0
" V.	2,920	2,779	2,300	13 2
" IV.	3,343	3,226	2,815	12 4
" III.	3,570	3,442	3,020	11 4
" II.	3,576	3,457	3,191	10 6
" I.	3,254	3,151	3,075	9 3
Preparatory	10,281	9,334	...	...
Totals	29,352	27,582	15,897	...

At the Roman Catholic diocesan schools the roll number was 1,677; 1,555 pupils were present at the Inspectors' examinations, and 693 passed in one or other of the standards.

The public schools show for the year an increase of 352 in the roll number, a decrease of 128 in the number present,* and an increase of fifty-six in the number of pupils who passed one or other of the standards. Rather more than 88 per cent. of the pupils examined in standards thus passed or gained promotion. The average age of the pupils in the lower standards shows some increase, but the interval between the average ages of pupils in successive standards is one year or less, except in one case, where the interval is fifteen months. I have made out the following statement of the estimated efficiency of the teaching of the class and additional subjects in the public schools, which is of some interest, and will help to check the impressions left by the remarks of the Inspectors on the treatment of these subjects: Class subjects, sixty-four schools good, 213 schools satisfactory, eighty-three schools fair, forty-one schools moderate, four schools inferior; additional subjects, ninety-eight schools good, 204 schools satisfactory, thirty-six schools fair.

In one or two schools only primer pupils were present, and in a number of the half-time schools no additional subjects were taken up.

* Doubtless due to the continuous inclement weather of the latter half of the year.

At the beginning of the present year four of the Inspectors took charge of fresh districts, and their opinions about the work they have seen are of the nature of absolute judgments rather than estimates of progress. Mr. Purdie has been left in charge of the Northern district, which he took over not long ago.

In the larger schools the teaching in general reaches a high level of efficiency, and there are hardly any in which it is not satisfactory. At the Thames and the larger goldfield centres very satisfactory progress has been made. In the rural districts the state of the instruction varies much from school to school, but it is in the main satisfactory, and in a considerable number of cases efficient. The list of schools that are considered unsatisfactory by the Inspectors also grows smaller, though defects of professional training, the necessity for employing quite a large number of raw and inexperienced teachers, and the evil effects of frequent changes of teachers, must for some years to come keep a number of the smaller schools on the borderland of inefficiency.

The promotion of pupils in the larger schools is being made with due discretion and sound judgment, and most of the Inspectors' examination reports express satisfaction with the promotions and classification in all classes of schools. Mr. Grierson (South-Central district) adverts specially to this subject, and expresses the opinion that pupils in the lower classes are being pushed on too quickly and before they have gained a sufficiently firm grounding in the work of the classes from which they have been advanced. Improper classification thus frequently begins in the Standard I. class, and, as the promotions depend on the teachers, the evil once begun goes on year after year without any adequate check; for Inspectors cannot now directly control classification, while teachers of smaller schools are, he thinks, frequently too much alive to the presence of local opinion and parents' demands to check it themselves. None of the other Inspectors make any complaint on this score. Proper classification is, however, of vital importance, for where pupils in the lower classes are promoted before they are fit the evil effects of the blunder will often continue throughout their school life, and make their instruction uninteresting and discouraging to themselves and a source of worry and disappointment to all concerned. If we are to educate our pupils they must at every stage be readily able to assimilate the teaching given thereat; failing this condition we may cram, but we cannot educate. In dealing with promotions teachers must realise that they are intrusted with a very great and onerous responsibility, and that they will prove unworthy of their office if they fail to exercise it wisely. They can, I feel sure, rely on the steady support of the Board and the Inspectors in dealing with promotions in a firm and prudent spirit.

The teaching of reading is in general satisfactory, and in a large number of the most important schools it is good. In a small number it is backward, and in a few it even lacks fluency. Want of expression is still too common, and is specially remarked by Mr. Grierson and Mr. Mulgan (Southern and North Wairoa districts). The former considers that pattern followed by simultaneous reading is excessively used in his district. Teachers have little excuse for this abuse, for the limitations to which the use of pattern and simultaneous reading is liable have been repeatedly dwelt on in former reports to the Board. If pupils are properly classified and really fit for the reading-books on which they are engaged, this method should be but sparingly used or needed. Original power of reading comes only from much practice in reading without help or prompting, or at least with as little of these as possible. Inexperienced teachers must study to exercise a wise and firm restraint on their first impulses to help scholars over difficulties. To help unwisely or prematurely is to impair or, it may be, to destroy the educative effects which only self-help and original effort on the pupil's part can secure. Mere imitation is little more than parrot-work; we must often use it as a starting point, but the true teacher, using it as little and for as short a time as he can, rises above its aid and works habitually on a higher and more intelligent level, training the opening mind to grow and gain strength and flexibility by the daily exercise of its native powers. How far help and prompting are needed each teacher must judge for himself; but he can rest assured that if their ministration is habitually given or habitually needed he is cramming and not teaching, and that the classification of his pupils is radically unsound.

The comprehension of the language and subject-matter of the reading lessons shows some improvement, but has still much leeway to make up. In most schools this matter receives a good deal of attention, but the treatment frequently lacks skill, and is sometimes inaccurate and superficial. In the "Suggestions for the Guidance of Teachers," circulated by authority of the Board, I have explained in some detail how this subject may be dealt with. The need of habitual preparatory study of reading lessons both by teachers and by pupils, and the importance of habitually testing this preparation at the opening of each reading lesson, are there insisted on, and there is still occasion to insist on them. In the course of the year I have not found these Suggestions as carefully attended to as I could wish. The blackboard, moreover, is insufficiently used for noting points of difficulty with a view to testing whether their explanation has been assimilated. The neglect of such testing, that can be readily carried out orally, or preferably by writing on slates or paper, leads teachers and pupils to flatter themselves that they have dealt adequately with many a difficulty that is but vaguely and imperfectly apprehended or not understood at all. Systematic revisal questioning, verifying and verifying again, and nothing else, will truly gauge the assimilation of the teaching of this department of English. Were this more regularly used far fewer teachers would have occasion to offer lame excuses for the too frequent failure of their pupils to explain phrases and short passages of ordinary difficulty in the class reading-books. To secure satisfactory results, oral explanations must here be supplemented by frequent explanations in writing, and these must be carefully examined, and, if faulty, effectually criticized, so that the pupils will benefit by the criticisms.

Mr. Purdie thinks the written tests in explanation now given in the higher classes "have considerably aided in producing the improvement" he has noticed in his district. Mr. Crowe (South-eastern district) finds oral explanation "good" and written "moderate." Mr. Mulgan finds "a considerable number of schools where poorly expressed and inaccurate explanations are frequently

given," and he recommends that "all passes in reading should depend absolutely on a knowledge of the meaning of the passage read": he would specially insist on this in Standard VI. "It would mean spending additional time on the examinations, but this is surely a matter of minor importance where the benefits to be secured are so obvious and so great." Mr. Grierson writes on this topic as follows: "There is a very general opinion among teachers that the comprehension of the New Zealand Graphic Readers cannot be overtaken, in the higher numbers at any rate. In this opinion I should entirely concur if it were necessary for a teacher to explain the meaning of everything obscure to the pupils' minds. But surely a child can be expected to help itself in this matter, as it does in arithmetic and elsewhere. The teacher should carefully thresh out a few lessons in the earlier part of the school year, guiding the pupils in the use of their dictionaries and presenting clearly on the blackboard the best manner in which the explanation can be shown. After a short course of such exercise the pupils would be able to pursue, with a little occasional assistance and further direction, this most useful and interesting study. Years ago I used this method with great success. Are not hundreds of thousands of children all over the world mastering a foreign language in this way? All that is needed for success is that teachers should realise the immense importance of this part of a child's education, make up their minds that it shall, by some means, be done, and set themselves to work to get it done. The end is a great one, and is worth a great effort." I would only add that the readers used in the Roman Catholic schools are no whit easier of understanding than our Graphic Readers.

On the whole, spelling continues to be well taught. Mr. Goodwin (North-Central district), while finding it "satisfactory" in the country schools, notes much incorrect spelling of common words in exercises outside dictation, which he roundly attributes to carelessness. Both Mr. Crowe and Mr. Grierson point out that too little account is often taken of accurate spelling in determining promotions.

Writing is taught with very unequal success in different schools. In many of the larger schools it is good, and this holds of a considerable proportion of the smaller ones. In the examination reports it is seldom described as being below "satisfactory." Still, in many of the smaller schools the writing in exercise-books, &c., leaves much to be desired, and that in copy-books cannot always be held passable. Mr. Grierson says "it is taught with fair success" in his district, but he complains of inattention to the writing posture and the way of holding the pen, as does Mr. Goodwin also. "Many teachers in my district," writes the former, "profess not to be able to see any utility in attending to these points, while others confess to their inability to train their pupils to a rational and natural posture. To the former I would reply that no one becomes a fluent writer until he has acquired the correct posture, and that the advantages of a fairly upright position, as compared with the sprawling, body-twisting distortions indulged in by most of the children in the district, from the point of view both of the development of a child's body and of the preservation of its sight, are self-evident. To the latter class of teachers I would say that they have mistaken their vocation, and if they are unable in one month to make the correct posture a habit at all times throughout their schools they are unworthy to be intrusted with the vital duty of moulding children's characters and forming their habits." Good writing goes hand in hand with good discipline; those who fail to teach it with reasonable success have not the influence with and power over their pupils that are indispensable to the educator.

Fair progress in the teaching of composition continues to be made. "It is good in a few schools, satisfactory in most, and weak in a few," is Mr. Purdie's estimate. Mr. Mulgan writes: "Grammatical errors and mistakes in spelling were seldom met with in the two upper classes, where moreover the power of expanding ideas is being cultivated with success. It is not unusual to find a large Standard VI. class writing relatively long compositions on subjects treated for the first time, and expressing themselves for the most part with clearness and accuracy. The matter evolved, however, is often disappointing, showing but small evidence of thought-power. The compositions in fact are descriptive, and disclose very little originality or ability to follow up lines of thought. I am inclined to think that too many of the subjects chosen (by the teachers) in the upper classes encourage descriptions of, rather than thoughts about, the matter to be discussed. In Standard IV. most of the exercises were written without notes, and in many cases were creditable productions. . . . In Standard III. the work was almost everywhere well done—in many cases, indeed, the exercises being quite up to the level of Standard IV." Mr. Crowe says: "On the whole, I think this subject is taught in a satisfactory manner." Mr. Goodwin describes most of the exercises received in his country schools "as passable, though few could be truly described as 'good,'" and he notes that the exercises were frequently marred by bad spelling. Mr. Grierson's account of the teaching is less satisfactory. "I found no evidence," he says, "of the many useful suggestions made in your last year's report being adopted. I can only record the opinion that the composition exercises written at the examinations were, on the whole, but fair. As you remarked last year, many of the teachers do not show any burning desire to learn good methods, and I am certain that few of them have taken the trouble to think out carefully a plan of teaching composition."

In the larger schools, and particularly in those of the city and suburbs, the teaching is creditable in nearly every respect. Exercises showing good arrangement of matter, clearness and correctness of statement, and considerable power of thought, are here by no means uncommon. Freedom from errors of grammar and spelling, added to general neatness, affords evidence of well applied attention to this part of the school-work.

Little change is to be noted in the teaching of arithmetic. There is, however, considerable discrepancy among the opinions of the Inspectors about it. In Mr. Purdie's view "it is on the whole very satisfactory as regards accuracy of calculation and the application of processes. The pupils in a very large number of schools do not, however, give evidence of understanding the principles underlying the processes. This is noticeable in the small number (comparatively) of pupils who

are able to solve the problems in the test cards issued by the Department." Mr. Grierson says: "Arithmetic is just satisfactory in most of the schools, but rarely anything more; often very weak in Standards I. and IV. The same old faults prevail—too little elucidation of principles, too little mental work in easy examples illustrating new rules, too little use of the blackboard; too much text-book and too little thought and common-sense." Mr. Goodwin finds it satisfactory in Standards I. to IV., while "in Standards V. and VI. the results are inferior." Want of accuracy, he says, is a prevailing fault. "It is seldom that I see the teaching of a new rule, and rarely indeed do I see any attempt made to educe from the scholars the reason for the process with which they are engaged. I am afraid that a stupid adherence to formulæ still lingers among some teachers." Much more pleasing is Mr. Mulgan's estimate of the teaching. "The mechanical or routine work," he says, "in this subject was well done, and principles were on the whole skilfully and thoroughly taught. As a disciplinary agent this subject possesses great possibilities, and so far as pupils are taken is doing valuable work. In the three upper classes I consider the lowering of the problem level a mistake*—for, after all, when once principles are mastered the only work left involving thought-power lies in the solution of problems. I cannot say that I found evidence of increasing ability to reason out and solve thought-demanding questions." Mr. Crowe has found arithmetic generally well done in Standards IV. and VI., satisfactory in Standard III., and less satisfactory in Standards II. and V. I have myself examined fewer of the smaller schools than the other Inspectors, and cannot speak for so large a volume of work, but I found the arithmetic, though unequal in different schools, and occasionally in the different classes of the same school, in the main quite satisfactory. It rarely happened that all the problems set were not answered by some of the pupils, though by a considerable number the problems were hardly touched, and seemed to be considered a needless inquisition into their attainments. The working, moreover, was in general smartly done, as well as neatly and clearly set out. I cannot but consider Mr. Grierson's and Mr. Goodwin's experience for the year as exceptional.

Mental arithmetic, though on the whole not unsatisfactory, needs more attention than it now receives in the smaller schools. "The difficulty in finding time for it," Mr. Mulgan says, "would largely disappear if training in mental calculations formed part of each lesson given. Indeed, apart from all considerations of mental calculations, this is obviously the way to teach arithmetic." Mr. Grierson mentions that "he heard no mental arithmetic practice outside of Class P. during the year," and this though he spent fully a third of it in continuous inspection-work. In such circumstances it would have been well to ask to see a specimen of this sort of exercise. Before leaving this subject I must express decided satisfaction with the mental addition and other exercises in classes Standards I. and II. of the schools I examined.

In Standard VI. geography is a pass subject. Here political geography was very satisfactory, and in many instances good, and physical geography very fair. Many excellent papers were received in the larger schools. In the classes below Standard VI. geography is a class subject. The Inspectors' estimates of the work done in them afford evidence of pronounced differences in the quality of the teaching. Mr. Crowe finds the subject "as a rule well known." Mr. Purdie writes that "the general geography shows improvement, and is on the whole quite satisfactory." Mr. Mulgan's estimate is equally favourable, except with regard to physical geography. Mr. Goodwin, however, finds the work of Standards IV. and V. disappointing, though in Standards II. and III. it is generally satisfactory. Mr. Grierson considers "it is very unintelligently taught as a rule," while "the plan of the school and its environs is generally conspicuous by its absence." I have myself seen much of this department of teaching during the year, and, while allowing that the teaching is generally narrow and sometimes ill-informed and unintelligent, and lamenting the evident want of interest that ill-informed teaching always entails, I have usually found the information gained by the Standards IV. and V. classes of satisfactory accuracy as far as it went, except with regard to the products and industries of the various provinces of New Zealand and the abstruse mathematical geography prescribed for Standard V. In Standards II. and III. much of the work was in all respects creditable. It is clear, however, that the teaching in Standards IV. and V. might well be broader in scope and more thorough and intelligent. To achieve this end numbers of our teachers must greatly enlarge the store of useful and interesting geographical knowledge they now possess. One is tempted, in hours of despondency, to doubt if half of them know anything more than is contained in the pages of the meagre and rather stupid text-books that are in the hands of their pupils. Illustrated and more informing text-books† will have to be consulted, and pictures and interesting facts gleaned from them will have to be freely used, before this study is raised to its proper level. We must not forget that the definition of the course of study in the syllabus tends to encourage the formal and uninteresting treatment of the subject. As we are promised a revised syllabus, it would be a great gain if the aim of the teaching in this and other subjects were as carefully defined as its scope. This is an excellent feature in the syllabus of the South Australian public-school system, in which I notice a special direction that no place is to be taught about with reference to which some useful or interesting information cannot be given.

Drawing continues satisfactory, and is in many instances well taught, while the slate freehand tests were often creditably done. In the lower classes copies drawn on slates are often on too small a scale. They should usually be drawn nearly as large as the slate will allow. In a number of schools measuring and forming outlines in dots or very short lines are tolerated, to the ruin of the teaching. Ruled lines are sometimes to be found in exercises that profess to be freehand, though the fact can be detected with ease and certainty. The faults noticed will never be tolerated by any teacher who realises why drawing is made a subject of instruction. In a few schools brush

* Due to the low standard now set in the Department's test questions.

† Herbertson and Frye's Illustrated Geography is a most suitable book of reference that should find a place in every school library.

work or brush drawing and colouring has been taken up, instead of the ordinary course, with promising success. I hope to see a wide extension of this movement, for this form of drawing appears to give a better and surer training in freehand and freearm work, and undoubtedly invests the lessons with an interest unknown in the practice of drawing with slate or lead pencils—a fact of great significance. Blank drawing-books are now in very general use, except in the lower classes of the smaller schools, and should be used everywhere.

In the larger schools some improvement in the teaching of grammar can be noted, but elsewhere no general progress can be recorded. In Standards III. and IV. it is usually satisfactory, and sometimes good; in Standards V. and VI. seldom more than fair, and frequently moderate. Mr. Mulgan, however, describes the work in Standards V. and VI. as very fair. It is not want of time but want of interest and of an earnestly pursued and well arranged course of treatment that retards progress here. I would recommend teachers who desire to do better justice to it to consider what I have said in the "Suggestions for the Guidance of Teachers" (page 17 *et seq.*).

Fair work is being done in the teaching of history. Mr. Crowe and Mr. Purdie reckon it generally satisfactory. Mr. Grierson says it is "poorly known in most schools." In the larger schools it is adequately treated, but there is a noticeable want of narrative power. Asked a number of narrow questions on details, pupils answer creditably, but if invited to tell what they know of an event—the Trial of the Seven Bishops, for example—they make a poor appearance in displaying their knowledge. This is due less to ignorance than want of practice in oral narrative. Teachers would do well to cultivate narrative power more sedulously. In a few schools history has been dropped in favour of handwork, and this exchange is likely to become more general. One or two teachers who have made this change feel that their pupils are sustaining a serious loss in learning nothing of history, and have suggested that the use of a short text-book might be authorised as an extra reader. I have been looking out for a suitable work of this kind, and may soon be able to recommend one to the Board.

The teaching of object lessons shows some advance in aim and in thoroughness. Mr. Grierson considers it "satisfactory for the most part," and Mr. Purdie notes that it has "somewhat improved," and particularly in aim. Mr. Goodwin says object lessons "are treated too bookishly," and he doubts if a "clear opinion of their educative value can be formed" by questioning in the subjects in which the teachers have given lessons. "The examiner very often only finds out what the children have been told." The cause of this, however, is not the method of examination so much as the method of teaching the lessons, of which Mr. Goodwin says, "Their real scope seems to be either misunderstood or neglected by most teachers, who persist in telling too much, and in leaving too little to be drawn from the pupils." If "objects" are really used in educing and illustrating the matters taught, I think it highly improbable that the pupils' knowledge will connect itself with the teacher's verbal explanation rather than with the things seen and handled or experimented on. Mr. Mulgan "cannot report much improvement in this section. There is still too much memorising and too little real observing." He considers the average teacher's questioning about objects too suggestive, so that it fails to lead pupils to frame their answers from original observation and reasoning. "The average object lesson," he thinks, "when once given has done its work and seldom requires to be repeated in the same form." Repetition leads the teacher to attach an undue importance to the knowledge imparted, and "in the case of pupils stimulates memory-effort rather than thought-power." He also attributes much of the faulty teaching to the practice of examining from the list of lessons given by the teacher during the year—a practice, be it remembered, that is expressly enjoined on Inspectors by the words of the syllabus. On the general question here raised I am of opinion that skilful examination will seldom fail to disclose whether the object lessons given are gaining the ends of such teaching, and that the observation of lessons that are being taught (and an Inspector may see one if he wishes in every school he visits for inspection) will afford decisive evidence on the point, so far as a sample shows the quality of the mass. Moreover, the knowledge gained through object lessons is by no means to be despised, and any examination that ignored the teacher's yearly syllabus of lessons would necessarily have to leave it out of account. A combination of the two plans would doubtless be best, and this treatment is quite practicable now, if time is available for it. When we are sufficiently enlightened to provide an Inspector for every fifty schools, such a procedure would be most natural.

I have noted that children are usually interested in object lessons, and in some schools they are the treats of the week. To maintain this interest they must not deal with things of which most children have already a familiar knowledge, for novelty and interest go hand in hand. In the infant and primer classes the time-honoured topics of the "umbrella," "a slate," "a brick," "a lump of coal," "a piece of kauri-gum," &c., are quite suitable. There is too much working on objects of this type in the lower standard classes, where they should yield place to less familiar and more interesting subjects of study. The futility of dealing *ad nauseam* with quite familiar objects is well illustrated by some remarks of Mr. Grierson's. "It is often amusing," he writes, "in a country school to hear a town-bred lady gravely questioning a class of farm-bred children on the points and uses of the cow or the sheep. Probably any member of the class could teach her a good deal about these animals and their products; and the young lady finds exercise for all her ingenuity and skill in restraining some enterprising youngster from jumping up and putting an end to the lesson by telling in a breath all that she intends to spin out over half an hour." This little picture shows us how necessary is careful selection of topics and of modes of treatment that will add to the pupils' existing stock of knowledge, and teach them to see and learn the significance of what often lies beneath the surface.

The chief impediment to a better training through object teaching seems to me to be the imperfect equipment of many teachers in first-hand knowledge of common things, both animate and inanimate. Only first-hand examination and inquiry can give the teacher that experience in careful

and accurate observation, and in the comparisons and inferences that flow from it, that is needed to guide the like efforts of their pupils. Their knowledge, moreover, is often too narrow to allow of a recognition of facts and relations of great interest. I have seen, for example, many lessons given on "an insect," but I have never heard any reference made to the remarkable arrangement it shows for supplying oxygen to the tissues. To healthy-minded children this point in the insect's structure would be most interesting, and with the aid of a cheap common lens the "air-openings" on the surface of the body and the "air-vessels" in the wings could be easily demonstrated. The knowledge of plant-physiology is also very defective, though it deals with many points that come within the range of most children's observation. While teachers depend on books for the matter of their object lessons (and one constantly sees them consulting books, which may indeed be helpful in the choice of methods) the teaching must continue to be bookish. A wider culture and, above all, a real living interest in nature in its manifold aspects seem to me indispensable conditions of any marked advance. Unfortunately, in this new country we have very few facilities for diffusing a knowledge of topics such as local natural history and geology, many features of which lend themselves to interesting and illuminating treatment in the elementary school, and teachers must not be too harshly blamed for defective knowledge of them. But the great features of both are the same all the world over; and the works on nature-study, now issuing from the Press in England and the United States, are full of suggestions and of knowledge that will put us on the right lines of observation and inquiry here. The new name of "nature-study" is highly significant, as indicating a notable change in the nature and scope of object teaching.

The teaching of science is mainly by exposition or lecture illustrated by familiar experiences, and by simple experiments where a supply of apparatus is available. The principles of the "method of discovery" or the "heuristic system" admit in such circumstances of very limited application—an application by no means new, viz., in observing and stating the conditions that obtain before the experiment begins, the change or changes that accompany its performance, and the conditions that obtain when it is finished, followed by a discussion of the "why" of the changes observed and of the general arrangements made. As the teacher, aided it may be by some pupils, performs the experiments in front of a large class, many cannot see clearly what has taken place, and this is a great and unavoidable disadvantage of this method of teaching. Still, it is the best we can do under existing circumstances, and we must bear these conditions in mind in judging of our results, which, though much disparaged nowadays, need not be devoid of considerable value.* If time and means of giving pupils a practical training in the elements of science could be secured, no doubt much more valuable work would be done, and the study would be much more attractive. I do not at present see how such a change can be carried out in the larger schools except by instituting classes at special convenient centres, as the Board is now doing for instruction in cookery and wood-work. The Department might well be approached without delay with a view to providing this accommodation. In the smaller schools arrangements such as have been suggested by the Board's Director of Technical Education might be more easily carried out to some extent. To make the provision of the necessary apparatus possible, all science classes would have to become "school classes" under the Manual and Technical Instruction Act (see section 27 of the regulations thereunder).

Under the present teaching of science a good deal of satisfactory work is being done in the larger schools, and it is fair in many of the smaller ones, in some of which Mr. Mulgan and Mr. Purdie have found it "valuable." Where no apparatus is provided little more than useful theoretical knowledge can have been gained, and we are quite prepared for Mr. Mulgan's estimate that "the net result of much of the teaching in this subject is to foster memory-effort rather than thought-power." I trust, however, that the "memory-effort," which Mr. Mulgan regards with evident distrust, may not be altogether wasted if it has supplied children with some deposit of useful and accurate knowledge of such subjects as the laws of health and the simpler principles of agriculture. It is becoming the fashion to belaud the value of methods in science teaching to a pitch that implies the almost worthless character of the knowledge (or, as some would say, the information) gained. The two are, however, nearly on a level, no knowledge being truly gained that is not assimilated and placed in living relation to what was in the mind before. The exaggeration of the day must not lead us to take distorted views of educational values. Methods count for much, but not for everything.

In connection with additional subjects, I need add nothing to the information contained in the statement of efficiency given above.

During the year the Inspectors have taken much pains to encourage teachers to improve the oral answering of their pupils, and not without success. As I have pointed out before, good oral answering is largely dependent on suitable questioning, and can improve only *pari passu* with the latter. The repetition of a question as part of the answer to it is still a prevalent fault that militates against improvement. Effort to recollect the wording of a question diverts attention from the main point—the statement of what is asked for or about—and takes up time to no useful purpose. In this connection questions of a wide scope that sum up the gist of a previous series of questions are of special importance, and should be frequently used in the course of most lessons.

* From the preface to an "Elementary Chemistry for Schools of Science" recently written by Mr. Thomas Cartwright, B.A., B.Sc., Lond., &c. (Thos. Nelson and Sons), I extract the following, which seems to me to contain a just view of the case. "An attempt has been made to strike the happy medium between the method of discovery and the method of telling; for the writer believes that the heuristic theorist, who would abolish telling and insist upon the learner being entirely a discoverer, is as much in the wrong as the teacher who puts his faith in the lecture-room rather than in the laboratory. Telling there must be; but it should be judicious and not excessive, it being remembered that the aim of an elementary course should be to train the observing-powers of the students, to accustom them to intelligently interpret simple phenomena, to manipulate and construct simple apparatus, and to give them a clear conception of the meaning of symbols, formulæ, and equations, and the simple laws of chemical theory."

The matter of reading lessons, object lessons, science lessons, geography, and especially history lessons, lends itself to the treatment I am recommending. There is no doubt that, in spite of constant practice in answering questions, our older pupils are singularly inarticulate; though the difficulty of making due allowance for diffidence and the possible depressing effect of an Inspector's presence (which many teachers manage to get their pupils to regard as inquisitorial rather than frankly inquiring and friendly) inclines one to discount his frequently unfavourable impressions. Even when all the pupils are at their ease—no unusual experience—this defect is distinctly noticeable.

Handwork—usually cane-weaving and modelling in plasticine—has been taken up with considerable success in a number of the smaller schools. Now that payments in aid of materials are to be made for an hour's instruction a week I expect an extensive development of this work. Curiously enough, when I asked the Minister to sanction this concession a year ago the request was refused. The Department is to be congratulated on taking a wiser view of the question. History is the subject that is omitted where handwork is taken up.

Under the new scheme for teachers' salaries no provision is made for teaching sewing in small schools taught by male teachers, and its teaching has in many such cases been discontinued. This is much to be regretted.

The teaching of the primer classes continues in the main most satisfactory. In the smaller schools careless writing at desks is sometimes complained of, and oral arithmetic (chiefly oral addition) is now and then unfavourably noticed. There has been a great extension of kindergarten work, in spite of the Minister's former refusal to make payments in aid of materials for less than two hours' teaching a week. The teachers and School Committees between them have raised the needful funds, which the useful work the classes are doing will in future earn. All the kinds of kindergarten work taken up are very popular, and in general they are efficiently taught.

The arrangements the Board has authorised for teaching cookery and wood-work in Auckland and suburbs are most suitable and welcome, and the instruction will doubtless be much appreciated. The needs of the Thames and a few other larger centres will no doubt be provided for in due season, when a number of qualified teachers have been trained at the Auckland special schools.

Most of the Inspectors have made only incidental reference to methods of teaching. A good few of our teachers are young and inexperienced, but most of these are anxious to advance and do their best to improve the efficiency of their work. The case is different with a considerable number of older teachers in charge of schools, who, though honest and hardworking, have not very seriously considered the aims they should keep in view in their teaching, and seem to be unable to adopt and apply with any success the many suggestions for improvement contained in official reports and books on methods recommended by the Inspectors. The inexperienced but zealous young teachers would, I believe, greatly benefit by a brief attendance at a small and inexpensive model school, such as I have for years been vainly urging the Board to establish in the neighbourhood of Auckland. Those with little capacity for improvement we must tolerate, until by the aid of a training college for teachers the supply of well-qualified teachers is increased. In the larger schools generally, and in many of the smaller ones also, good methods, or at the least suitable methods carefully applied, are in daily use. As an instance of indifference to suggestions offered by the Inspectors I may refer to Mr. Grierson's experience in the South-Central district. He there found little attention to the instructions contained in the circular of July, 1900. In most of the small schools the subdivisions of the year's work therein asked for, which have been found of great value to those who have given the system a trial, had not been made out, while programmes of the course of lessons in history, science, and object lessons had rarely been prepared. These facts disclose a spirit of indifference to suggestions that is very unusual in most parts of this education district. One of the chief impediments to progress is the moving about of pupil-teachers from school to school. There is often but little occasion, it seems to me, for these changes, and I would advise the Board to leave pupil-teachers in the positions to which they are first appointed, unless removal is recommended by one of the Inspectors. By acting on some such principle a great deal of friction would be saved.

I more and more doubt the wisdom of restricting teachers to a choice of one or two series of reading-books as second readers. This policy has not originated with the Board, but has been forced on it in the supposed interests of parents' purses. But I cannot believe that any large class of parents would be unwilling to provide a new set of reading-books at reasonable intervals to make the school life of their children brighter and more interesting. After some years' use the upper reading-books, especially in the smaller schools where several classes are taught in the same room, get more or less known to the younger pupils, and when these pass on to them they have lost the savour of novelty and interest that do much to win children to the love of reading. I feel more and more convinced that the Department's policy in this matter is a blunder, and a wrong to the young.

The order and discipline of our schools are in general good, and in many cases excellent. The pupils are nearly always respectful to their teachers, and well-behaved.

In general the fidelity and diligence of the teachers can be highly commended, but what has been recorded above shows that "there are faults and omissions not a few that a little more enthusiasm, a little more thought, and a little more study of their profession," to use Mr. Grierson's words, "would do much to correct and supply." The attention of pupil-teachers to their duties and the large measure of success they attain in the performance of them deserve special acknowledgment.

I have, &c.,

D. Petrie, M.A., Chief Inspector.

The Secretary, Auckland Education Board.

TARANAKI.

SIR,— Board of Education, New Plymouth, 16th April, 1903.

I have the honour to submit my report for the year ending the 31st December, 1902.

At the close of the year seventy-three schools were open, and all were examined with the exception of the newly opened school at Ruapuha and the Tongaporutu School, which was closed at the usual examination time.

The following table contains a summary of the examination results:—

Classes.	Number on Roll.	Present at Inspector's Annual Visit.	Passed.	Average Age of Pupils in each Class.	
				Yrs.	mos.
Standard VII.	67	47	...	14	5
" VI.	236	226	164	14	2
" V.	406	400	257	13	4
" IV.	544	518	341	12	5
" III.	598	578	416	11	5
" II.	608	576	470	10	6
" I.	602	577	498	9	1
Preparatory	1,627	1,449	...	7	2
Totals	4,688	4,371	2,146	11	6*

* Mean of average age.

During the year the number on the roll has increased by 352. The percentages of increases in the several classes are as follow: Preparatory class, 11 (nearly); Standard I., 11; Standard II., very slight; Standard III., 5½; Standard IV., 3; Standard V., 2; Standard VI., 30; Standard VII., 24.

It is extremely gratifying to find that the number of pupils in Standard VI. increases year by year, thus indicating that parents show an increasing desire to give their children the benefits of an education beyond what is rendered compulsory by the School Attendance Act. The very slight increase in Standard V. is surprisingly low, the increase for 1901 being 26 per cent. The number present at the Inspector's annual visit shows an increase of 1,619, but of these 1,449 were pupils in the preparatory classes, which were not previously included in this column of the return. The number present in Standards I. to VII. increased by 170. The number of passes in Standards I. to VI. increased by fifty. The majority of the pupils in Standard VII. were on the roll of the Stratford District High School, and received regular instruction in secondary subjects. In the following schools pupils were presented, but the instruction was, in the main, confined to primary work somewhat in advance of the requirements for Standard VI.: Tarata, Denbigh Road, Midhirst, Urenui, Dudley Road, Omata, Lepperton, Hurford Road, Huirangi, Egmont Road, Tikorangi, Ngaire, Bell Block, and the Central School. A considerable proportion of the secondary pupils of the Stratford District High School received free tuition as a reward for a pass with credit in Standard VI. at the schools in the Stratford district. These would, however, represent only a fraction of the ex-Standard-VI. pupils in the whole district that were desirous of obtaining instruction in secondary subjects, for until the beginning of the present year no provision for free tuition at the northern end of the district had been made by the Department, and a pupil in or near New Plymouth, though having done work equally meritorious, was debarred the privileges enjoyed by his more favoured *confrère* at Stratford. I anticipate that during the current year at least seventy or eighty ex-Standard-VI. pupils will be receiving free tuition in secondary subjects as a result of their primary work.

The changes in the staffing necessitated by the passing of "The Public-School Teachers' Salaries Act, 1901," were gradually carried out, and these, combined with the increased attendance, have just doubled the number of assistants.

As there was considerable difficulty in procuring suitable teachers, positions as assistants and even as sole teachers were offered to pupil-teachers before the expiry of their apprenticeships, and, though the curtailing of their course of training is a matter for regret, I have been pleased with the very good promise shown by most of those so appointed. As the transference of one teacher often involves the transference of others, there was an abnormal number of changes in the staffs of the schools. Even excluding pupil-teachers, I find that permanent appointments were made in the staffs of more than half of the schools, and that in some schools three or four changes took place. This, of course, interfered materially with the continuity of the work, but I was gratified to find, in many cases at any rate, that the interests of the pupils did not apparently suffer, the difficulties serving merely as stimulus to increased effort on the part of the teachers. Recognising that there was a scarcity of teachers, many Committees have shown a commendable spirit in leaving the appointments in the hands of the Board, thereby enabling vacancies to be filled more promptly, avoiding the necessity for the number of relieving teachers that would otherwise have been required, and enabling deserving teachers in the Board's employ to obtain well-earned promotion. Twenty-six vacancies were filled by teachers not previously employed by the Board, and in all seventy-nine permanent or temporary appointments (exclusive of pupil-teachers) were made. With the exception of the West End School in New Plymouth, all schools are working with the staff provided by the above

Act, and the number of appointments should now return to the normal. Further results of the Act are that the number of pupil-teachers has been considerably reduced, and that in some schools the staffs have been weakened owing to an undue proportion of the pupil-teachers being of the lowest grade.

Except in handwork, the work of the year shows no marked advance on that of previous years, nor in any subject was there a very noticeable falling-off. In a few schools the object lessons received more rational treatment; and I was pleased to see that the text-books that have from time to time been recommended are displacing the older unsatisfactory ones, though the extreme conservatism of some of the teachers is very astonishing. At the visits to the schools I found that many teachers seemed not to have seen the clause in last year's report which stated that "when giving a syllabus of work undertaken in science, teachers will be required to hand in also a list of experiments performed, and a large proportion of the questions will be on these." I recommend teachers to read "Notes of Lessons on the Herbartian Method," by M. Fennell (Longmans, Green, and Co.), for they will there find many valuable hints and suggestions as to placing the lessons before the pupils in a more presentative manner than is generally adopted. For methods in science I recommend "A Graduated Course of Natural Science," by Loewy, and "Elementary Physics and Chemistry," by Gregory and Simmons (both published by Macmillan and Co.); but the procedure and methods exemplified in these books are applicable also to the whole range of school-work. And this brings me to a defect very common in the general instruction given in schools: it is too didactic, and not "heuristic"—an addition to educational terminology which has met with general approval and acceptance as expressing, probably better than did "inductives," the modern ideas as to what teaching should be. No doubt Archimedes' cry of "Eureka! Eureka!" suggested the term; and though we hear it used most frequently in connection with modern methods of teaching science, the method by which a child is led to discover the truth for himself is applicable to every lesson. Take, for instance, lessons in the reading-books, which in very slight degree seem to lend themselves to this method. Many of the lessons are illustrated by pictures by means of which much of the subject-matter can be taught heuristically. I will give an instance. In one of the lower reading-books there is a lesson on "sugar." In the matter we are told the kind of climate best suited to the cultivation of the cane, the height of the cane, about its being cut down, and so on. As the lesson proceeds one teacher may note essential points on the blackboard, recapitulate these at the close of the lesson, and adopt the usual devices for impressing the memory. A better teacher will see that all this can be taught heuristically and without any cram. Before the lesson is read the pupils would, if possible, be shown a piece of sugar-cane, and would be asked to state what they see in the picture. They see that (1) the workmen are dark-coloured, and pupils "discover" that the cane grows in hot countries; (2) the cane is between two and three times the height of a man, and therefore the height of the cane is "discovered"; (3) the tops are cut off and thrown aside, therefore it is "discovered" that they do not contain the sweet sap; (4) the stems are cut into pieces and made into bundles, and therefore it is "discovered" that they have to be conveyed some distance (to mill or factory); (5) the canes grow in regular rows, and therefore it is "discovered" that they have to be planted and attended to, and so on—the pupils "discovering" nearly the whole of the matter of the reading lesson, the teacher, being a philosopher, serving merely as a guide to the effort. There can be no similarity between the educational values of the two methods contrasted. In the first case the teacher finds the lesson difficult, and, though he works hard and does his best, he is not satisfied with the result; the pupils find the lesson irksome, and cannot remember the matter; and both teacher and pupils would prefer that at the examination that lesson were not chosen by the Inspector. In the second case the teacher does not find the lesson fatiguing, for there has been no necessity for "working hard," as is said, and he knows that his lesson has made similar lessons in the book easier to deal with; the pupils do not find the lesson irksome—indeed, they are interested; and if at the examination the Inspector questions on the lesson he can tell immediately that there has been no cram in the treatment.

Not only in such lessons as I have described, but also in all lessons, do many teachers "work hard," feeling quite worn out at the end of the day, and yet feeling that the educational results are not satisfactory, and are not commensurate with the energy expended. They fancy they are teaching—in reality they are not, the fault lying in the way the work is done. The art of teaching lies in making the pupils do the work, or, as I have so frequently told the pupil-teachers at their criticism lessons, "in doing only so much as will enable the pupils to discover the truth for themselves." This is brought about by skilful questioning; and if a teacher be skilful in questioning, and can use his blackboards well, there should be no hesitancy in predicting as to what should be his measure of success. But in the use of the blackboards there is much room for improvement, for very seldom are they really well used. There is not a lesson in which the board cannot be made of the greatest assistance, yet I have seen lesson after lesson of half an hour's duration and the board has not once been used. Any point that requires to be strongly emphasized should be written down, explained, and recapitulated at the close of the lesson. What is heard is not so well remembered as what is seen, but if both the ear and the eye are utilised the impression is correspondingly deeper, and is rendered still more so by the recapitulation, without which no lesson should be concluded. A few of the infant teachers use the boards very skilfully during the object lessons, but in geography, science, &c., the efforts are often very disappointing.

Again, many lessons are not educative because the teacher omits to derive from them generalisations, or to formulate general principles that in other similar lessons will be of value to the pupil. Not only so, but the opportunity for valuable mental training is lost, for the pupil is not led to reason from one thing to another, and, though he may have been instructed—not educated—in any isolated fact, at the end of the lesson he is mentally no better equipped than he was at the beginning. Take an example, a lesson in elementary composition. The following sentences have to be combined in one: "*John walked to the railway station. John's sister walked with him. His*

sister's name was Mary. They went early in the morning. The station was a mile from the village. They lived in the village." The teacher may write the sentences on the board and lead the pupils to construct the following sentence: "Early in the morning John and his sister Mary walked to the railway station, a mile from the village in which they lived." This is very good so far, but if the lesson ends here it has been of little aid in teaching composition. To render the lesson educative, generalisations such as the following should have been educed, written on the board, discussed, exemplified, and recapitulated: (1) Unnecessary repetition should be avoided; (2) words, phrases, and clauses of time often open the sentence; or, the emphatic part of the sentence is the beginning; (3) adjuncts should be placed as near as possible to the words they qualify (rule of proximity); (4) terseness increases the force of the sentence; (5) the periodic sentence is better than the loose sentence (principle of suspense). These principles can now be applied to any other exercises brought under the notice of the pupils, who have thus made a distinct advance in the study of sentence-building. The point indicated applies to all lessons, and by its educative value a teacher should gauge the success of his instruction.

Organization, especially in the smaller schools, is still very defective, and this arises chiefly from neglect to arrange a plan for the day's work, an essential to success where a teacher has to control and instruct several classes. At the time for, say, arithmetic, the teacher has to ask the pupils where they left off at the previous lesson, has to start some classes at work in the books, and for other classes has to write questions on the blackboard. Meanwhile the class awaiting class-instruction is wasting its time. At the end of the time-table period for arithmetic the lessons are not finished or the work is not corrected, and the subsequent lessons, not being commenced at the proper time, have to be curtailed. Similar conditions obtain during the other periods shown in the time-table, with the result that much time is lost, pupils are not kept profitably employed, the work of one day has little bearing on the work of another, and the instruction, instead of being progressive and connected, is disjointed, inconsequent, and confusing to the pupils. In this connection I may quote my report for the year ending the 31st December, 1897: "Carrying out the time-table gives ample scope for ingenuity and skill, and I shall here give a few hints which may be of some assistance. Take, for instance, reading. On the time-table two classes—say, Standards IV. and V.—may be shown as taking reading during the same half-hour. The time devoted by the teacher to each class will depend upon the size and proficiency of the class, but some such plan as the following should be adopted. While Standard IV. is being instructed, Standard V. may read silently, using a dictionary for difficult words, may write out the meanings of phrases set upon the blackboard or marked in the books, may write a test in spelling or dictation (see below), and so on. During the lesson to Standard IV. the difficult words and phrases are set upon the blackboard, and, while Standard V. is being taught, Standard IV. may write out these, or do work similar to that assigned to Standard V. Such work as I have referred to admits of easy correction, and keeps the pupils profitably employed. In spelling and dictation a teacher might save much time. If a class of four pupils has to be tested, the teacher should divide the passage to be dictated into phrases, and one of the four pupils may dictate it and at the same time transcribe it, so that he also benefits by the lesson. Without direction from the master the books should be collected and placed upon the table. As a rule, however, teachers dictate to three or more classes at once, a procedure confusing to the pupils, and occupying time that might be devoted to instruction. Arithmetic is taken generally at 10 o'clock, and before school commences the teacher should write on the blackboard such notes as, 'Standard V., Ex. 5'; 'Standard IV., Ex. 6'; 'Standard III., Ex. 2,' to show the desk-work of the various classes. At the time appointed one class will be brought up for blackboard instruction, and the others, without direction, will know what to do. When the class at the blackboard has been instructed and sent to the desks they also know what to do, and without any loss of time another class can be brought out. The work in Standards IV. to VI. should be done in rough exercise-books (such as were referred to in my last report), and could be corrected at a convenient time." Indeed, in all schools there should be an "organization board," on which the organization, as above described, should be shown.

The scheme of work for the year that the teacher is required to draw, and more particularly the instruction-book, which has been in use in the district for some years, have tended to prevent overpressure at the end of the year. In most cases, I am pleased to say, there is no great fault to find in this respect, for the work proceeds steadily throughout the year. In a few cases, however, I have no hesitation in saying that the first part of the year is spent in perfunctory performance of duty, and a brief period before the examination is a rush of cram, punishment, detention, and trouble for the unfortunate pupils, and any slight sickness, irregularity of attendance, or overcrowding is exaggerated and made an excuse for the resulting unsatisfactory work.

The oral answering continues to be very satisfactory, and has a marked beneficial effect on the general intelligence of the pupils, increasing vocabulary, aiding correct expression, and leading the instruction to partake more of the character of a natural conversation between the pupils and the teacher. In some cases I still notice that "Yes" and "No" answers, or their equivalents, are accepted as satisfactory. Gladman and other authorities state that "Yes" and "No" questions, as they are called, should not be asked; but not infrequently the most natural question, and sometimes the best in the sequence of questions, is one involving "Yes" or "No" as an answer, for it leads up to some point that is in the mind of the teacher. In such cases the fault lies not in putting such a question, but in accepting an unexplained "Yes" or "No" as an answer. I find that some of the teachers we get from other districts do not attach the same importance to the oral answering as do our own, and in some schools there has in consequence been a distinct falling-off in the general intelligence of the oral work and in the spirit and alacrity with which the pupils answer. Other Inspectors report on the great benefits to be derived from giving strict attention to the fullness of the oral answers, but nearly all report that the teachers do not give their recommenda-

tions the attention that is desirable. Of our own teachers I can only say that they fully recognise the value of good oral answering, and have made it one of the strongest features in our schools.

Handwork is being undertaken in an increasing number of schools, and in many cases the progress made has been surprisingly good. In order that the difficulties inseparable from starting new work might be minimised, brush drawing was allowed to displace the whole of the drawing previously taken; but, as in a great measure these initial difficulties have been overcome, it is desirable to point out that geometry and scale drawing should not be omitted, but might well be taught together in Standard V. and less brush drawing taken in consequence. As scale drawing is, however, required in connection with some manual subjects, where these are undertaken such special attention as I have mentioned need not be given to it. Paper-folding, bricklaying, modelling, and so on have also been undertaken, though the difficulty in obtaining material has considerably impeded steady progress. I much prefer coloured bricks for bricklaying, and the coloured paper used at Home for paper-folding. Colour gives increased interest in the work, and increased interest causes an increased desire to produce the best possible work. Whatever one is interested in is done to the best of one's ability, and even in the case of adults hobbies for this very reason are prosecuted "for the joy of the working," and represent one's best efforts. Colour in the case of young children acts as a powerful means to an end, and should not lightly be disregarded. When brush drawing is undertaken I should like to see free-arm drawing undertaken also, as they are of mutual assistance, and produce better all-round training than either alone. During the year classes for the instruction of teachers in first aid, brush drawing, modelling, paper-folding, and mat-weaving were held in New Plymouth, and for instruction in brush drawing, modelling, and paper-folding in Stratford. The results of the examinations at the end of the terms were generally satisfactory.

The introduction of handwork has, particularly in the lower classes, produced a marked beneficial effect on the development of the intelligence of the pupils. On the other hand, notwithstanding all that has been said about manual work, hand and eye training, and so on, it must be admitted that there still exists a great deal of misconception as to the educational aims and value of manual work in schools. Those who have given little thought to it are very ready in condemning it as a waste of time, though they may admit that wood-work "is not so bad" because it enables one to do odd jobs about a house, and that first aid also "may come in handy." But while some kinds of manual work may be of practical utility to some pupils after they leave school, the importance of all manual work is educational, training the eye to accurate observation, the hand to accurate manipulation, and consequently training the brain which governs both. And surely very little consideration must impel one to admit that a pupil who during his school course has had his faculties so trained will become a better man, and a more useful being on the veldt, on the farm, in the office, or in the workshop, even if after he leaves school he may never drive a nail, handle a saw, or see a piece of plasticine. But teachers also fail to look upon manual work in the proper light. They often look upon paper-folding, modelling, and so on, as new subjects instead of methods of teaching other subjects, and they are, moreover, inclined to look at the result of the work rather than to the training of eye, hand, and brain received in producing that result. In addition to their value as methods of teaching, manual subjects afford a valuable training, obtained in only a slight degree from the school subjects prescribed by the standard regulations. In this connection a quotation from my first annual report will serve as a parallel. I reported that "The instruction proceeds as though the subjects were utterly dissociated. Transcription is looked upon as writing exercise and that only, and consequently if the writing be satisfactory the whole is satisfactory, even if error after error occur in the 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, and the object lessons. There is thus an absence of coherence and unity militating against good educational results." This cannot now be applied generally to the subjects mentioned in the extract, but *mutatis mutandis* it does apply to manual work. This may arise in part from the fact that the teachers have not yet got that thorough command over the work that they have over the other subjects. Drawing, either with the pencil or with the brush, is very seldom utilised in object lessons, science, geography, matter of the reading lessons, and so on. Modelling is brought to bear in very small measure on the other subjects of the school course, and therefore one of the most valuable aids to instruction is not used to its fullest advantage. Handwork, including kindergarten work, must be looked upon as a means to an end, and not as the end itself; and when teachers fully realise this I have no doubt but that it will fall into its proper place in school training. Just as spelling is judged by general ability to spell as well as by the test from a specially prepared book, and as writing is judged by the general ability to write as well as by the work in the copy-books, so also must handwork be judged by its effect on the training in the general work as well as by the quality of the specially prepared exercises.

As reported last year, the teachers as a whole exercised sound judgment in examining Standards I. to V., and in comparatively few instances have I found it necessary to disregard the results placed before me. At the same time, I must say that the experience of the past year showed that there was an increasing tendency to pass pupils who failed in two important subjects out of the five pass subjects, and who, on their average ability, were not qualified to cope with the work of the higher class. In arithmetic there was sometimes a considerable difference between the marks obtained at my annual visit, even though the teacher used in his test the cards issued in previous years by the Department. In composition, defects were not fully marked, and too low a

standard was accepted. In reading, spelling, and writing the results agreed more closely. I find that the Inspectors in Otago report somewhat to the same effect. For the year ending 31st December, 1901, they state: "In our reports on the several schools we have generally been able to say that the headmasters' passes were justified; but to bring some of them within this description we had to exercise pressure, many of the passes assigned by the teacher seeming to us to have been given too easily. A large number of teachers took advantage of the regulation that allows them to pass pupils that fail in two subjects. We are convinced that this regulation makes a pass too easy. Arithmetic and composition are the subjects in which our marking most frequently differed from that of the teacher, and in the latter subject his marking was, we are bound to say, not infrequently very faulty. We assured ourselves of this by reading the papers on which the pupils had been passed. Under the present regulations the efficiency of a school should, in great measure, be judged by the work of the Sixth Standard, the finished product of the school; but unless teachers insist upon good work in the standards below it they must look in vain for good work in it." They, however, state that "a large number of teachers" passed pupils that failed in two subjects. It cannot be said that comparatively "a large number" of our teachers did so, but, at the same time, I noticed an increasing tendency in the direction indicated by the Otago Inspectors.

I have, &c.,

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

The Chairman, Taranaki Education Board.

WANGANUI.

SIR,— Education Office, Wanganui, 1st March, 1903.

We have the honour to submit our report for the year ended the 31st December, 1902.

Congratulatory.—During the year, Dr. J. Smyth, M.A., who occupied the position of Chief Inspector of Schools for the district for some eighteen months, was appointed to the position of Principal of the Melbourne Training College. He has since also received the appointment of Lecturer on Education at the Melbourne University. Dr. Smyth's appointment was made from among candidates from all parts of Australasia; and we feel that the great honour conferred upon him is likewise an honour to our district and to New Zealand teachers, to whose ranks Dr. Smyth formerly belonged. While we regret that Dr. Smyth was thus compelled to sever his connection with us, we congratulate him on his promotion, and wish him all success in his new sphere.

Schools.—The number of schools in active operation during the past year was 155, an increase of three on the previous year. The new schools opened during the year were Watershed Road, Pohonui, Torere, Utuwai, Te Awa, and Awahou South. Owing to a rearrangement of the boundary between the Education Districts of Taranaki and Wanganui, three of our schools were placed in the former district.

Inspection and Examination.—Owing to a variety of causes our work during the early part of the year was greatly hindered, and on this account fewer schools than usual were inspected. We hope that at the close of the present year there will be very few schools that have not been inspected. All the schools were examined. Some of the schools are very inaccessible, notably those in the upper reaches of the Wanganui, Wangaehu, and Rangitikei Rivers, and it is scarcely possible at present to visit such more than once a year.

The following is a summary of the examination results for the whole district:—

Classes.	Number on Roll.	Present at Inspector's Annual Visit.	Absent.	Failed	Passed	Per Cent. of Passes on		Average Age of Pupils in Each Class.
						Number on Roll.	Number present.	
								Yrs. mos.
Standard VII.	353	340	13	...	...	...	...	15 2
" VI.	699	671	28	101	570	81	84	13 11
" V.	1,091	1,045	46	162	883	80	84	13 1
" IV.	1,329	1,279	50	227	1,052	78	82	12 1
" III.	1,455	1,426	29	187	1,239	85	86	11 2
" II.	1,411	1,367	44	143	1,224	86	89	10 0
" I.	1,361	1,321	40	89	1,232	90	94	8 11
Preparatory	3,487	3,020	467	...	...	...	...	...
Totals	11,186	10,469	717	909	6,200	84	87	...

From the above table it will be seen that the number of children attending the schools in the district is still increasing. This year shows an advance of 342 on the previous year. The average age for the different standards is much the same as last year. We are pleased to note that that of Standard VI. is again below fourteen years.

Passes awarded by Head Teachers.—The great majority of teachers in awarding the passes in Standards I. to V. have maintained a high standard, and have based their awards not on one single examination, but on a series of examinations given at intervals throughout the year. This is as it should be. Those only deserve a pass who have worked hard and attended well throughout

the year. A few teachers, however, either because they have not sufficient backbone to refuse a pass, or because they do not understand the value to themselves and to the district of keeping the pass standard high, have given passes where there was absolutely no warrant for doing so. No consideration should induce a teacher to pass a child who does not deserve to pass. He may, if he please, promote him to the next highest standard even though he has "failed" him. Sometimes it is both wise and expedient to do this.

Pass and Class Subjects.—We should like to see these terms entirely done away with. They seem to be responsible for the idea that prevails with some that certain subjects are of less value than others, and that it is a matter of very small moment that they should be neglected. We do not say that the class subjects are not allotted their fair share of time on the time-table; but, from the poor exhibition made by some schools in them at examination time, it is more than evident that the time-table time has not been given. It is only reasonable to expect that the amount of knowledge possessed by the pupils should bear some proportion to the amount of time professed to be spent in imparting it.

Grammar.—This is perhaps the most ill-used and most misunderstood subject in the syllabus; yet there is no subject which, if intelligently and thoroughly taught, will furnish a better and more important training. How should it be dealt with? That is the question that puzzles most of us. We feel bound to say that a great deal of what has long been regarded as an essential point in the teaching of grammar—*i.e.*, detailed parsing—is worth very little from the point of view of primary-school education. The points upon which stress should be laid are such as these: (*a*) Functions of words, phrases, and clauses; (*b*) analysis and synthesis of sentences; (*c*) position of words, phrases, and clauses in a sentence; (*d*) active and passive constructions; (*e*) chief syntactical relations. A minimum amount of inflexional grammar must, of course, be taught, but it should be only a minimum. As an example of what we mean here we may take tense. It is quite sufficient that standard pupils should be able to tell the broad divisions of time—present, past, and future—without entering upon the nicer distinctions of indefinite, imperfect, perfect, &c.; and it is not of much practical importance that a child should be able to rhyme off the whole paradigm of the verb. The endeavour and aim should be to make grammar work in with composition.

Composition.—This subject rightly receives a great deal of attention, and quite a number of teachers teach it with enthusiasm. Some of the composition papers handed in were of very high merit, reflecting great credit upon the fullness and thoroughness of the teaching. But composition is admittedly not an easy subject. The chief difficulty lies in this: that children cannot be got to write much about subjects which are outside the range of their observation and experience. How can we impart to them ideas and conceptions, and how can we train them to express these ideas and conceptions in suitable language? One thing seems very clear, and it is this: Children seem to lose their almost divine gift of imagination not long after they enter our schools. A few short years and the bright, imaginative, and talkative child of five is converted into the stilted, unresponsive, and circumscribed school-boy whom we so well know. There must be something wrong somewhere, for such development is quite unnatural, and contrary to the true idea of education. Can it be avoided? Is it inevitable? We should, as teachers, face these questions and try to answer them. One great need in the early part of school education is for more conversation lessons in which children may be allowed to talk freely to the teacher, to answer and ask questions, and to have their inquiring and observant minds continually brought into contact with new and interesting objects and ideas. Indeed, conversation lessons should be made a great feature of our whole school course; and, speaking generally, children should be encouraged to talk much more freely to their teachers than they are accustomed to do. Oral composition is another name for a conversation lesson, and it is only by means of such lessons that good composition will ever be got.

Reading.—A higher standard should be aimed at in this subject. The most common faults throughout the district are rapidity of utterance and its inevitable concomitant indistinctness. Intelligent expression is also sadly lacking. Children should be so taught to read that an ordinary listener may be able clearly to make out every word and to understand the sense of the passage read. The faults mentioned above as occurring in reading are accentuated in recitation. Here the fast reader has become a "gabbler." From one point of view, no doubt the main thing to be aimed at is correct repetition; but surely it is worth a great deal to be able to add to correct repetition, ease and grace in recitation. The necessity of reading as many books as possible cannot be over-emphasized. The same lesson should not be read too often; most of the words used in one lesson occur again frequently in succeeding lessons. Reading should not be made "to wait" for spelling and subject-matter. Two books at least should be read in every class, and if possible one of these books should not be what is known as a reader. Abridged editions, suitable for children, of biographies and novels are now published. Quite a number of these are on exhibition in the teachers' room at the Board's office. Some very fine continuous stories for our infants and Standard I. pupils are also available. We may mention two or three of these here: "The Story of a Cat," "The Lost Pigs," "The Three Monkeys." These are published by Bell and Sons, and are under the general title "Books for Young Readers." A very fine series of books suitable for infants is also published by Nelson. The fairy tale, nursery rhyme, and fable should have a prominent place in our infant classes.

Geography.—Though by an increasingly large number of teachers this subject is treated in an intelligent and interesting manner, there is still a tendency to rely too exclusively upon text-books and to make the teaching a process of cramming the names of places, the only ideas of which the unfortunate learners receive are dots, or strokes, or certain shapes on the map. So long as we are content only to put a text-book into the hands of the scholars and say, "There, learn that," so long will the time and effort we spend for the most part be vain and unproductive of real benefit. We recognise that the system of examination that has obtained everywhere is largely responsible

for the methods adopted in teaching. But we should like our teachers to try to take up more practical lines. Aim at making everything real. Let a sea route to London be taught by means of an imaginary trip to London from the child's own district; the boat calling at the chief ports, receiving and putting off cargo, mails, &c. In teaching about Manchester and its cotton industries, bring the cotton from the plantations in America, and connect America, Liverpool, and Manchester in such a way that they will live in the minds of the scholars. Where possible use pictures and relief maps. In teaching products, take the articles of the home used for food, clothing, &c., and trace out where they came from and how they came. Only important towns and physical features should be taught, and the aim should be to give the children ideas of the places of the world and not mere sentences about them from a book. We would recommend all teachers to obtain a copy of a lecture on "The Teaching of Geography," by Dr. Gregory, published by Whitcombe and Tombs.

Drawing.—Judged by the books presented for examination, the work in this subject was throughout satisfactory; but judged by the test given it was not so good. In drawing, as in other subjects of our school course, "a change has come over the spirit of our dreams," and we are to follow here also a natural order of things. We are to bring our drawing more into touch with nature, and cultivate and develop the child's innate desire to reproduce the objects it meets with day by day. Further, we are to correlate drawing with object lessons and science. We are to ask our pupils to draw the objects we have been talking about in conversation, object and science lessons. All this means, so far as teachers are concerned, that they will have to acquire more skill in blackboard drawing, and make frequent use of blackboard sketches in illustrating their lessons. A few of our teachers are taking up free-arm drawing. A piece of mill-board about the size of a large slate is held in either right or left hand at arm's length while the pupil is sitting at his desk, and a free, bold drawing is made in chalk with the other hand. We are greatly interested to know how the experiment will succeed.

Object Lessons and Science.—Nature-study is a term with which in recent years we have become familiar. Its meaning is clear. It applies to the whole realm of science. It is with nature in her varied moods and tenses, in her multifarious forms, forces, and manifestations that our chief concern is. And to foster inquiry and research into her mysteries and wonders, and "to lead from nature up to nature's God," should be the aim of the educator. In order to do this, the teacher himself must be something more than a mere text-book man. He must be an observer. It is pleasing to note that an increasing number of our teachers are breaking away from the old, formal object lesson into the freer, more practical, and more interesting nature lesson. We would recommend to the notice of all Grant Allen's "In Nature's Workshop," Arabella Buckley's "Eyes and No Eyes," and "Nature in New Zealand." Science has received an impetus from the generous grant made by the Board towards the purchase of apparatus. A goodly number of teachers have availed themselves of it, and we trust that ere long this department will be well equipped in every school.

Drill and Singing.—These subjects are receiving more attention throughout the district than formerly. Drill in one form or another is now taught in almost every school, and in some schools excellent results are gained. Especially is this the case where cadet corps have been established. Singing is taught with more or less success in the majority of schools. We should like to see more attention given to theory. Though good as far as it goes, the mere singing of songs is not the all-important part of this work. Pupils should be trained along the lines of a graduated course such as is exemplified in Curwen's Standard Course, and songs taught the music of which the children themselves can read. The practice of teaching by ear should be discontinued except in the lower classes.

District High Schools.—Six of these have now been established in the district, those at Eltham and Patea having come into existence during the past year. By means of them a large number of the children who have passed Standard VI. have the opportunity afforded them of pursuing their studies along secondary and commercial lines. While these schools are undoubtedly a boon to the children of the districts in which they are placed, they do not solve the question of higher education for districts remote from such centres. Perhaps that question will never be solved; but we are inclined to think that it would be wise if the same grant, *i.e.*, £6 per annum, as is made on behalf of district high school pupils were made on behalf of the pupils of any school outside the district high school areas who received similar instruction to that given in the district high schools. We are sure that, were such a grant given, the teachers of country schools, especially of schools of over forty in average attendance, would willingly take up the teaching of secondary subjects to those who have passed Standard VI. There is no doubt that the district high schools, when fully equipped, as those at Hawera and Palmerston North will shortly be, with science laboratory, wood-work, cookery, and art rooms, will fill what has hitherto been a great gap in our educational system. The aim and purpose of these schools is to provide teaching that will be most beneficial to those who can afford to remain only one, or at the most two, years at school after passing Standard VI. Though such pupils as desire it will be trained for Civil Service and Matriculation examinations, still, examinations will be kept in the background, and the requirements of individual pupils, as far as possible, consulted. Further, we may look to these schools to replenish our supply of pupil-teachers, and in the near future those who enter the ranks of the profession as pupil-teachers will be so well advanced in their literary subjects that they will be able to give more attention than hitherto to the practical side of their profession, and also be in a position to study for higher examinations.

Pupil-teachers.—Under the new scale of staffs and salaries the number of pupil-teachers in this district has fallen from 100 to fifty-seven. There will not now be the same chance as formerly of oversupply of teachers, since under the new arrangement a pupil-teacher is not appointed to any school until the average attendance reaches ninety. This brings it about, also, that most of

our pupil-teachers are within easy reach of one or other of our three chief centres—Wanganui, Palmerston North, and Hawera. We have had this in view in framing the new pupil-teachers' regulations, and by these all pupil-teachers during their course must attend for at least two years one or other of the singing classes authorised by the Board. Singing is now a compulsory subject of examination for third- and fourth-year pupil-teachers. We trust that pupil-teachers will see that the increased demands made on them in the matter of study will tend to their ultimate good, and that they will strenuously endeavour to obtain their full D at the completion of their term.

Scholarships.—We would offer just one remark here by way of advice to teachers, and it is this: It is still worth while urging pupils to gain scholarships so long as these are offered. Apart from the monetary view altogether, it is worth a great deal in the after life of a boy or girl to be able to say "I won a scholarship." We say this to help to counteract the idea which is gaining ground that now, since free secondary education is offered to all who pass Standard VI., a scholarship is not worth going for.

Manual and Technical Instruction.—Quite a number of teachers, influenced by the summer school classes, have during the year been giving attention to some of the subjects that come under this head. Brush-work has been found by many to be a very useful adjunct to drawing. The pupils take to it with great relish, and some of the work shown us was extremely creditable. In most of our larger infant rooms one at least of the various forms of kindergarten work is now being taught. We do not recommend that these subjects be taken up generally until the long-promised new syllabus has come into operation; but in all schools where there is more than one teacher, although it may not be possible to earn the departmental grant, it is possible to devote some time to at least one subject in the lower class of the school.

Summer School.—The first summer school was held at Wanganui, in January, 1902. It was very largely attended by teachers from all parts of the district. Dr. Smyth, M.A., late Chief Inspector, was the organizer, and to his efforts, combined with those of a strong committee of teachers, the success of the gathering was largely due. That the school bore abundant fruit is evident in a quickened interest in school-work generally, an insight gained into one or two forms of manual instruction, and a readiness on the part of teachers to experiment with new methods and break away from old and stereotyped lines of teaching. We have not yet determined upon our next summer school, but we hope, if possible, to arrange for a winter gathering, when an opportunity will be given to teachers of becoming further acquainted with one or two manual subjects, and of discussing the best methods of dealing with others.

Conclusion.—We have, in concluding our report, to bear testimony to the faithful and earnest work done by the large majority of our teachers. We recognise that the teacher's life is one that has discouragements and difficulties which outsiders know little about. Especially is this the case with those of our profession who are placed in out-of-the-way districts, isolated from their fellow teachers, and with very few chances for social intercourse. We feel that we do not often enough express to such our appreciation of their difficulties and discouragements; but we would say here to them, and to teachers generally, that it is our constant aim to measure their results and achievements in the light of the situation and circumstances in which they are placed. We thank the teachers for their kindness to us when we are on our rounds, and bespeak their earnest co-operation with us in our task—often by no means an easy one—of maintaining and furthering the cause of educational progress in our district.

We have, &c.,
WM. GRAY, M.A., B.Sc.
JAS. MILNE, M.A.
} Inspectors.

The Chairman, Education Board, Wanganui.

WELLINGTON.

SIR,— Wellington, February, 1903.

We have the honour to lay before you our report for 1902 on the primary schools of the Wellington Education District.

All Board schools in operation at the time of the Inspectors' visits — a total of 140—were examined. In 1901 the total was 143, but of these, four—Te Aupapa, Whareama, Mangatiti, and Pencarrow—were closed, and two—South Karori and Masterton Infants'—have been incorporated with the main school in each district. Three new schools—Momona, Wai-o-waka, and Plimmerton —were examined during the year. Of the schools closed in 1902, Wharau, Whareama, Mangatiti, and Pencarrow have been reopened, and a new school has been established at Marima in a rented building. The school at Maungapakeha is now being held in the building erected by the Board. Seven Roman Catholic schools were examined and reported on.

The total number of children presented for examination was 15,258, an increase of only seventeen on the roll of the previous year, and of only forty-seven on that of 1900. Comparing the figures with those of last year we find that the preparatory class shows a decrease of 174, Standard I. an increase of 106, Standard II. an increase of thirty-five, Standard III. a decrease of eighty-four, Standard IV. a decrease of fifty-eight, Standard V. an increase of 116, Standard VI. an increase of thirty-five, and Standard VII. an increase of forty-one. The increase in Standards V., VI., and VII. is satisfactory, for it tends to show that the number remaining at school in the upper standards is increasing; but the decrease in the preparatory class is not promising.

For the last three years the examination roll number of the district has practically remained unchanged. The March quarterly returns for 1902 showed a roll number of 15,365, an increase on the corresponding numbers for 1901 and 1900, but in December the roll number fell to 14,898, an

increase of five only on the December return for 1901, and of 240 on that of 1900. The average roll for last year was 15,254, the average attendance 12,580—82·5 per cent. Omitting the figures of the last quarter, in which an epidemic of measles and scarlet fever reduced the numbers, the percentage was 83·4. In 1901 the percentage of attendance was 83·7; in 1900, 82·9. In average attendance the Wellington District in 1901 was seventh on the list of the districts of the colony, six districts having a higher average and six a lower. Such a district as ours ought to occupy a much higher position. The number of children present at examination in Standards I. to VI. (inclusive) was 9,809, and of these, 8,725—a little over 88 per cent.—were promoted, an increase of 1 per cent. on the promotions made in the previous year. The percentage of passes in Standard VI.—the class examined by the Inspectors—was a little over 82, about the same as in the previous year. The slight increase in the total percentage is principally in those standards in which the head teacher exercises his right to promote. This right is exercised judiciously in most cases, though there are some teachers—mostly in country schools—whose anxiety to promote children outruns their discretion. We have not had any difficulty in dealing with such cases, for it is a general understanding that promotions are not made until after consultation with an Inspector, and a teacher invariably acts on the Inspector's advice.

We have this year classified the 140 schools examined as—satisfactory, ninety-six; fair, thirty-one; and inferior, thirteen. Of the inferior schools the larger number is in grades 1 and 2, but it does not necessarily follow that they now are under incompetent teachers. In most of them changes have been made during the year, and in others the conditions have been unfavourable. Many of the thirty-one schools classed as fair are under a sole teacher, working under unfavourable conditions during the year, and others have suffered from changes in the staff, but in all of these an improvement is desirable. Of the ninety-six schools classed as satisfactory many of them, more particularly the largest, show good work in all departments. In this class also there are several country schools whose teachers have been commended for the work of the past year:

Coming to the consideration of the various subjects of the syllabus, and speaking in general terms, we find that in the pass work the arithmetic and the spelling are good. We have, however, noticed an inclination on the part of many teachers to devote too much time, relatively speaking, to these subjects. Five hours per week is the maximum that can be given to arithmetic, while, as a matter of fact, we find it receives in some time-tables a nominal allowance of six hours, and even more. It is not only the excessive time that we object to, but the unwarrantable expenditure of energy and teaching-power so urgently needed for other and perhaps more important subjects. Arithmetic in primary schools, like Euclid in secondary schools, has been made a perfect fetish of. One would imagine that we still lived in that happy Arcadian period when the three R's constituted a syllabus, and not in a day when science, hand and eye training, and a dozen other subjects make such demands on our school time. Granting its indirect educational value, we still maintain that an altogether disproportionate part of the average child's school life is taken up with what, in nine cases out of ten, is merely utilitarian arithmetic. We sincerely hope that a new syllabus will see this subject relegated to its proper place. Composition we should like to see receiving more oral treatment, more especially oral treatment in the lower classes. Not sufficient use is made of object lessons in this respect. In our larger schools, where oral composition is begun in the lowest classes, really good results are obtained. Reading is satisfactory. We have in some cases recommended that silent reading be substituted for a great deal of the simultaneous reading that now prevails. Writing is the least satisfactory of the pass subjects, and during the year we have had to speak in strong terms of the writing in some of our schools. The usual excuse is the crowded syllabus, and to a certain extent this excuse is admissible, but in many cases sheer neglect and lack of systematic instruction are the main causes. Teachers have the choice of a variety of systems of handwriting—vertical, upright, or sloping. Experts, as usual, differ as to which is the most desirable. We accept any system provided it *is* a system, but we must say that the best results appear to us to be obtained by schools in which a slight forward slope has been adopted.

In the class subjects we consider that geography, as apart from physiography, is efficiently taught, and we are well satisfied with the results as a whole. Physiography, on the other hand, is not so satisfactory, and evidently requires more thorough blackboard demonstration. We notice few schools making any use of plasticine, or sand-modelling, in connection with this subject. Grammar is distinctly unsatisfactory, nor do we expect to find it anything else until more reasonable demands are made by the syllabus.

In elementary science chemistry is still the favourite subject in the majority of the schools, though a fair proportion take physiology and domestic economy (including practical cookery). The excellent results in chemistry are largely due to the improved accommodation with which our larger schools are now provided. A still more important factor, however, is the number of teachers taking advantage of the Victoria College chemistry lectures. Comparatively few schools take up physics, agricultural knowledge, or botany. This is a matter for regret, more especially with regard to agricultural knowledge, a subject of such vital importance to a young country whose population is mainly occupied in pastoral and agricultural pursuits.

Mr. Riley reports on drawing as follows: "This subject is in a stage of transition, as the first-grade drawing examination has ceased to exist. The course of work in freehand is now directed towards a study of nature and natural forms with elementary pattern forms, the girls' classes utilising this section of the work in lieu of scale and geometry. In geometrical work the application of forms to common requirements, combined with card or paper modelling, is being gradually adopted. Scale drawing is required to be done entirely from the object or from the surroundings of the school. Model drawing has practically remained upon the old lines. The changes cannot, however, be completed, nor a suggestive programme issued, until the intentions of the Education Department are known with regard to the syllabus. In the meantime every effort is being made to prepare the schools for the new methods, which will, as far as possible, correlate with the school-work upon the broadest lines."

Recitation, we notice, is apt to consist of mere memory-work and unintelligent repetition, and too often we have had to express disapproval both as to treatment and choice of subjects. Many teachers do not appear to be alive to the importance of recitation as a means of improving enunciation and expression in reading. In other words, the two subjects are not co-ordinated. Recitation, moreover, if properly taught, should not only be the first step in the study of literature as an art, but should also be a training of the mind of the child in comprehension and appreciation of higher thoughts and aspirations. To a certain extent the wretched selections in the class reading-books are responsible for the faults we have mentioned, and we strongly recommend the use of the Globe Poetry Books (published by Macmillan and Co., price 6d. each). The teacher will find in this series selections from the best poetry in our language.

Singing, which of recent years has always been good, if not excellent, in our town schools, is making very fair progress in the country districts. In the good work now being done in this subject the Board is reaping the benefit of the singing classes which were established some years ago under the able direction of Mr. Robert Parker, and we consider it a matter for great regret that through the discontinuance of those classes our pupil-teachers have been thrown entirely on their own resources so far as instruction in vocal music is concerned.

The sewing report is good. There is some diversity of opinion as to the relative merits from a teaching point of view of the specimen as compared with the regular garment. Some teachers maintain that more effective instruction can be given by working with specimens, while others again are of opinion that the full-sized garment gives the more satisfactory result, as children take more interest in work which they know will be put to some practical use. We approach the subject with considerable diffidence, but in our opinion the time at present taken up in sewing by hand long seams and hems might be more profitably employed in cutting out and fixing garments, and in giving instruction in the use of the sewing-machine.

With regard to the schools individually, we have, both in our examination and in our inspection reports, given full particulars as to their condition and circumstances. The substance of these reports is embodied in the efficiency marks which have been awarded to each school. We think it unnecessary to recapitulate at any length the suggestions made and the instructions given to teachers during the year. We wish to place on record our appreciation of the loyal and earnest desire manifested by the teachers as a body to adopt any measures calculated to remedy such weaknesses and defects in the school-work as have come under our notice. We should like also to express here the hope that the cordial spirit of co-operation between Inspector and teacher for which this district has for so long been noted will continue to exist, for we are convinced that the best interests of education are served less by treating the teacher as an object of everlasting criticism than by co-operating with him in his honest efforts and by sympathizing with him in his many difficulties. Of these difficulties there are two—the overcrowded syllabus and irregular attendance—which call for more than a passing notice. The urgent need for reform in the syllabus is now so universally recognised that it is unnecessary to reiterate here opinions and arguments which have been so often expressed in previous reports. The time has come when "not the pruning-knife but the axe" should be applied with an unsparing hand. Of the many hardships calling for redress, we would especially emphasize the case of the sole teachers, more especially the case of those in charge of schools with roll numbers ranging from thirty to fifty. The necessity for a separate syllabus for use in schools of this class is apparent, and we are convinced that no syllabus that exacts the same requirements, or practically the same requirements, from the sole teacher as it does from the teacher of a single standard can do anything but perpetuate the most mischievous tendencies of the present system. Our experience leads us to the conclusion that a reasonable syllabus and an intelligent method of examination will result in reasonable and intelligent methods of instruction. Teachers with high ideals and high endeavours are not wanting, but too often "their nature is subdued to what it works in, like the dyer's hands."

The average attendance for the whole district is 82·5 per cent. on a total roll number of 15,254; that is to say, 2,600 children daily absent themselves from the schools in this district. This is a serious matter, and we are concerned to think that such ineffectual steps are being taken to remedy it. It is mainly in the small country schools that the evil is most rampant. Time and again we are asked to excuse unsatisfactory work on the score of irregular and unpunctual attendance, and we ourselves confess to finding the greatest difficulty in estimating the work of a teacher in a school where the half-day attendances of the scholars average barely 200 for the year. Is it reasonable to expect ground to be covered in a week of three days when regulations prescribe a week of five days? The amended Act of last session provided what was apparently most effective machinery for enforcing attendances at the public schools, but in this district the local authorities show little inclination to put the machinery in motion. Some months ago the Board issued a circular to local Committees giving full particulars as to the working of the new Act, and offering to send a member of the office staff to conduct prosecutions. All that the Committees were asked to do was to make out the preliminary notices and see that they were served, but we are not aware that any Committees have taken action in the matter.

The lectures on paper-folding, brush-work, plasticine and cardboard modelling held in the Technical School last year under the direction of Mr. Riley were attended by a large number of teachers, who showed a great interest in the work. Some schools have already applied for recognition for work under the Manual and Technical Instruction Act in all classes, and others for work in classes up to and including Standard II. There is no reason why the larger schools should not obtain recognition of such work as is laid down for Classes P–Standard II., for in most of them the work has been carried on for years in the preparatory classes, though perhaps in not as systematic a manner as is now prescribed. In the work laid down for classes above Standard II. practically nothing has been done except in a few schools. In the syllabus handwork is allowed to be substi-

tuted for any one of the class subjects except drawing, but the burden of the syllabus, and the scholarship programme existing in the district, practically made it impossible for the headmaster of a large school to make any substitution. The public pressure brought to bear on him to compete for scholarships was too strong to allow him to omit any of his class subjects, and, moreover, few of his teachers were trained for the work.

A syllabus giving more freedom of choice to headmasters, and the extension of free secondary education by means of district high schools, will undoubtedly give greater impetus to manual instruction, besides providing relief from the necessity of preparing for a special scholarship examination. But before a teacher undertakes manual work he should make a careful study of the whole question, and have a practical acquaintance with the occupations he selects, and then see that those occupations co-ordinate with the general scheme of work he has laid down for the year. They are of little educational value if treated as independent and isolated subjects; they must be linked with other subjects of instruction, fit in with the general aim of the work of the school, and thus supplement the usual intellectual instruction rather than act as substitutes for it.

Nothing has yet been done to establish classes in wood-work, but the lectures now being given take up all the spare time of the teachers for the present.

The cookery classes under Miss Ivey in Wellington and Miss Millington in the Wairarapa have been continued under the direction of Mr. Riley as heretofore. The room now occupied by Miss Ivey's classes in the Technical School will, we understand, be required for other technical classes. To continue these classes applications have been made to the Department for grants in aid of buildings and apparatus for Mount Cook, and for apparatus, &c., for Newtown and the Terrace, the Board providing the rooms in the two last-mentioned schools. With these applications an application has also been made for apparatus and fittings for laboratory work in chemistry at Newtown and the Terrace.

By "The Physical Drill in Public and Native Schools Act, 1901," physical drill must be taught to all boys and girls over eight years of age attending the public schools in the district, the only exemptions being such children as in the opinion of the principal teacher are unfit to undergo the drill.

When Sergeant-major McDonald was in charge of the drill of the district the Board issued a small manual of preparatory and physical drill (without apparatus), and this is still used by many teachers. Others take exercises with clubs, poles, or dumb-bells, as well as free physical exercises; but to enable teachers to have a clearer idea of what the Act requires the Department should issue as a guide a model course in physical training, setting forth a minimum such as can be satisfied even in small schools. This can be supplemented by further and more varied physical training, including, where possible, systematic instruction in swimming, cricket, or other games.

Leaving out the small aided schools in grade O, we find that physical drill is taught in 115 schools, in about fifty of which the programme is satisfactory. To give the teachers an opportunity of becoming more efficient the Board decided to hold a class for female teachers on Saturday morning. Gunner Juriss was the instructor for the first six months, but when his services were withdrawn an offer was accepted from the Wellington Physical Training School of the use of a suitable room and the services of its instructor, Mr. Dovey. This class held forty-two meetings. The roll, which at the beginning of the year was only seventeen, rose to 108 before the end of the year. The highest attendance at any meeting was sixty-six, and the average attendance forty-four. As this class is doing good work, the Board decided to continue it, and, as a result, we hope to see a general improvement in physical drill, more especially in the smaller country schools. In three schools—Porirua, Pahiatua, and Mangatainoka—swimming has been taught, but we have not had an opportunity of seeing the result. Those schools situated near baths or other suitable bathing-places might with great advantage during the summer months substitute lessons in swimming for physical drill, even if they find it difficult to comply with the regulation which enables them to claim a capitation of 2s. 6d. for each unit of average attendance.

The credit of the organization of the military drill of the district is due to Sergeant-major McDonald, whose valuable services were required by the Government elsewhere. The Education Department has now taken up the work for the whole colony. An officer commanding the public-school cadets of the colony, Major Loveday, has been appointed, and regulations relating to public-school cadet corps have been issued. During the year eleven cadet corps, each with a total of not less than forty-eight of all ranks, representing nine schools, and twelve detachments, each with a total of not less than twenty-four of all ranks, from twelve schools, were recognised by the Department. The total number of cadets of all ranks for the whole district was 1,013. At a meeting of headmasters which was attended by Major Loveday arrangements were made by which inspections could be held by that officer at suitable times. When the different corps are formed into battalions the number of parades necessary to qualify for capitation can be attended. Besides the twenty-one schools mentioned above, military drill has been taught in twenty-five schools, but the number of boys in each was not sufficient to form a detachment. The Board's class for instructing the teachers in military drill held forty-two meetings during the year. When the services of Gunner Juriss were withdrawn, Mr. Polson, of the Clyde Quay School, who holds a captain's commission in the Volunteer Militia, succeeded him. The roll at the beginning of the year was fourteen, at the end of the year thirty, the highest attendance twenty-five, and the average attendance fifteen. The Department has now taken over the instruction of teachers in military drill, and Captain Polson has been appointed to instruct the teachers at the Wellington centre. A centre has also been established at Masterton, where a class will be held during the coming year under Mr. A. N. Burns, of the Masterton School. As several of the assistants who have shown great enthusiasm in military drill hold commissions in the Volunteers, we look forward to some good work in the corps under their command. The Board is indebted to those members of the Permanent Militia who for so many years have given the boys excellent instruction in company

drill. Their services were withdrawn by the Defence Department when the public-school cadets were transferred to the Education Department. The work done in many of our schools is greatly benefited by the interest which the teachers take in the boys' games, especially cricket and football.

The annual scholarship examination was held in October, when 212 candidates sat for examination—133 in Class A, twenty-three in Class B, twenty-five in Class C, and thirty-one in Class D. Thirteen scholarships were awarded in Class A, three in Class B, three in Class C, and three in Class D. The work done will compare favourably with that of previous years. The new regulations regarding district high schools will make it necessary to revise the system of awarding scholarships. These regulations were issued in a revised form at the beginning of the year, and under them the Board established a district high school at Masterton. The pupils' numbers increased during the year, and two secondary teachers were appointed. The programme of work is at present drawn up to enable scholars to enter for the Matriculation and Civil Service Examinations, but it was pointed out to the local authorities before the school was established that when proper provision was made for accommodation the syllabus of work should be such as would have some bearing on the future life of the children.

The accommodation at Masterton School is limited, but when rooms are built for the secondary department there will be ample accommodation for the primary school. We understand that the matter now rests with the local authorities to allow the land opposite the primary school to be taken for the high school, and when this is decided an application can be made to the Government for a grant in aid of buildings. Applications in aid of buildings under the Manual and Technical Act have been made for rooms for laboratory work in science and for practical work in cookery, and when these and the high-school rooms are built a syllabus of work on the lines laid down by the Inspector-General in his annual report can be drawn up. There is a Technical School at Masterton under a local authority, and if steps could be taken to work the High School and Technical School in close connection with each other the expense of each would be less and the efficiency greater.

To give the other parts of the district the same facilities for improved education as are now possessed by Masterton, the Board should now take into consideration the question of establishing district high schools at other centres—for example, the Forty-mile Bush and the Manawatu district. As the education at these district high schools is free to all children who pass Standard VI., the children in the City of Wellington whose parents are not able to pay fees at a secondary school have not the same advantages as those children who are able to attend a district high school, as the scholarships available for city children are limited in number. Whatever steps are taken to remedy this, nothing should be done to injure the secondary schools now in operation. It is probable that the city and suburban schools could furnish more pupils who have passed Standard VI. than the Wellington College and the Girls' High School could find immediate accommodation for. We have great sympathy with the aim of the Department, and we hope some steps will be taken to extend the benefits of secondary education to more children than can avail themselves of it at present. It is a question for consideration whether a higher primary school, with a course of training framed so as to have some bearing on the future life of the children, in which practical work could be done in science, domestic economy, woodwork, &c., would not meet present requirements. Whatever steps are taken, we have no doubt that the matter will receive the serious consideration of the Government and the hearty co-operation of the Board. The establishment of district high schools at which children who pass Standard VI. can obtain free education means that it is no longer necessary to award scholarships to those schools from which scholars can readily reach a high school. If the Government will allow the Board to retain its present scholarship grant, the money can be distributed as lodging-allowance to the scholars of back-country schools who would otherwise be unable to obtain the advantage of a high-school education.

The Department's offer to examine the papers of the pupil-teachers at their annual examination was accepted, and of thirty-two pupil-teachers who sat for examination all but one passed. Two were absent on account of illness, and sixteen were excused, having passed equivalent examinations which entitled them to a partial pass towards a certificate.

Many of the candidates selected for appointments to city schools are matriculated students, but the candidates for country schools are not, as a rule, as well equipped for their work. The establishment of high schools in the country districts leads us to look forward to an improvement in the intellectual equipment of those who wish to enter the profession of teaching. With free secondary education, it will be no hardship for the Board to make two years' attendance at a high school, or a matriculation pass, a necessary qualification for all probationers. We further express a hope that the Government will soon take steps to establish a training college on the lines already laid down by the Department.

Last year was the first year of operation of "The Public-School Teachers' Salaries Act, 1901." It is too soon yet to give a decided opinion on the working of this Act, but of the changes it made in our district two marked ones are worthy of notice. The number of pupil-teachers under the Board's scale of staffing was 165. Under the colonial scale this number has to be reduced to ninety-five. When the average attendance of a school reached forty-one, under the Board's scale a pupil-teacher was appointed, but under the colonial scale an experienced teacher (called a mistress) has now to be appointed. As these two changes mean that more classes than formerly have to work under teachers of experience, they may be looked upon as improvements. In a school with an average of seventy-six three teachers were allowed under the Board's scale, but under the colonial scale the third teacher is not added to the staff until an average of ninety-one is reached.

With these exceptions the two scales very nearly correspond as far as regards the number o teachers on the staff of a school.

The scale of salaries under the Act differs from the Board's scale in several particulars. Under the Board's scale a certificated teacher in a certain position was entitled to an increase of salary if he raised his certificate by passing higher examinations, but under the colonial scale the salary is allotted to the position irrespective of the grade of the certificate.

Thus, under the colonial scale, the chance of promotion is the only incentive to a teacher to raise his status, while the Board added the incentive of an immediate increase of salary to the position he occupied.

The head teachers of all schools (about sixty-seven) in grades 3 to 11 inclusive were paid more liberally by the Board than under the colonial scale. Under the colonial scale, however, the salaries of the assistants of the higher-graded schools are increased, and a few head teachers of schools in the highest grades also receive increased salaries. In 1904 all schools come under the Act, but till then teachers who were receiving a higher salary under the Board's scale are allowed to retain that salary if they remain in the same position.

On account of these differences between the two scales, to adjust the salaries and positions at once meant serious injustice to many teachers; but to adjust salaries only as vacancies occurred meant an impossibility under normal conditions, besides preventing all teachers entitled to an increase of salary from receiving that increase immediately. The Board decided to bring the assistants and pupil-teachers under the colonial scale if such a course could be arranged without dismissing any competent teacher. This was not an easy task; but, as many of our ex-pupil-teachers were certificated teachers of some experience, all such were offered positions at increased salaries, and, with the exception of a few third assistants in the city schools receiving a salary of £150, all assistants were placed under the colonial scale.

It was then found that thirteen pupil-teachers were still unprovided for, but the Department generously allowed the Board to allot them to the largest schools as excess teachers, on the understanding that they were to be offered vacancies on the regular staff as these occurred, and thus the adjustment was made without injustice to any assistant or pupil-teacher.

As the head teachers of the sixty-seven schools mentioned above will suffer a decrease of salary in 1904, the Board decided to take their cases into consideration when new appointments were made. Many of these cases have been adjusted, but unless an abnormal number of vacancies occurs during the coming year it will be almost impossible to give every teacher a salary under the colonial scale equal to that which he received under the Board's scale.

The additional accommodation provided at Kilbirnie and Karori has served the immediate wants of those districts. The alterations at Newtown have greatly improved the condition of that school, and as accommodation is now provided for more than the number of children in excess at Rintoul Street, to many of whom Newtown is quite convenient, additions to Rintoul Street are not required as long as there is accommodation at the older school. New schools have been built at Mangatiti, Rongokokako, and Horoeka, and the Kaituna School has been enlarged. The new school on the Terrace is now occupied and in working order. The immediate requirements of Petone, Worser Bay, and Brooklyn are being met by additions, which are in course of erection. A central school at Levin—to replace the Horowhenua and Levin Schools—and a new school at the Hutt will soon be completed. New schools will be built at Epuni, Muritai, and Akatarawa, and the Board is about to consider reports on the remodelling of the Carterton and Shannon Schools.

The attendance at Nireaha and Kereru has increased; but, as petitions for schools from neighbouring districts have to be reported on, these reports should be considered first, for the building of schools in such districts may cause the withdrawal of a number of children from the schools already in operation, and thus render additional rooms for the latter unnecessary. There are now before the Board several petitions for country schools, each of which requires very careful consideration, for, while it is desirable to extend the benefits of education as widely as possible, the unnecessary increase of small schools means an extra charge on the funds of the Board, and tends rather to inefficiency, as, under ordinary circumstances, in a school with two or more teachers the work is done under better conditions than in a school with a sole teacher, while the cost per child for maintenance and equipment is less. Unmetalled roads and unbridged rivers often prevent children from attending an established school no great distance away, and to build a permanent school for their wants often means that when the roads are metalled and the rivers bridged several small schools are in operation where one larger and probably more efficient school would give better education at less expense to the State. The needs of such cases should be met by temporary accommodation at first, as in aided schools, and the question of a permanent school should await the development of the district.

In all new schools and in all additions to schools made during the year the architect has observed such measurements as are, in the opinion of the Health and Education Departments, requisite to secure a proper supply of pure air for each child in an ordinary class-room. These are: "For each child in average attendance a minimum floor-space (exclusive of that occupied by such furniture as cupboards) of 12 square feet and an allowance of cubical space not less than 200 cubic feet, the height of each class-room from floor to wall-plate being at least 14 ft." These two Departments should also publish rules for the planning and fitting-up of schools, as is done in England and elsewhere.

In the annual report of the Health Department, Dr. Valintine, Health Officer for Wellington, writing on the sanitation of schools, says, "It is not unusual to find the privies inadequate in number, ill-ventilated, and situated over foul excreta pits. In all cases where these latter abominations have been found, on recommendation to the local Committee they have been promptly abolished. In some instances the water-supply has proved questionable on analysis. In any case it would be as well to supply a Pasteur-Chamberlain filter to each school, and also to do away with the iron drinking-cup that is generally attached to the well or tank. These cups

are a fruitful source of transmitting diphtheria. Of course, it is not practicable for each child to bring his own cup, but the thick glass drinking-cups that are used in the United States might be generally introduced."

Such questions as latrine accommodation, painting, and repairs generally have received the close attention of the clerk of works. He has drawn up a schedule of work done during the year, and of work necessary to put all buildings in an efficient state. This shows that the grants to the Board for building purposes are entirely inadequate to the needs of the district. These grants have not increased with the increased accommodation now necessary for each child, nor with the increase in the price of building materials which the architect informs us has taken place during the last few years.

Increased grants may perhaps be looked for when it is found to be of greater advantage to the State to give as adequate grants for buildings in which its children spend a great part of the most critical period of their development as it does for other public buildings.

We have, &c.,

T. R. Fleming, M.A., LL.B.,
F. H. Bakewell, M.A., } Inspectors.

The Chairman, Wellington Education Board.

Summary of Results for the Whole District.

Classes.	Number on Roll.	Present at Inspector's Annual Visit.	Passed.	Average Age of Pupils in each Class.
				Yrs. mos.
Standard VII.	524	501	...	14 5
" VI.	1,075	1,039	858	13 8
" V.	1,612	1,567	1,341	12 7
" IV.	1,850	1,795	1,573	11 10
" III.	1,869	1,814	1,589	10 11
" II.	1,873	1,823	1,676	9 10
" I.	1,832	1,771	1,688	8 6
Preparatory	4,623	3,753	...	7 1
Totals	15,258	14,063	8,725	11 1*

* Mean of average age.

HAWKE'S BAY.

Sir,— Inspector's Office, Napier, 4th March, 1903.

The seventy-nine Board schools and seven Catholic schools which are in operation in what is known as the Hawke's Bay Educational District have been duly visited and examined during the past year. My separate reports on the work and state of the schools have already been submitted for the consideration of the Board, and it merely remains for me to present in summary form the results of all my examinations for the year, with such remarks as may appear necessary to explain the general state of education throughout the district.

No new school districts were constituted, and only the small school at Patoka was opened as a new school, during the year.

Few changes have been made in the way of school buildings and residences, and, although quite a number of districts where schools are in operation are without suitable buildings, nothing has been done to place the children under fair and healthy working conditions. It is surprising to me how children and teachers are allowed to meet for so many hours daily in insanitary buildings, without a playground, a water-supply, or proper out-offices, when at the same time we read of the enforcement of the Public Health Act everywhere except, unfortunately, in places like a public school, where the enforcement of proper hygienic conditions is a public necessity.

A year ago attention was directed to the want of suitable school accommodation in a number of districts along the East Coast, such as Awanui, Waipiro Bay, Tokomaru, Morere, Mohaka, and Tolago Bay. Except at the latter place, things remain as before, although there is a prospect of school buildings being provided at Waipiro and Mohaka, but, unfortunately, without residences. I say "unfortunately" advisedly, because these places are in Native districts, and no school for Native children is ever erected by the Government without a suitable residence for the teacher. It seems to me a strange thing that a makeshift school for the children of settlers should be considered sufficient in so many places; whilst teachers are compelled to live under conditions that can hardly be realised by those who are unaware of the actual state of affairs. One does not see makeshift Native schoolhouses and residences; but these are to be met again and again in the case of schools under the control of the Board. Not only do the children suffer mentally and physically, but the teachers soon become broken down in health owing to the isolation and privations they undergo. So bad are the conditions in some of these places that in one place I had to carry on an examination wrapped in an overcoat, with the rain driving through the skeleton building. Every pupil belonging to the school was present, although the day was miserably cold and the room

cheerless and bare. The mistress stated that even the schoolroom was better than her own accommodation, and that in bad weather she was compelled to retire early to bed in order to keep warm.

Mention has only been made of school deficiencies along the East Coast, but there are places, including Gisborne, Te Karaka, Hampden, Waipatiki, and Dannevirke South, where an increase in the school accommodation is required.

In the districts where full school provision has taken place, the buildings, including residences, are mostly in good repair, and externally present a neat and tidy appearance. The internal condition is not so satisfactory. For a number of years little or nothing has been done to paint or beautify the rooms in any way, and a fairly large expenditure is now necessary to provide for this important work.

The School Committees in many districts pay considerable attention to the wants of the schools. There is a growing watchfulness among members and a desire to keep things in good working condition. Improved sanitation, a proper water-supply, and neat grounds are matters that receive increasing attention in the larger districts, and it is seldom that any complaint is called for in consequence of neglect on the part of Committees and teachers. Considering that so much has been done in making suitable school provision in all the older settled districts, efficiency can only be maintained by School Committees supporting and carrying on the good work that the Board have attempted. The schoolhouse and residence, with the ground attached, should present to the people of a district a standard of neatness and tidiness that is worthy of imitation. Children are imitators by nature, and if they have presented to them at school good surroundings, so as to cultivate their taste and influence habit, the foundation of a good character will be laid. The busy life of a settler is apt to overlook or undervalue these aspects of school training. Imagine, for example, my surprise a few days ago when accosted by a settler: "Mr. Hill, that house is too good for a teacher; why does the Board waste money on such a building?" My reply was, "The house will help to make the teacher comfortable, and therefore more capable of teaching; further, it will show the children that a nice home is worth striving for." To the settler the mere teaching to read and write and cipher embraced all the teacher was capable of conveying to children, and, unfortunately, a similar idea prevails in many districts to-day. The school has to carry the higher ideals among the people, and true education will advance just in proportion to the supply of proper school buildings, where the children of the colony can be trained to realise that knowledge and character in combination make up the successful citizen, for without character knowledge will be of little avail.

The following summary shows the number of children in the schools of the district who were returned as attending school during the progress of my examination last year, it being examined for classification purposes only. The results of the examinations for the previous year are given by way of comparison.

Classes.	Number on Roll.		Present at Annual Visit.		Absent.		Failed.		Passed.		Percentage of Passes in		Average Ages of Pupils in each Class.	
	1902.	1901.	1902.	1901.	1902.	1901.	1902.	1901.	1902.	1901.	1902.	1901.	1902.	1901.
													Yrs. mos.	Yrs. mos.
Standard VII.	111	79	96	...	15	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	14 7	...
" VI.	503	464	493	446	10	18	192	121	301	325	61·0	72·8	14 0	14 0
" V.	772	734	757	719	15	15	152	147	605	572	79·9	79·5	13 0	13 1
" IV.	928	937	901	926	27	11	150	138	751	788	83·3	85·1	12 1	12 2
" III.	1,145	1,019	1,109	1,005	36	14	156	141	953	864	85·9	86·0	10 10	11 1
" II.	1,024	1,066	987	1,054	37	12	104	114	883	940	89·4	89·2	9 9	10 0
" I.	1,075	1,082	1,044	1,067	31	15	91	110	953	957	91·2	89·7	8 7	8 8
Preparatory	2,672	2,675	2,364	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
	8,230	8,056	7,751	5,217	171	85	845	771	4,446	4,446	84·0	87·1	11 10*	11 3*

* Mean of average age.

In the Catholic schools examined there were 781 on the roll; 526 were present at my examination. Eighteen of those in standard classes were absent; 170 failed, and 356 passed. There were also 236 in the preparatory class, and one in Standard VII.

The increase in the number of children whose names are entered on the school roll as attending school is 174 for the year. Those examined in standards increased by 258, whilst the number of passes or promotions in the standard classes was exactly the same in 1902 as in 1901.

As remarked by me in a previous report, the pass results, with the exception of Standard VI., are based solely upon the examinations held by the teachers. At the time fixed for the annual visit of an Inspector the examination of the large majority of children in a school has taken place, and it merely rests with the Inspector to see whether the promotions that are made or are recommended are justified and represent a fair standard of efficiency when compared with the requirements as set forth in the regulations of the Government.

A reference to the table shows there was a falling-off during the year in the percentage of promotions from standard to standard, the most noticeable being in Standard VI., where there is shown a difference of over 11 per cent. in the proportion of passes compared with the previous year. In Standards IV. and III. there is also a falling-of in the promotions, but the difference is small, and bears no comparison with the marked lowness of the passes in Standard VI. This decline in the results of the highest class is the outcome, I fear, of allowing promotions in Standard V. on too

low a basis, or on too imperfect a preparation in those of the class subjects that become pass subjects in the highest standard. As far as I am able to judge, no difference whatever has been made in the demands for a pass, and it can hardly be that work taken under the Manual and Technical Instruction Act will have affected the results in the higher classes as much as is shown in the table. Little sympathy can be shown with teachers whose only aim is to rush children through the standard course at a rate only possible at the cost of imperfect preparation. Free classification was intended to give greater thoroughness to the children by enabling teachers to place them under the most favourable working conditions, and it would be a good thing were this point kept clearly in view. Although the passes in Standard VI. show such a decided falling-off, the progress of education in its wider aspects has certainly made rapid and encouraging strides. The new influences that are working in the schools are certainly having a good effect. When teachers meet together, as the majority of them have been able to do at the Saturday classes, the result must be beneficial, and it is for this reason that I think the training grant for the carrying-on of special classes for teachers is one of the healthiest signs in our school progress that has been made for a number of years. Certainly the classes that have been carried on throughout the year at Gisborne, Napier, and Dannevirke have been much appreciated, and if the course can be continued in the way of anticipatory preparation for new work in the schools the benefit to the country will be very great. Among the influences suggested as affecting the schools just now may be mentioned the operation of the Manual and Technical Instruction Act of 1900; the improved status of the teachers by the introduction of the salaries scale; the assistance offered by the Government for the establishment of district high schools; and, finally, the prospect of a superannuation scheme.

The improved prospects that are held out to the better classed teachers will certainly be highly beneficial in the end, if proper care is taken that what is to be sought for by them is substance and not shadow. The best teachers are wanted in the primary schools. Because a man is a graduate it ought not to be assumed that his work is to teach something termed the "higher subjects." What are higher subjects and what lower? If subjects of instruction are estimated in proportion to their value to each individual in life, it must be that reading, writing, or English and the science of numbers occupy first place. But these vital subjects to every pupil who attends a public school do not receive as much careful attention as formerly, and too often the work of teaching them is relegated to the least competent on the school staff. The danger is a growing one, and it is fostered by the demands of parents, who think that Latin, and French, and Euclid are to be preferred to a knowledge of their own mother tongue. What we need in the schools is improved methods of instruction, and not a wider list of subjects. It can hardly be urged too often or too strongly that it is by means of improved methods of instruction that progress towards the higher studies will be possible in the case of children who are taught in the public schools. Thoroughness in the foundation work is necessary, for by means of reading and writing the world's thought is communicated. It seldom happens that one learns in the schools of a new method or plan being tried in the instruction of children, and the ruts of routine are so many by the way that teachers, falling into them, seldom get out again. The mere providing of facts for memory-preparation after the manner of getting special fattening food for young ducks and turkeys is neither teaching, training, nor education. Far too much of the early mental fattening process is going on, and too little of that generous and manly training that tends to bring out the real characteristics of children and produce, as a final product, a real live, observant, and intelligent citizen. Knowledge in itself gives power, and education should give the children the power to discover that mankind is progressive, and that the world of thought and of humanity is moving rapidly; and if we are to keep abreast in this hard world of progress and competition we must be diligent, observant, active, and apt, for aptitude, after all, is the power that makes adaptation in life possible.

The absence of originality in methods of instruction might easily be illustrated by reference to what is often seen going on in certain schools, but there is no necessity to do this here. An "Inspector's visit" provides a means of doing some practical good in a school, when a quiet talk with a teacher on school method and forms of instruction leads to practical issues in the case of teachers who are apt and open to improvement. It is at times a task of some difficulty to get teachers to leave the old methods of instruction and training. A higher plane, however, must be reached, for if we are to have an educated democracy the first essential is to deal with children as beings capable of being trusted when work has to be done and tested. The syllabus of instruction may perhaps operate in such a way as to lead teachers to pursue defective methods of instruction, and this may perhaps be urged in the case of an important subject like geography. In the earlier stages of teaching this subject there is little to call up the thinking and reflective faculties of children, and yet what valuable information is available were the subject taught with a view to its intelligent preparation and practical use! The annual publications that are issued by the Lands and Survey Department, the Marine Department with respect to lighthouses, &c., the Tourist Department, and the Government Year-book, with their beautiful maps, illustrations, and diagrams, should be brought under the notice of every pupil learning geography in the public schools. Information such as is found in the publications named becomes invaluable to children in after life, as they are made acquainted with sources of useful information about which the majority of adults in the country are entirely ignorant. Even teachers appear to have but slight acquaintance with what is the most valuable physical and political geography of the colony, and it would be a very good thing if every school had a bound copy of the publications named for the benefit of teachers and pupils. With the help of a "gazetteer," I make bold to say that a better knowledge of New Zealand, and of the world generally, would be obtained than is possible from the use of "the special standard preparations" that now flood the market and the schools in the shape of "text-books."

The regulations that were issued by the Minister, having reference to district high schools, have created a desire in quite a number of districts for the establishment of a higher-grade school

where advanced subjects of instruction can be taught. District high schools, however, will not meet the wants of ex-Sixth Standard pupils in the smaller and outlying districts. A school twenty miles away from a small country settler might just as well be fifty or a hundred miles, as the cost to educate his children away from home will be the same in either case. The difficulty would be met by offering a capitation grant for the instruction of Seventh Standard children in specified subjects, to be approved by the Board on the recommendation of the Inspector. Many of the teachers in charge of country schools are capable of giving special instruction suited to children who have passed the Sixth Standard. I am satisfied that a much greater benefit would be conferred upon the school-children than can possibly result from district high schools in places where the population is scattered.

There has been much activity shown by teachers in some of the subjects under the Manual and Technical Instruction Act, but I feel it necessary to reserve my judgment for the present as to the benefits conferred upon the standard children. The drawing classes that are carried on by Mr. Anderson and his assistant are excellent, and the scope of this class of work might easily be widened were it not for the doubt that exists as to what subject to leave out from the class subjects under the standard regulations.

In the case of preparatory classes there is no difficulty in the way, and the grants for the supply of kindergarten apparatus and brush drawing have assisted in a marked manner to create interest in the teaching of manual subjects in the infant-schools. Equally satisfactory results might be expected in the case of standard children, but teachers are averse to the increase of school subjects, and I fear the progress will be delayed until a more definite syllabus of instruction has been issued whereby alternate subjects may be taught. If Regulation 29 of the standards of instruction could be widened, school classes under the Act would become general in the schools of my district.

The establishment of a technical school has been a means of creating interest in art and science work among the teachers throughout the district, and their attendance (optional) at the Wednesday classes in Gisborne and the Saturday classes in Dannevirke and Napier sufficiently testifies to their earnestness and to their desire to prepare subjects that will be of value to them in the training of their pupils.

The training school for ex-pupil-teachers continues to give promise of a growing success. Young teachers trained in country districts look forward to the time when they will be able to enter the training school as a student. Other districts may have better arrangements for the academic preparation of teachers, but I am satisfied that few young teachers receive better technical training than what is now being attempted in Napier. With more pecuniary help from the Central Department the benefits of the training school might be largely increased, but in justice to those who have passed the training course it must be said that the mark of their work is already apparent in the schools of the district. And as showing that the training school, apart from academic preparation, is coming to be recognised as a necessity in England, it may be mentioned that the London County Council have lately opened a teachers' training school on lines almost identical with the one established by the Board. If pupil-teachers are to be properly trained for their profession, there must be separation between the academic preparation and the technical training, such as is necessary in the case of a medical student. The young teachers now in training would no doubt be much better for a year at one of the university colleges, and this might easily be carried out by a simple system of teachers' scholarships.

The formation of a Schools Association for the encouragement of athletics and physical training among the children of this education district deserves a word of praise. The majority of teachers have heartily taken up the subject, and the first meeting took place at Waipawa in November, where the local authorities did everything to encourage the success of the meeting. There was a large gathering of children, parents, and friends; and the fine healthy rivalry between the schools in trials of physical skill was a special feature of the meeting. When the next annual school sports come round I trust the Board will notify a general holiday, and that a Hawke's Bay banner will be available, to be held by the school that makes most points in drill, calisthenics, and deportment.

The tone of the schools continues good. Few things afford me more pleasure than a visit to a school in its every-day dress. Well-mannered children, neatly dressed and working diligently, reflect the character of the school and the influence of the teacher. Bad children are uncommon, and well-behaved and bright and intelligent ones are abundant. I have seldom to complain of dirty desks, floor, and fireplace, or of untidiness in the out-offices and school surroundings. I think it may be said of most of the teachers in the Board's service that they are competent, diligent, and honourable, and perform their duties with a considerable amount of success, as was recently shown in the examination for the Victoria Scholarship and in the Civil Service and Matriculation Examinations.

Of the Catholic schools little need be said. The authorities are most anxious to have their schools examined, and I have done so under considerable pressure for available time. Good manners and good behaviour characterize the schools, and two of them do work that would be equally praiseworthy in the Board schools. In every case the teachers are diligent and earnest, but the lack of technical training militates against efficiency in the higher classes. The tendency to over-classification in Standards I. and II. reacts upon the higher work; but this will disappear soon, and no doubt the future success of the schools is assured if the work is continued on the present lines, as the classification is low, the groundwork rapidly improving, and the teachers are determined and watchful.

I am, &c.,

H. HILL, Inspector of Schools.

The Chairman, Board of Education, Napier.

MARLBOROUGH.

SIR,— Blenheim, 20th January, 1903.

I have the honour to present my twelfth annual report upon the primary schools under the control of your Board.

Sixty-three schools were open during the last quarter of the year 1901. Five of these—namely, Flaxbourne, Four-fathom Bay, Ocean Bay, Onahau Bay, and Waterfalls—were closed at the end of the year, the first three permanently, and the others temporarily. Two new schools—Sea View and Hopewell—were opened, and Onahau Bay was reopened during the year; so that sixty-one schools have been in operation during some part or the whole of the year. The roll numbers at the ends of the four quarters were: March, 2,073; June, 2,066; September, 2,023; December, 2,007. The mean average weekly roll number for the year was 2,054. The average daily attendances of the same quarters were: 1,769, 1,744, 1,746, and 1,723. The mean average attendance for the year 1902 is therefore 1,745. This number is important, since it determines the Board's income for 1903, from which must be met the whole expenditure of the Board other than for buildings and the teachers' salaries. The mean average attendance for the year is 85 per cent. of the mean average roll number, and shows an improvement of 3·4 per cent. upon last year's average. This improvement may perhaps be attributed in some degree to the direct and indirect influence of the Truant Officers. Only four districts in New Zealand exceeded this average in 1901. The steady decline in the roll numbers referred to in my last report, and again exemplified in this, is not difficult to account for, and will probably continue for some years longer, until a younger generation enters into possession of holdings at present occupied by the old folks, whose families have nearly all passed through the schools, and have in many instances been obliged to settle in other parts of the colony, owing to the fact that there is little or no land in this district suitable for settlement that is not already occupied. The almost entire absence of local industries other than agriculture, together with the occupation of the greater part of the district as sheep-runs, carrying a very small population, are also contributing causes of the small school attendance. The steady decrease in the school attendance has not so far been accompanied by any corresponding diminution in the number of schools, nor, consequently, by any material lessening of the working-expenses.

The scholars on the rolls of the schools at the date of the "annual visit" numbered 1,984, or ninety-three less than the corresponding number last year, and nearly double the deficiency of that year compared with 1900. The proportion of scholars in Standards VI., III., II., and Class P is slightly lower, and that of Standards VII., V., IV., and I. rather higher, than in 1901, the greatest increase, however, being only 1·4 per cent. in Standard IV. About 60 per cent. of all the scholars on the roll, or 89 per cent. of the number examined, obtained promotion. This is 3 per cent. less than in 1901, but about the same above the mean average of the whole colony in the same year. The percentages of passes in the several standards were as follows: In Standard VII., 91·8 per cent.; Standard VI., 70·7; Standard V., 83·8; Standard IV., 92·6; Standard III., 91·8; Standard II., 93·6; and Standard I., 93 per cent. of the numbers examined. These figures show a falling-off in the results of the examination of Standards V. and VI. when compared with those of last year. The Sixth Standard has 8 per cent. and the Fifth 10 per cent. more failures. The Fourth Standard has 2 per cent. fewer and the Third Standard the same proportion of failures as were recorded last year.

Neither the very small nor the larger schools are, as a rule, concerned in this depression, but chiefly small schools having all the standards represented, with, of course, a sole unassisted teacher. In my opinion, the teachers of such schools would be doing far more real good for the community and for the cause of education if they omitted some one (or more) of these class subjects, notwithstanding the statement in the standard regulations (clause 9) that "the neglect of any one of these subjects will be regarded as highly censurable," and by abandoning the hopeless attempt to accomplish the impossible they would have more heart for, and more success with, the remainder of the work. There would also be less excuse for the absurdity of allowing scholars to "pass" a standard though failing in two out of the five pass subjects.

Taking the Fifth and Sixth Standards alone, the following are some cases where the scholars gave a poor account of themselves: Blind River, Standard V.—examined, 3; passed, 1; Standard VI.—examined, 2; passed, 0. Ferndale: Standard V.—examined, 2; passed, 0; Standard VI.—examined, 4; passed, 0. Omaka: Standard V.—examined, 2; passed, 0; Standard VI.—examined, 2; passed, 1. Seddon: Standard V.—examined, 5; passed, 2; Standard VI.—examined, 4; passed, 0. Waitaria Bay: Standard V.—examined, 5; passed, 1. These all belong to the type of school that I have referred to in the previous paragraph.

In pleasing contrast with these cases are the schools where, although working under the same disadvantages, all the scholars examined in these two classes secured promotion—viz., Okaramio, Marlboroughtown, Havelock Suburban, and Kaituna. Several other schools, including small aided schools, passed all the scholars presented in one or both of these classes. The number of cases in the Third, Fourth, and Fifth Standards in which passes had been recorded which I could not indorse amounted to thirty-two out of 398, or about 8 per cent. The Department now requires that the ages given shall be the average of all the scholars on the roll, instead, as heretofore, of those only who pass. No comparison is therefore possible with the statistics of former years in this respect. The most extraordinary variations in these ages are to be found, reaching as high as four years above the average age of the same class in this district. The majority of cases of excessive age occur naturally in the small aided schools, and arise from the circumstances referred to in my last report. Fortunately these extreme ages are few in number, so that the average for the whole district is not seriously affected. In schools above grade O, however, there are numerous examples of averages not only above, but considerably below, the "district" average, and amongst the latter may be found some excuse for the shortcomings previously referred to.

Passes.—As long as the regulations permit scholars to be promoted who fail in two out of five subjects, I think it is highly desirable that the nature of the passes recorded should be clearly presented to view, and I have again arranged these particulars in a tabular form, classifying the passes as "weak," "fair," or "strong," according as failure was recorded in two, one, or none of the five pass subjects. In the four upper standards of the schools included in this list the strong passes amount to 50 per cent. of the whole, the fair passes to 34 per cent., and the weak passes to 16 per cent. In my opinion, a weak pass is far worse than a failure, since it compels a teacher to promote a scholar very imperfectly prepared for the step, who would in most cases derive far more practical benefit by remaining for a year, or half a year, in the same class; but its worst feature is the demoralising influence that must be produced amongst all scholars (and possibly a few teachers) by the knowledge that such passes have the direct sanction of the highest educational authorities. It may also be partly responsible for irregularity of attendance.

Class Subjects.—On the whole, with the exception of geography, the class subjects were better prepared this year. Although there was a noticeable improvement in the grammar, it still continues to be the least satisfactory of this group of subjects, 42 per cent. being classed as "inferior," and many of these would have been more correctly described as "worthless."

Handwork.—Without any "flourish of trumpets," a considerable amount of valuable work in this direction has been undertaken at many of our schools. No application has been made to the Department for any assistance under the Manual and Technical Instruction Act. The amounts granted under the regulations are so small, and the formalities to be observed, the returns required, and the conditions generally so exacting and vexatious, that the game is hardly worth the candle. Perhaps when the simplification of the regulations, promised in the Minister's last annual report, is accomplished, it may be found desirable to extend this portion of the work by taking advantage of the Government grant. Early in the year a supply of plasticine and modelling-boards was obtained and distributed amongst the teachers who expressed a desire to take up this subject; and in all cases the results have been very satisfactory. Admirable specimens of the work were exhibited at all the schools that have undertaken this branch of handwork. Perhaps the best work was to be found in the Blenheim Infant Department, Blenheim Girls', and Renwick Schools. At the Blenheim Girls' School some original modelling was executed in my presence from the children's own designs; but in every case I was more than satisfied with the progress made. It is, moreover, worthy of mention that in the schools that have taken up modelling there was no falling-off in the quality of the ordinary school-work, but rather the contrary. No doubt the energy and enthusiasm which prompted the teachers to voluntarily undertake this additional work has been operative throughout the whole school course; and perhaps, with the scholars, the close attention and observation required for this form of handwork may have reacted upon the other branches of their school-work. The value of this and other forms of handwork by far exceeds, in my humble opinion, that of object lessons without objects and elementary science without apparatus or experiment. Modelling is not the only form of handwork to be found in our schools. Paper-folding, weaving, bead-work, &c., are carried on at some of our country schools, and the earlier kindergarten "gifts" are also in use amongst the infant classes.

Vocal music has made some progress, and has been taken up at most of the Board schools with more or less success.

Military drill is undertaken at all the schools having men teachers, and at a few conducted by women. The drilling of the boys and girls at Renwick was particularly effective, and included wand drill for girls and dumb-bell exercises for boys. School cadet corps have been established at Picton, Springlands, and Blenheim, and appear so far to have given satisfaction to the military authorities.

An entirely new departure, as far as this district is concerned, and one of a most commendable character, has been made by the teacher of the Waitohi School, who has established a night school and a continuation class, to which not only young people, but a few adults also, are admitted. The continuation class has been recognised by the Department, and the grant received for the same during the time it has been at work is £3. I am not aware what fees, if any, are paid by the students; but they cannot be large, so that the teacher must be actuated by higher motives than the mere desire to increase his income. Much good might be done in this way—at any rate, in the country districts, and during the winter months—by teachers with constitutions sufficiently robust to stand the extra work. There are probably in every locality even yet some whose education was neglected in their youth, and others who, having passed through the standards some years ago, would be glad to revive and improve the acquirements of their school-days. Again, the school might be made the centre of a reading club, at which, on certain evenings in the week, the teacher or some other member of the club might read aloud from the current literature of the day articles of political, scientific, or social interest, which might afterwards furnish a topic of conversation, if not of formal discussion. The reading of the article might occasionally be intrusted to the best reader amongst the scholars in the higher standards, and this would no doubt act as a powerful incentive to improvement in that useful art. School Committees, who often complain (not without cause) of the trivial nature of their connection with the administration of education, might find, in the encouragement of such attempts, ample scope for their energies, and a wider sphere of usefulness than is assigned to them under the Act. In fact, there are many ways in which the village school might be utilised for the improvement and elevation of the community.

I do not consider it necessary this year to dilate upon the treatment of the various subjects of the syllabus in this district. I did so pretty fully in my last report, and nothing has since occurred to change my opinions as then expressed.

In the early part of the year I obtained a supply of the "Examination Register" published by Whitcombe and Tombs, and brought it under the notice of the teachers of the principal schools, several of whom resolved to make use of it. These registers are very serviceable to conscientious

teachers, by enabling them to accumulate a mass of reliable records of their scholars' work throughout the year, thus giving them the means of pronouncing judgment on each at the end of the year, with the almost absolute certainty of a fair and just decision. If the use of this or some other form of register were made compulsory in all schools, the work of the Inspector at the annual visit might be confined to a careful examination of this record, with, probably, a general confirmation of the results arrived at by the teacher. At the schools where these registers have been used during only a part of the year it was scarcely necessary for me to examine the scholars myself (although I did so). In the few cases where my results differed from those of the teachers of these schools the ultimate decision was arrived at after consultation upon each case separately.

To sum up the whole, I can say confidently that nearly all the Marlborough schools are in a fairly satisfactory condition, and that some of them need not fear comparison with any schools of the same grade in the colony. In the few cases where the apparent results are not quite so satisfactory as might be expected it must be remembered that the results of a single examination, however carefully conducted, can only give an approximate estimate of the real value of the work done. Sometimes, too, there are disturbing influences, unknown to the general public, which have prejudicially affected the year's work; and in such cases we must expect better results when those influences have ceased to operate. In one case where the results of the year's work were not so good as they should have been the teacher had recently suffered a severe bereavement, which may have had a dispiriting effect upon his year's work. In another the school appears to have outgrown the power of the present teacher, and unless this surmise is disproved at the next annual visit it will be necessary to make a change.

The M.H.R. medals were this year awarded to a girl at the Renwick School and a boy at the Canvastown School.

Free Secondary Education.—Although not perhaps strictly within the scope of an Inspector's report, the magnitude and importance of the new departure may be sufficient excuse for my referring to it. The offer of the Government to give free secondary education to all primary-school pupils under the age of fourteen years who have passed the Sixth Standard indicates a laudable desire to place all classes of the community as nearly as possible on an equal footing in this respect, and no doubt the cost, which will be considerable, has been counted. In the year 1900 the number of scholars who passed Standard VI. was 6,365, and in 1901 the number was 6,854; or the average for the two years was 6,609. The average age of passing the standard throughout the colony was thirteen years eleven months. Now, assuming that only half of these 6,609 were within the age-limit (fourteen years) at the end of 1902, and that of this half only one-half would avail themselves of the offer, there would be 1,650 scholars to provide for in the first year. Assuming the number of passes in Standard VI. to remain constant, there would be 3,300 free scholars during the second year; and, allowing only half of those admitted in the first year to pass the Inspector-General's examination, the third year would find 4,125 scholars, costing the country £24,750 annually; while in the fourth and every succeeding year the amount required would be £29,700 per annum, to say nothing of the interest on the large amount of money that must necessarily be spent in enlarging buildings, providing furniture, &c.

Of course, the expenditure as above estimated must be reduced by the amount of capitation paid on account of such of these scholars as now remain at the primary schools after passing the Sixth Standard. In 1901 these numbered 2,657, and, supposing the Seventh Standard to be abolished, this would mean a saving of £10,628 at £4 per head, leaving the net cost of the new scheme £14,122 per annum. Large as this amount is, it would be money well invested if the whole, or a large majority, of these students were thereby rendered better men and women and more useful citizens than they would have become under ordinary circumstances. But this is highly improbable, and all the advantages that the State would derive from this liberal expenditure could be more certainly obtained, at a far less cost, by the selection of the brightest intellects throughout the colony by the establishment of a liberal system of scholarships, equally open to all classes of the community within the same limits. This would, moreover, be fairer to the country districts that are far removed from any secondary school, since the free places could not be accepted by the greater number of country scholars on account of the expense of living away from home. The effect of the new arrangement upon the finances of Education Boards would not be very great, though always in the direction of a reduction of their already insufficient revenue. The total amount of such reduction for New Zealand would amount, at 11s. 3d. a head, to about £1,500 per annum. If, however, the free secondary education "has come to stay," some modification of the present syllabus for primary schools will be found expedient, in order that the two systems may work smoothly and in harmony without the overlapping that now exists. It is well known that at present holders of Education Board scholarships are at a great disadvantage on entering the High School, because, although well grounded in the subjects of the primary-school syllabus, they have, as a rule, no acquaintance with Latin or mathematics, and cannot at once fall into line with the High School class, with which their other attainments would have connected them. This is a great disadvantage not only to the scholars themselves, but also to the teachers of the High School. The work of the Sixth Standard should therefore be arranged so as to prepare the scholars who pass that standard for the work they will be required to do in the lower forms of the secondary schools, perhaps by the discharge of some subjects, such as history, science, &c., and substituting some two of the following: English grammar, higher arithmetic, elementary algebra, geometry, or elementary Latin. Some alteration of this kind would be equally desirable in the case of scholarship-holders; and, as a revision of the primary-school syllabus has long been contemplated, perhaps some change in the direction indicated may be already under consideration.

Scholarships.—The examination of candidates for the Board's scholarships was held on Tuesday, 23rd December last, at the Blenheim Borough School. Twelve of the fourteen candi-

dates nominated presented themselves, the others being disqualified by age. The candidates present were nominated by the head teachers of the following schools: Blenheim Boys' School, 3; Blenheim Girls', 3; Renwick, 2; Tuamarina, 1; Havelock Suburban, 1; Onamalutu, 2. The candidates who qualified by gaining 60 per cent. (or upwards) of the possible marks were only five in number. Last year nine out of twenty qualified, so that the proportion is nearly the same, or about 3 per cent. less this year. The average age of those who qualified this year is about five months more than the corresponding average for last year, while the average percentage of marks gained is about 10 per cent. higher this year than it was in 1901. The unqualified candidates this year gained a rather smaller percentage of marks than those of last year.

The candidate at the head of the list comes from the Havelock Suburban School, and it is worthy of special notice that a scholar from this school occupied the same honourable position last year. The scholarships available this year are: One country scholarship of £35 per annum; two town scholarships of £10 per annum; two free places or junior statutory scholarships. All these are tenable for two years. The number of qualified candidates is therefore just sufficient to absorb all the available prizes. The work of successful candidates was very creditable, and remarkably even throughout. Only two cases of marks falling below 50 per cent. occurred out of forty, and one of these was only slightly below half-marks. In the two "toughest" subjects the highest marks in arithmetic were gained by a girl from the Blenheim School, and the highest in grammar by one from the Renwick School, who also gained full marks in history. The recent regulations for giving free places to all scholars who have passed the Sixth Standard, if adopted by the Governors of the Marlborough High School, will render necessary some alteration in the Education Board's Scholarship Regulations, always supposing that the present scholarship grant to Education Boards is continued. The free places offered by the Department would be practically useless to most country scholars; and, since all town scholars would be entitled to claim free admission to the High School upon passing Standard VI., it might be considered advisable to devote the scholarships grant to country scholarships only.

I have, &c.,

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

SUMMARY OF RESULTS FOR THE WHOLE DISTRICT.

Classes.	Number on Roll.	Present at Inspector's Annual Visit.	Passed.	Average Age of the Pupils in each Class.
				Yrs. mos.
Standard VII.	64	49	...	14 11
" VI.	153	147	104	14 2
" V.	222	210	176	13 1
" IV.	266	258	239	11 11
" III.	260	259	238	10 11
" II.	238	235	220	9 6
" I.	235	231	215	8 8
Preparatory...	546	535	...	7 0
Totals	1,984	1,924	1,192	11 3*

* Mean of average age.

NELSON.

SIR,— Nelson, 27th January, 1903.

We have the honour to present the following report on the schools of the Nelson Education District for the year 1902:—

During the last quarter of the year 123 schools were at work, and of these all but four small household schools have been examined. Owing to a misunderstanding, the children of one of these latter were not brought to the nearest district school for examination; the children of the second failed to attend owing to the inclemency of the weather; the third had been but recently established; and the fourth was closed at the time of the examination. One other school, closed during the fourth quarter, had been examined earlier in the year. New household schools have been established at Doctor's Creek and the Lighthouse. Those at Cable Bay and Taitapu had a brief existence, and the Maruia, already referred to, has been closed but recently.

The following private schools have also been examined: St. Canice's, Westport; the Sacred Heart, Reefton; Whakarewa Home and Miss Deck's, Motueka.

Infirmity of health caused Mr. Ladley's retirement from the inspectorate early in the year, and Mr. Strachan was appointed in his stead. Since the latter did not take up his new duties till May, the whole of the work of inspection could not be undertaken; nevertheless, seventy-nine schools, including all the larger ones, were visited. The average weekly number on the rolls for the September quarter was 5,668, or twelve lower than that recorded last year. At the time of our examinations the number on the rolls was actually higher than that for the corresponding time in 1901; it is therefore probable that the annual decrease regularly reported since 1897 will soon cease. There are indications of growth of juvenile population in some parts of the district, and the slackening of the downward impulse is of happy augury for the future. The greatest increase is

shown in Westport, Motueka, Motupiko, and Millerton school districts. It is worthy of note also that the number for the colony as a whole has for the second time shown an upward tendency. With the exception of Cronadun, all the schools that were named last year as showing an exceedingly irregular attendance have made marked improvement. Fifteen of the household schools recorded for the year 100 per cent. of attendances, and of the others the following were the best: Sandy Bay, 97 per cent.; Ferntown, 96 per cent.; Gordon, 95 per cent.; Win's Valley, 94 per cent.; Progress and Brighton, 93 per cent.; Neudorf, 92 per cent.; Denniston, Burnett's Face, and Land of Promise, 91 per cent. Seven others showed 90 per cent., making in all a total of seventeen which have reached that limit, as compared with ten last year. On the other hand, the following show an attendance of less than 70 per cent. of the roll: Baton, 66 per cent.; Cronadun and Glenroy, 68 per cent.; and Fern Flat, 69 per cent.

The average attendance for the year has been 4,809, as against 4,734 in 1901. Epidemics of measles and scarlatina greatly reduced the attendance during the last quarter, but in spite of this the attendance for the year was so much improved that the percentage it bears to the roll number (84·4) is the highest it has yet attained, being somewhat higher than the average for the colony in 1901. This improvement is a hopeful sign, because Nelson has hitherto been much below the average for New Zealand. Otago 86·7 per cent., and South Canterbury 86·5 per cent., held pride of place last year. Twenty-three of our schools still show less than 80 per cent., which is the minimum contemplated by the School Attendance Act. This leaves ample room for improvement and for vigilance on the part of teachers and Committees alike.

As a result of the Inspector-General's visit to the local fruit-growing centres, in which the attendance during the summer months is so injuriously affected, certain proposals have been made by the Department. They would, if carried into effect, be of decided benefit to the staffs and salaries of those schools where the attendance for a quarter is abnormally low. They will also be a benefit to education by checking the growing tendency to close the schools unnecessarily—a practice that deprives many children of opportunities for making progress.

In his report for 1901 Inspector Hill commends the action of a Committee who have regularly presented a silver medal engraven with the name of the recipient and the year in which it was gained to each child in the school that has made a full attendance for the year. The Committee at Waimangaroa, who have always taken a keen interest in the welfare of their excellent school, adopted a somewhat similar course in supplying ornamental certificates. Teachers generally, we fear, do not take sufficient advantage of every opportunity to encourage regularity. So few apply for the good-attendance certificates issued by the Department that apparently these are not always presented when deserved.

On the 31st December there were in the employ of the Board 161 teachers, classified as follows: Head teachers—Certificated or licensed, 37. Assistants—Certificated or licensed, 34; uncertificated, 5. Sole teachers—Certificated or licensed, 46; uncertificated, 39. Totals—Certificated or licensed, 117; uncertificated, 44. For 1901—Certificated or licensed, 115; uncertificated, 37.

The number of assistants has increased for the year by eight. Four of the new appointees are uncertificated, as no fully qualified applicants could be found for the mistress-ship of certain schools in small remote centres. In one case, by permission of the Department, two pupil-teachers have been employed instead of a mistress. It would be well if greater latitude were allowed to meet local exigencies.

The partial adoption of the colonial sale of staffs has so far reduced the number of pupil-teachers from forty-eight (as reported last year) to thirty-nine, and at the end of 1903 the number will in all probability be further reduced to twenty-one. Of the pupil-teachers at present employed, nine are fully certificated, and ten others have either matriculated or obtained a partial certificate.

Only twenty-five candidates sat for the pupil-teachers' entrance examination in June last, and eleven passed. Spelling was again their weakest subject, and the repeated failure of so many of our young people in attempting dictation tests from work previously unseen, although their prepared work is satisfactory, leads one to the conclusion that their general reading cannot be very extensive.

The following general summary of results for the district has been extracted from the annual return. For the sake of comparison the corresponding totals for 1901 are also given.

Classes.	Number on Roll.	Present at Inspector's Annual Visit.	Passed.	Average Age of the Pupils in each Class.	
				1902.	1901.
				Yrs. mos.	Yrs. mos.
Standard VII.	215	195	...	14 9	...
" VI.	452	443	326	13 9	14 2
" V.	587	577	438	13 0	13 0
" IV.	672	649	495	12 0	12 1
" III.	685	667	540	11 1	10 11
" II.	693	674	603	9 11	9 9
" I.	624	600	529	8 11	8 10
Preparatory	1,770	1,596	...	6 11	6 11
Totals ...	5,698	5,401	2,931	11 4*	...
For 1901 ...	5,661	5,333	2,943	...	11 4*

* Mean of average age.

It would be a material aid towards compiling this return if the ages for the whole school, as given in the formal summary of standard class lists, were aggregated by the teachers.

The number in the preparatory class is higher by 116 than it was last year, and, in fact, higher than it has been for several years. As we have already noted, the number on roll is slightly higher; so also is the number of those that were present at our examinations. In regard to the children's attendance on these occasions we have very little to complain of. At forty-six schools every child on the roll was present. Some of these schools had comparatively high roll numbers—for example, Foxhill, 86; Granity, 84; and Wai-iti, 82. Hampden Street, with 138 on the roll, had only one absentee. The column of ages shows no marked differences except in Standard VI., where it is significant that the average age of those presented is lower, being only thirteen years nine months.

In the larger schools we have, as hitherto, interfered but little with the head teacher's classification, usually contenting ourselves with examining one or two classes fully, and forming an opinion of the work of the others in each of the pass subjects by sample. Our estimates usually agreed closely with those submitted to us. A similar course has been adopted with the intermediate schools, though in each of these two or more classes have been examined. In the small schools, controlled by sole teachers, we have invariably taken in detail all the classes. In each of the last two cases differences of opinion as to the qualifications of the children, though still occurring, were less marked than hitherto. The after-examination of the Inspector acts as a check upon careless or weak classification, and where there is any doubt affords the opportunity for a second and independent test, which is essential for arriving at a fair estimate. We certainly prefer that the teacher should hold a previous examination, as the result is very useful in enabling us to arrive at a satisfactory decision—one that is in some instances a compromise after consultation with the teacher. In spite of failure last year a number of pupils were promoted whose performance this time proved conclusively that such promotions were unwarranted.

In only eleven schools, all managed by sole teachers, have we had to adjudge the general work unsatisfactory. In seven of these the schools had suffered from a change of teachers. Such an alteration in the course of the school work must necessarily be a detriment; but it is by no means an excuse for all defects, and too much importance is attached to it, especially now that the incoming teacher has the right of reclassifying, if necessary. These disarrangements of the staff are much more frequent than one would suppose. In one group of twenty-five schools we found that no less than fourteen of the teachers had held their present positions less than two years.

We, as usual, append notes concerning the treatment that different subjects in the syllabus receive.

Reading.—The number of passes in this subject was much the same as last year, Standard VI. doing rather better, and Standard III. worse, than previously. On the whole, the general training given is good; the standard was, however, perceptibly lower in those few schools that employ only one reading-book. Among defects in pronunciation still prevalent in certain quarters, but by no means common, we may mention again the aspirate difficulty, particularly in connection with some of the Waimea schools, and the broadening of the vowel "i" until it resembles "oi." It may not be altogether out of place to suggest to some of our young teachers that for their own guidance a good pronouncing dictionary should always be at hand. We have noticed some teachers of experience, too, when reading dictation tests, so far forgetting themselves as to give to a word a forced syllabic pronunciation that, however advantageous for helping the pupil over a difficulty, is to be deprecated, if only on the ground that it is their duty to teach standard English. In the lower standard classes some children are not thoroughly broken of the habit of pointing to the words as they read. This practice tends to prevent the reader from acquiring facility in phrasing, which accomplishment should be attained even in the preparatory class. Since reading is the sluice through which the rich stores of the ages pass to irrigate and fertilise succeeding time, the love of it should be fostered in every possible way. Where classes are numerous silent reading might be given greater encouragement than at present. Again, as the reward of merit a capable and deserving pupil might be allowed to read to the class an interesting tale chosen by himself. The same course might well be adopted to relieve the quiet of the sewing-hour. Interest displayed by the teacher in the children's home reading is sometimes a powerful stimulus, and general intelligence may be developed and practice in reading secured by regularly questioning the children upon events of world-wide interest as recorded from day to day in the newspapers. We notice from the reports of other Inspectors that reading at sight is commonly required from the upper standard children, and it seems to us that extra tests of this nature might be regularly given to Standard VI. pupils. Mr. Petrie evidently considers a teacher untrained if he does not induce his pupils to attempt by syllabification to find out for themselves the approximate pronunciation of a new word. We note, also, that comprehension of the reading-matter in the form of meanings of words and explanations of phrases is tested by him on paper as well as orally. The Otago Inspectors recommend that as much as one hour a day be devoted to reading by each class, the time stated allowing for the study of the language and content of the lesson, for preparing the phrasing and emphasis, as well as for the oral reading and explaining of the teacher. On one point we are in full accord with them—namely, that "a child's success in the study of an arithmetical problem is largely conditioned by his knowledge of language, and that a wider and deeper study of the language and content of reading lessons would greatly aid him in his arithmetic, and also greatly increase his power of doing other kinds of intellectual work." These remarks have special force in regard to the treatment of synonyms. Much of what passes for explanation consists in the mere suggestion of a word more or less approximating the meaning of the word to be explained. The teacher should be on his guard against accepting in an offhand manner words nearly synonymous, for nothing is so befogging to the intellect of the child. The differences should be carefully elucidated. This forms an interesting study to children, who will often pursue it on

their own account, and appear to delight in discovering subtle divergencies of meaning. The child requires to be shown that the apparent synonym generally needs some limiting adjunct before it forms a complete explanation of the word discussed.

Spelling.—The Sixth were tested with extracts from previously unseen books, though the selected words were from prepared readers. The extra difficulty may account for the failures in this class being more numerous than usual. We intend to adopt the same course next year. The subject as a whole shows extraordinary results. The number of schools in which a class is specially commended for excellence is greater for this subject than for any other. Yet next to arithmetic as a pass subject it still presents the greatest difficulty to individual pupils, only 73 per cent. of those examined in Standards III. to VI. succeeding in passing the tests. Though it would thus appear that the inherent difficulties of the subject render general success impossible, we must confess to some disappointment with the treatment of the subject, especially when the work in higher examinations comes under review.

Writing.—Though this rarely receives high commendation it continues to be satisfactorily taught, the proportion of scholars that fail to qualify in this subject being relatively small. In some cases the formation of the letters calls for more attention, as also do the position of the body and the correct holding of the pen; but the chief fault is the lax supervision of the ordinary writing as distinguished from that done in the copy-book; this, we fear, is too common a failing. The child should be trained to write carefully at all times, and scribbling should never be tolerated. In the preparatory classes uniformity of ruling and more regular slope ought to be secured.

Composition.—Although the general work in composition was satisfactory, there were in the four higher standards fewer classes specially commended for this than for any other pass subject. This is partly due to the difficulty of the subject, owing on the one hand to the limited vocabulary, and on the other to the no less limited experience and consequent short range of ideas in the pupil. But there is also an apparent lack of method in the teaching which indicates some want in the training of our teachers. In many, especially of the country schools, the sole guide towards effectiveness in composition is the light of nature, with a benevolent teacher following up to point out where the full stops ought to be, or to indicate casual errors. In some, though happily few, cases the punctuation was absent. We wish to see a more strenuous attempt to teach this subject with a fuller use of the blackboard. The first stage would be a thorough inculcation of the simple sentence till the pupil has a perfectly clear notion of a complete thought, then the linking of two sentences into one, with illustrations of every possible link—the co-ordinating and subordinating conjunctions, the pronoun, the participle, the connective adverb, the gerund, &c. This work is often hampered by the lack of knowledge of grammatical nomenclature. In the Sixth Standard an acquaintance with technical expression much tends to brevity, yet even before the child knows the technical names of these connectives he can to some extent recognise their differences. When some degree of facility has been gained in the above, attention ought to be turned to the placement of words, phrases, and clauses, thus drawing in the principles of suspense, inversion, and climax, and *pari passu* with these lessons the idea of accuracy in the verbal expression of a thought, and also the conception of the logical connection of ideas, under the heads of contiguity, likeness and contrast, collocation and sequence. A clearer conception of the use of the paragraph would arise from these. The pupils of the Sixth Standard should also have some instruction in the matter of figures of speech, especially simile and metaphor. These are generally very interesting to the young, and a variety of illustration may be found in the reading-book. Concurrently with these lessons any tendency to slang or vulgarism of expression should be eradicated. Oral teaching might accompany the above to amplify and bring the lessons thoroughly home. The essays presented to us suffered frequently from a lack of detail. In this connection it may be affirmed that composition reflects mental vivacity as much as arithmetic or grammar, and that form of mental vivacity which shows itself in the power of grasping detail is capable of cultivation. Pictures might be shown for one minute, and then descriptions or suggested narratives written; or the children might be sent for a three-minutes run down a track, and then asked to detail facts, intuitions, and conclusions. When a pupil writes a good letter it may be made of general benefit if the teacher analyse it and note what gives it force: apt language, good use of connectives, picturesque use of figures of speech, happy effect of climax and consecution in thought, or dramatic introduction of detail. The letter should then be read to the class, and this substratum shown. The genius does not need these helps, but the mediocre will profit from them. We would not check even "fine writing" in a boy, but rather try to guide it into good channels. Often, indeed, has the "genial current" been frozen by a mistaken use of ridicule on the part of teachers gifted with a less fluent vocabulary than their pupils.

Arithmetic.—Considering how large a proportion of the school time is occupied in the teaching and practice of arithmetic, the results here again are somewhat disappointing. The number that qualified for promotion in Standards VI. and IV. is slightly and in Standard V. decidedly lower than in 1901, and yet many schools received special commendation for excellence in one class or another. In estimating passes we have, as hitherto, treated those that attempted lower standard work in this subject as failures. Since the number of these has increased this year—and many of them would, under the old regulations, have probably been presented for the lower standard in all subjects—the results would to some extent suffer by comparison with those of former years. The percentage of passes is as follows: 1902—Standard VI., 55; Standard V., 51; Standard IV., 64; Standard III., 76. 1901—Standard VI., 58; Standard V., 63; Standard IV., 67; Standard III., 76. In Standard V. the children evidently found the problems difficult; but it is remarkable that our four largest schools—Westport, Nelson Central, Toi Toi Valley, and Reefton—were less successful in this respect than the rest of the province. In Standard VI. neglect of preparation in the metric system was often evident. In some instances the junior classes are addicted to the use of the fingers or of strokes in adding, and in the preparatory classes the learning of subtraction tables,

which might be readily worked with those of addition, is very commonly neglected. From the last report of Mr. Lee we quote the following: "It is as true to-day as it was a quarter of a century ago that the frequent use of suitable mental exercises and the careful teaching of rapid and ready methods of reckoning are the surest way to success in the teaching of arithmetic, and such work calls forth the best energies of the most skilful teacher." A great fault in the higher classes is the failure to understand the reasons of the various arithmetical processes; at any rate, if they be understood, the pupils are rarely able to give expression to their knowledge in clear terms. Even in the recent pupil-teachers' examination we found that the majority did not understand the difference between ratio and proportion, ideas that underlie the whole of the working in higher arithmetic.

The following gives an estimate of the condition of the schools in regard to their treatment of the class and additional subjects:—Class subjects: Geography—good to excellent, 18; satisfactory, 50; fair to inferior, 52: drawing—good to excellent, 84; satisfactory, 27; fair to inferior, 9: grammar—good to excellent, 10; satisfactory, 35; fair to inferior, 70: history—good to excellent, 31; satisfactory, 43; fair to inferior, 38: science and object lessons—good to excellent, 42; satisfactory, 40; fair to inferior, 36: recitation—good to excellent, 52; satisfactory, 54; fair to inferior, 12: handwork—good to excellent, 3; satisfactory, 4; fair to inferior, 1. Additional subjects: Singing—good to excellent, 15; satisfactory, 15; fair to inferior, 90: needlework—good to excellent, 64; satisfactory, 22; fair to inferior, 11: drill—good to excellent, 19; satisfactory, 13; fair to inferior, 86.

Geography.—Since this was made a class instead of a pass subject in Standards III. to V. the number of pupils in Standard VI. that produce satisfactory papers has greatly diminished, nor can we find any indications of more efficient teaching in the lower standards; the map-drawing from memory has also deteriorated. Among the schools which are exceptions to this rule we particularly note Hillside, Churchill, Motupipi, Lower Takaka, and Ferntown. Singularly enough, this subject has for some few attractions, and hence special pains should be taken to make it interesting. General information and the acquisition of geographical knowledge would be encouraged by questioning children on facts learned from books of adventure. Such books are rarely altogether fictitious, and generally contain valuable information on the topography, fauna, flora, products, and ethnology of the countries concerned. Small sketch-maps might be kept on wall or blackboard depicting the salient features of any country—*e.g.*, Venezuela at present, which for the time is absorbing the world's attention—and on these maps places of interest might be marked as they come into prominence. No special devices should be required to make physical geography an interesting study, and yet in this section weakness is very commonly betrayed.

Drawing from the flat is usually well and neatly done, but model-drawing, though improving, is still weak, and Fifth Standard pupils are not always trained to construct their own scales. The lower standard books require both ruled and freehand drawings, yet the directions are at times unheeded, and the pupil obtains little or no practice in either the one or the other branch. This, even though it may not be the result of weak discipline, we consider a very serious defect, as the course is intended to combine manual dexterity and facility in the use of instruments with the training of the eye. We have long felt the want of proper instruction for our teachers in certain branches of drawing, and particularly wish to see established classes of instruction in model, free-arm blackboard, and brush drawing.

Grammar, though still far from good, shows decided improvement. Many head teachers, especially those in larger schools, need to be reminded that the granting of a pass is made conditional on giving a satisfactory amount of attention to class subjects.

History, so far as is required by the syllabus, is satisfactorily taught, but some teachers have very peculiar notions as to what constitutes an important event. We rather question whether better training is likely to be produced under the present system than would be obtained by using a simple Historical Reader.

Science, so far as can be expected considering the almost total want of apparatus, is very satisfactorily taught.

Ambulance-work, a very useful study which we would like to see general, has been very successfully attempted by some of those teachers who recently received a course of training.

Recitation is usually well done, though dramatic force might be further cultivated both in tone and gesture. The only common fault in rendering verse is a tendency to "race," a failing that sometimes also appears in the reading.

Singing and drill, though taught a little more generally, are too often neglected. In the one case eighty-five schools, and in the other sixty-six, have as yet made no attempt to give instruction, and where sole teachers are employed the exigencies of a lengthened syllabus have afforded a reasonable excuse for taking up as few extra as possible. In the case of singing many of our teachers through defects of ear and voice are unable to act as instructors, but in such schools as have two teachers the subject is often needlessly neglected, and in staffing these and larger schools prominence should be given to this valuable branch of instruction. The new regulations for public-school cadet corps provide, amongst other things, for a capitation grant of 2s. 6d. per annum, with a small supply of miniature rifles and cartridges for target practice. These allowances should increase the popularity of the corps, and greatly extend the value of the training imparted. Drill as a means of education is greatly undervalued, and the meaning of the terms is just as commonly misunderstood. In so far as it is only military it has a high disciplinary value in training to habits of order, promptitude, and strict obedience. The same term, however, includes all physical exercises taught in the school course. In the curriculum of a well-equipped secondary school, military drill, field athletics, gymnastics, swimming, and games such as cricket, football, tennis, fives, hockey, &c., play no unimportant part. As those under our supervision are merely day-schools, the children, especially in the country, have little or no time after hours to devote to similar pursuits, and as a

rule but little encouragement in the shape of apparatus. The school drill then represents almost all that they directly receive from the teacher or school in the way of physical culture—all that goes to make the *corpus sanum*. The ancients had clear ideas on the value of body training, and our modern Sandows are a living protest against the tendency of ages to cultivate the intellectual at the expense of the physical. Recent legislation makes physical drill compulsory for all girls as well as boys that are over the age of eight years. The Department has taken steps to have the teachers instructed, and we hope that in future our teachers, who we know have at heart the general development of their charges, will now devote attention to the physical as well as to the intellectual and moral. Among the signs of the times it may be noted that Cecil Rhodes, among the conditions affecting his famous scholarship bequests, in which we hope some of our scholars may yet be interested, attaches a very high value to physical efficiency.

The schools that presented some form of handwork for examination were very few in number, but we consider the work satisfactory so far as it has been attempted. The most important of our school technical classes were those for cookery conducted by Miss M. Tendall at Reefton, Westport, and Nelson. We commend to the notice of our teachers some useful hints by the North Canterbury Inspectors, in their report for 1901, upon the value of handwork, especially in correlation with other subjects of the syllabus, such as science, arithmetic, geography, history, and drawing. By the Manual and Technical Instruction Act of 1902 school classes may now, if desired, be carried on after school hours, so that one of the chief difficulties in introducing a fresh subject—the necessary shortening of the school time for the ordinary curriculum—has thus been removed.

During the year instruction classes for teachers in plasticine modelling, ambulance, woodwork, cookery, physics, and drill have been carried on. Sewing in schools managed by sole male teachers now come under the technical regulations. We would be pleased to see singing receive similar encouragement.

In addition to new teachers' certificate regulations, we understand that the Inspector-General has in hand a scheme for the establishment of a training-college that would greatly benefit districts such as ours, for which no provision of this nature has yet been made. As the number of pupil-teachers is now so reduced, a greater proportion than formerly of our teachers must enter the service through small country schools. Being in remote parts, their isolation places them at a great disadvantage in the matter of training and instruction even when compared with pupil-teachers. A colonial training college cannot fulfil its high mission unless the interests of this class are considered. Promising sole teachers should after two or three years' service receive the same advantages as pupil-teachers, and in the form perhaps of scholarships obtain free instruction with board at the training college. We hope that to make the scheme complete the authorities will yet see their way to establish the proposed chair of pedagogy at Victoria College.

Three district high schools—Westport, Motueka, and Reefton—have now been established, and the secondary classes were all at work during the last quarter of the year, the pupils numbering respectively fifty-three, forty-three, and thirty-two. The two first mentioned were examined by us, and reports showing very satisfactory progress have been duly laid before you. The secondary work of the third school was not begun until after the examination of the primary division. The establishment of these classes and of those undertaking manual and technical work has added considerably to our duties.

The close of the year marked another great advance in educational matters, one that linked more closely the bonds between primary and secondary education. New regulations were announced providing free tuition at Nelson College, among other secondary schools of the colony, for all pupils that had passed the Sixth Standard examination and were under fourteen years of age on the 31st December. This practically confers on Nelson City the advantages of a district high school. At least sixty-five scholars this year will be able to avail themselves of this great privilege. The majority of children—in fact, all except those that are out of reach of high school or college—have now a good prospect of free secondary education. The way to the university has yet to be cleared before we realise the ideal of free education from the alphabet to the degree. The rearrangement of the Nelson City schools, in order to make them comply with the terms of the colonial scale, has led to considerable discussion. As a compromise between the views of the Board and those of the local Committee an arrangement for the present year has been agreed upon. The effect is to make as little alteration as possible, to retain as hitherto separate boys' and girls' schools for the higher standard children, and to unite the four so-called infant-schools into two groups. We think that in the interests of education further amalgamation should have been made. The schools are too large and too scattered to be placed under one head, so that the simple and natural outcome—two groups of mixed schools, each under a capable headmaster—would, we consider, insure effective supervision throughout all classes, and conduce greatly to more uniform methods of working and improved efficiency.

Suitable accommodation for the secondary pupils at Reefton High School has yet to be provided. Other pressing building requirements of the district are, we consider, those in connection with schools in which two teachers are compelled to work in the same room. Additional rooms are urgently needed at Millerton, Coal Creek, and Dovedale. At Foxhill, Spring Grove, and Lower Takaka the difficulty is partly overcome by the use of a side-room for some of the oral lessons, but these arrangements are not entirely satisfactory.

As yet neither the half-time system nor the conveyance to centres of children from outlying parts has had a practical trial in this district. These expedients might remove some of the difficulties at present experienced in the way of efficiently staffing our small schools.

The Department has, we are pleased to see, made some provision for relieving teachers when incapacitated through illness. Relief of another kind will shortly, we hope, be provided for the teachers of small schools when the new syllabus promised in the last report of the Minister of Education is issued. To fulfil expectations the number of subjects obligatory upon a sole teacher must be considerably reduced.

The very general improvements recently effected in their lot by the adoption of the colonial scale of salaries and other measures, with the expected adoption of a superannuation scheme in the near future, have considerably brightened the prospects of the members of the teaching profession, who are deservedly entitled to the nation's gratitude.

We have, &c.,
G. A. HARKNESS, M.A.,
D. A. STRACHAN, M.A., } Inspectors.

The Chairman, Education Board, Nelson.

GREY.

SIR,— Education Office, Greymouth, 18th March, 1903.

I have the honour to present the following report on the schools of the Grey Education District.

The schools of the district were inspected by my predecessor about the middle of the year. On the 1st October I took up my duties as Inspector under your Board, and my report will therefore refer only to the examinations of the schools and the impressions formed during a somewhat hurried visit.

Thirty-one primary schools, three Catholic schools, the secondary class of the Greymouth District High School, scholarship candidates, and pupil-teachers were all examined.

The following table gives the general results of the public schools:—

Classes.	Number on Roll.	Present at Inspector's Annual Visit.	Passed.	Average Age of the Pupils in each Class.
				Yrs. mos.
Standard VII.	72	56	...	14 3
" VI.	128	120	93	14 0
" V.	151	132	122	13 1
" IV.	188	168	146	12 0
" III.	170	159	145	10 9
" II.	174	161	157	9 11
" I.	175	165	141	8 7
Preparatory	545	411	...	6 8
Totals ...	1,603	1,372	804	11 2*

* Mean of average age.

In the three Catohlic schools examined the roll number was 268; 241 were present at the examination; and 137 passed.

At the outset I may say that I was disappointed with the numbers present on examination day. In several cases, a few days before my visit, measles were prevalent in the school districts, and consequently many pupils were absent. Still, there were schools where no satisfactory explanation was forthcoming. Where teachers and pupils have honestly worked throughout the year they should not fear the visit of an Inspector. Rather, they should strive to convince him that their work has been well and thoroughly done—that another good report has been secured for the school by their united efforts.

The number of times the various schools were opened was far too small, and an improvement in this direction must be effected. The number of regular holidays granted by the Board is not excessive; in fact, I think a longer holiday could reasonably be granted at midsummer. Perhaps then there would be less desire to have so many odd holidays throughout the year. After making all allowance for the wet days, on which the children of some of our country schools cannot possibly get to school, I am convinced that every school should be opened at least four hundred times throughout the year, and satisfactory explanation should be forthcoming in every case where that number has not been reached. Some of the schools of Westland for the past year were opened over four hundred and forty times. Teachers must recognise the advantage of continuous and regular instruction.

In a district such as this, where there is a number of small schools, the salaries appertaining to the position of teacher must be so small that trained teachers cannot be obtained. Before long the Board will have to face the question of how to keep these small schools open at all. One solution of the difficulty is obtained where an elder pupil gets so far advanced as to be able to instruct the juniors. It certainly will not pay a girl to reside away from home on a salary of £20 or £25 a year with no prospect of an increase. Several of these small schools do very good work. True, they do not attempt the whole syllabus, nor do I think they should be asked to do so. If good work is shown in what may reasonably be called the more important subjects an Inspector is usually satisfied. But in a school that is well staffed there should be no omission. Indeed, teachers should particularly remember that "all the subjects must receive a due measure of attention, and the neglect of any one of them will be regarded as highly censurable."

The terms "pass" and "class" subjects are very misleading, and should be abolished. Many teachers attach an undue importance to the former, and almost neglect the latter. If the education of the child were considered, and not the fact that he must secure a "pass," this would

not be the case. We should then find that grammar and composition would be taught regularly side by side; that the geography of Standard VI. would not be so much more advanced than that of Standard V.

The English pass subjects are the best taught. Of these the results in reading are the most disappointing. Until supplementary reading matter is provided fluent reading will not be the rule. In those schools where two readers have been used the results are very marked. The reading of the preparatory class of the Greymouth District High School was very good, much better than that heard in Standards I. and II. of some of the country schools. Pattern reading and careful correction by the teacher and plenty of practice by the pupil should go a long way to remedy a very marked defect.

Spelling is the best taught subject of the syllabus. More attention to the spelling of common words that the pupil uses would be more practical than the learning how to spell long uncommon words that he may not meet again in his lifetime. One often finds the words of the spelling test all correct, while the composition exercise has many errors.

After examining the writing of all the schools I am convinced that many of our teachers do not attempt to teach the subject at all, and yet no subject of the school course will so well repay the teacher for his labour. Too often the pupils are set to write while the teacher is engaged in other work. Blackboard explanation, careful pointing out of errors to the individual, and strict supervision must produce correct, if not graceful, writing. A copy written by the teacher on the pupil's slate or book is often more helpful than one set on the blackboard.

When we consider that a quarter of the school day is taken up by arithmetic the results ought to be better than they are. Mental work, and plenty of it, will do for the pupil what slate work will never do. Tables are well attended to in the lower standards, but in the upper standards they are often neglected. Yet, surely for every standard they are all important. A simple Fourth Standard question in reduction would present difficulty to many a Sixth Standard pupil. Until Standard VI. syllabus is very much reduced teachers will complain that the time for revision is very limited.

Of the class subjects grammar is the most disappointing. When teachers recognise that it is one of the most important educational subjects we shall have better work. As many of our pupils now pass to the secondary class, where the English work is most important, it behoves all to see that the foundations of English grammar are well and truly laid.

Why do our teachers choose as subjects for object lessons the most out-of-the-way things? They are not meant to be information lessons: the object is rather that the child should see or discover for itself, and then tell the teacher in its own words what it has seen. Thus the foundation is being laid for composition. My advice is, choose common objects, and let the children know they have eyes to see and hands to handle.

If in this short report I have shown defects rather than merits, it is because, if we wish to advance, we must look upon the defects and strive to correct them. During my examination round I quietly pointed out the weaknesses to many of the teachers, all of whom were thankful for my criticism. On my inspection visit I hope to be of assistance to many of the younger teachers, especially those in the more isolated places. That the Board has in its service many earnest, conscientious, and industrious teachers I am fully convinced.

I have, &c.,

The Chairman, Education Board, Greymouth. H. Smith, B.A., Inspector.

WESTLAND.

Sir,— Education Office, Hokitika, 26th January, 1903.

I have the honour to present the following report on the schools of the district for the year 1902:—

The primary schools, numbering thirty-five, were duly examined, also the secondary class of the Hokitika District High School, five Catholic schools, candidates for scholarships, and pupil-teachers. With the exception of those of South Westland, each of the public schools of the district were visited at least once for the purposes of inspection.

The following table supplies information regarding the number of pupils and of promotions in connection with the examination of the public schools:—

Summary of Pass Results.

Classes.	Total Roll.	Present at Inspector's Annual Visit.	Passed.	Average Age of Pupils in each Class.
				Yrs. mos.
Standard VII.	45	39	...	14 6
" VI.	91	87	71	13 9
" V.	104	100	90	13 1
" IV.	151	147	108	12 0
" III.	121	119	103	11 0
" II.	118	114	98	9 9
" I.	119	115	111	9 0
Preparatory	337	320	...	6 5
Totals ...	1,086	1,041	581	11 2*

* Mean of average age.

The following information is added to that supplied by the table: The number of pupils absent at the Inspector's examination was reduced in 1902 to 4 per cent., a proportion less than half that of the previous year. The percentage of pupils in the various classes compared with the total rolls is: Standard VII., 4·1; Standard VI., 8·4; Standard V., 9·6; Standard IV., 13·9; Standard III., 11·1; Standard II., 10·9; Standard I., 10·9; Preparatory, 31. The percentage of the pupils in Standards I. to VI. from whom promotion was withheld is 14·8, a decrease of 3·2 from that of the previous year. The number of pupils presented in a lower class in arithmetic is sixteen, and in a higher class three. Of the 337 pupils in the preparatory classes, thirty-eight were over eight years of age, and satisfactory reasons were usually given for the retention of such pupils in those classes.

In the previous year's report reference was made to the effect of adverse conditions on the work of the schools. An improvement in the length of the actual school year produced by a return to the normal number of holidays has especially provided an opportunity to recover usual efficiency, and in a few schools, including one or two of the larger ones, a distinct advance has been made in comparison with the results of several previous years.

While the record for the year is thus in many respects encouraging, there is reason to fear that there will continue to be an increase in the difficulty experienced in maintaining a good standard of ability in the staffs of the smaller schools. This change of conditions is due to the increasing scarcity of certificated female teachers, caused by the requirements of the new Act relating to staffs and salaries, and by the opening of numerous schools in certain districts of the North Island. During the past year eight certificated teachers have left the district to accept positions in other parts of the colony, and in several instances their places were of necessity filled by teachers without the required qualifications. To further emphasize the probable decrease in efficiency of the staffs, it may be added that, while during the year applications were invited in connection with fourteen positions as sole teachers or assistants, the salaries ranging from £56 with residence to £120, there were out of a total of forty-nine applicants only sixteen in possession of certificates, and on six occasions all the applicants were uncertificated. Of the pupil-teachers of the district only about two complete their course each year, and it is necessary in filling the numerous vacancies to depend largely on candidates without experience or special attainments. As the causes of the scarcity of female teachers in the colony are largely temporary, some relief might be granted by the acceptance, during a limited period, of voluntary service in public schools, under suitable regulations, as part of the qualification for a certificate. The Board has during the year had several applications from pupils that have passed the Sixth Standard to be allowed to act as voluntary assistants. The recompense for such service is instruction and training by the head teacher, and experience is gained that is of value to the small schools that are subsequently placed under the tuition of these probationers, who would be encouraged to pursue the preliminary course with more eagerness if by that means they could qualify for a certificate. This temporary arrangement would assist to maintain a supply of duly qualified teachers.

The classification of the pupils from the preparatory classes to the Fifth Standard, where that duty has been performed by the teachers, was carried out with care and discretion. There is, perhaps, a tendency in some cases to overstrictness produced by a laudable desire to maintain or elevate the standard of efficiency of the schools, but in no instance was there displayed a desire to promote unduly pupils that were not sufficiently prepared. The teachers in charge of a majority of schools, however, prefer to leave the duties of classification to the Inspector, and I have had to insist on the examination of every school by the teacher immediately before the annual examination, and on the presentation of the records of such preliminary test, even where the final classification according to standards is omitted. The information thus supplied is frequently of use to the Inspector, and a comparison of results is instructive to many of the teachers. It has also been necessary to remind teachers of some schools that to supply an estimate of the regularity and completeness with which the work of the school year has been carried on there must be preserved the exercises of the pupils duly dated, a syllabus of the course of instruction recorded twice each quarter, and the results of the teachers' examinations. Such records, further, enable a teacher taking charge of a school to become acquainted more readily with the work done under previous management.

The English subjects of the course of instruction have been treated more thoroughly in the larger schools than during previous years. Reading, spelling, composition, and grammar are now prepared in a manner that in general is satisfactory. In view of the extension of secondary education that will follow the grant of free tuition, it is pleasing to find that the subjects that must form the basis of most of the work of secondary schools are receiving due attention from the pupils from whom the students of such schools are drawn. The chief criticism that suggests itself in connection with the instruction in these branches of the school course is the need of greater attention to correlation among them. Being to an unnecessary extent separated in the teachers' time-tables, they are regarded as unconnected subjects, and the advantage of the treatment of English as one object of study, though viewed from different aspects, is lost. Orthography and inflection; the explanation of words and phrases; the relation of these to each other in the sentence; the arrangement of ideas by paragraphs and in proper order—all should receive attention in accordance with a general and well-devised scheme. Each should be the subject of at least occasional reference in lessons in reading and composition, and several in instruction in spelling and grammar, although the emphasis in the various exercises may be placed on different points. Composition especially should be regarded as an exercise in reproduction of methods studied in connection with the other branches. For this purpose good methods of oral answering in all classes, the paraphrase of passages, and rewriting of reading lessons form valuable aids in acquiring a vocabulary and the power of expression in the written form.

Arithmetic is the individual subject occupying most time, and the one to which most mental effort is devoted. It is certain, however, that its educational value is reduced by the unnecessary

multiplication of rules, and it is a matter of regret that a revision of the syllabus has not yet been found feasible. Teachers at present are so engaged with the task of accomplishing instruction in the full course that they have not time to train the pupils in the mental alertness and careful reasoning that are the most important educational results of good teaching in arithmetic. Pupils are frequently able to work by stereotyped methods exercises apparently more difficult, while at the same time they fail to satisfy easy mental tests on the elementary processes on which such rules are based. A number of teachers succeed under the present conditions, but in no schools does mental arithmetic, with the quick operation of compound addition and other elementary rules, equal in results those of the ordinary tests. This is probably the experience in every district in the colony, and it must be recorded that under the conditions imposed the schools of this district are in general very successful in the preparation of this subject. A few teachers, however, require to change their plan of instruction. These adopt what may be called the "test" method, and depend on the correction of the working of long lists of sums that the pupil should not be allowed to attempt without a longer previous course of study. This results naturally in mental confusion and dishonest practices. Such teachers would find that eventually the employment of demonstration, mental drill, and blackboard exercises secures satisfactory results with greater economy of time.

Of the class subjects geography and grammar have been tested by the requirement of written exercises as fully as the pass subjects. While the instruction in geography has not quite reached the standard of previous years, the work presented in grammar in the larger schools showed an advance that is encouraging. The teachers have been urged to greatly simplify the course in the latter subject, while making the preparation thorough. It may at once be stated that no school is in a satisfactory state of efficiency if grammar is neglected. Elementary science receives a very commendable amount of attention in several schools; it is found very difficult, however, to induce the teachers of the majority of the small schools to regard this subject as consisting not of the imparting of information, but of the training of the pupils in observation and clearness of thought by means of the study of real objects and of the natural phenomena existing in their surroundings. The remaining class subjects are treated generally with a completeness that is satisfactory in view of the conditions in the respective schools. Handwork especially has formed a prominent part of the course of the junior division of eleven of the larger schools, being confined in most cases to the preparatory classes and the First Standard. The branches adopted have been chiefly modelling in plasticine and paper folding and cutting. In this subject, as in science, it is sometimes necessary to emphasize the need of regarding the instruction as a means of training, the manner of performing the exercises being more important than the material results.

Of the additional subjects needlework forms part of the course of practically all schools. Instruction in singing and drill is seldom given in schools of less than twenty pupils. All these subjects are very efficiently taught in the larger schools, although in singing the number of schools in which attention is given to tone and sight reading is very small. In the three schools where school cadet corps have been formed the instruction is of very good quality, and in these and others good physical training is given to both boys and girls.

With regard to the Catholic schools of the district the notes of last year may be repeated. The instruction in pass subjects has been satisfactory, while the average results in the remaining subjects are only fair. In one or two schools the latter branches have been greatly neglected. For the informatfon of the teachers of these and of the public schools attention is drawn to the requirement of the regulations—viz., that to pass in the four higher standards a pupil must have "received regular instruction in the class subjects."

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

NORTH CANTERBURY.

Sir,— Christchurch, 30th January, 1903.

We have the honour to present our annual inspection report on the schools of the North Canterbury District for the year 1902.

During the year the customary routine has been pursued, the Inspectors' time, except for the month of February, being fully occupied in the inspection and examination of schools, the examination of pupil-teachers and scholarship candidates, and in the consideration of such matters of reference as fall to our duty in the ordinary course.

The usual summary in regard to the schools is appended.

Examination.—Of the 207 schools in operation during the year 205 were examined, the two omitted being those opened in the course of the year. In the schools examined 19,749 children were enrolled at the date of examination, and of this number 18,430 were present—207 in Standard VII., 12,789 in classes Standards VI. to I., and 5,434 in the preparatory division. Of the examinees in Standards VI. to I., 10,767 passed their respective standards on either the Inspector's or the head teacher's estimate of their claims. The figures throughout are closely parallel with the corresponding figures of the previous year, but on the whole show a slight decline. Increases are observed in Standards VII., VI., IV., and I., and in preparatory (in the last three very slight), while a reduction is found in Standards V., III., and II., amounting to a roll total of 248, the net decrease on the whole being ninety-three.

On the general results there is little comment to make; the attainments observed are much on a line with those of earlier date, though the readier promotion now granted shows a definite weakening influence at the Fifth Standard stage in admitting pupils of insufficient mental training, whose future preparation for a Sixth Standard certificate would be a matter of difficulty. In the teachers' estimates of their pupils' attainments, as disclosed in the schedules presented, there are, without

doubt, a few instances—occurring chiefly in very small schools—where unjustifiably sanguine views are found to prevail; but on the whole the present privileges in this respect are exercised with commendable honesty and due discretion, and in many cases the standard adopted represents a higher ideal than the Inspector would himself feel justified in seeking to establish. Of a desire for greater freedom of classification in subjects than the present conditions encourage we have not seen any particular indications in this district, and we do not think that parents would relish a further material change, made with this object in view, in the form of examination adopted. But without entering into any discussion on the matter, we may say that, were the Fourth Standard the standard of exemption, as with the age limit at fourteen some of us are inclined to think should still be the case, we should be quite satisfied to see the schedule estimates applied only to the Second, Fourth, and Sixth classes—a reduction which would leave sufficient indications of the general progress of the pupils to remove any fears of unsoundness.

Inspection.—The inspection of schools takes approximately one-third of our time, and, so far as the school course is concerned, is mainly directed to the observation of methods. In these we find a very general informity, the variation consisting more in the different degrees of skill with which they are applied than in any striking evidences of original departures marking the teacher's individuality. To this kind of informity, whether it is viewed as a merit or a defect, the system of examination has no doubt largely contributed; but even with the teacher's present options examination need not prove a bar to a material extension of characteristic developments, and still less should it do so with an improved scheme and the further option in the selection of programmes of work which we hope to see embodied in the long-looked-for revision of the syllabus. The extension of manual methods, as indicated in our last report, so far as the apparatus at the disposal of the teacher and general conveniences will permit, marks the line of most promise in this direction; but teachers of good ideals may also find scope for improvement on other lines to which manual methods are less applicable. A few observations on the English subjects may prove suggestive.

English Subjects.—The reading of our schools is improving with the spread of more liberal ideas of the scope and value of the exercise; but to get the best results at the higher stages two things are necessary—one without and one within the teacher's present option. So far he has found himself practically tied down to the use of one or perhaps two text-books, the greater or less difficulty of which in regard to spelling bulks largely in his choice, and he has little encouragement to venture on a wider field of practice which would make the reading lesson more interesting and fruitful. It is probably a wiser counsel of the English Code which now severs the intimate connection of the reading-book with the teaching of spelling, and prescribes for the latter feature a special course of instruction founded in part on a word-building basis. Though in unskilful hands the severance involves greater danger of poor results, the prospective advantages of a new departure in this direction seems to us to give sufficient warrant for the experiment. So long as inability to spell correctly is looked on as a sign of neglected education, we must have good spelling in our schools; and if good spelling can be obtained without difficulty on intelligent methods, let us by all means adopt them. No doubt the spelling of our tongue is so far anomalous as to afford ground for the remark that spoken and written English are different languages; but there is sufficient of law and order in English spelling to make systematic instruction profitable, and the anomalous forms within the range of the children's ordinary vocabulary are not too numerous to be learnt separately. To good spelling on this basis good teaching of reading, requiring clear and distinct articulation, would materially contribute; practice in transcription would be relied on as an important aid; word-building would supply the regular formations with the significance of prefixes, affixes, and inflectional terminations; and word-grouping, with the making of sentences involving the use of contrasted forms, and the application of a few simple well-recognised rules, would practically complete the scheme.

The other departure to which we refer in connection with reading concerns the use of silent reading. Much of the time spent by the better members of an upper class in listening to the efforts of his poorer class-mates and the teacher's corrections would be in many cases far more profitably employed in reading in silence a few pages of fresh matter, the knowledge and industry of the pupils being tested at the close of the lesson by a few minutes' questioning on the facts or incidents forming the subject of the passage. The value of such practice must be obvious, for it encourages intelligent reading, promotes self-reliance—a quality apt to prove deficient where, as in most large classes, the teacher does so much—and it leads the pupil to begin in his school days what he must do for himself afterwards. The suggestion is not original; but it is one that commends itself not only to teachers, but to the Inspector, as indicating a means of profitably varying his methods of testing progress and intelligence.

The last but not least important subject of the English teaching with which we wish to deal —composition—is admittedly the subject which presents most difficulty in the elementary school. The narrow experience of the children, their poverty of ideas and vocabulary, the fact that only a few have acquired reading habits or have the advantage of hearing correct English spoken outside the class-room, must always be obstacles to good results in the subject. If the child comes from a good home the teacher's task is comparatively easy; if, on the other hand, the environment be unfavourable, all the resources of the teacher's skill and experience must be brought into play, and then the result will depend as much on his method of treating other subjects of the school course—*e.g.*, reading—as on the methods directly bearing on the composition itself. In this connection we have already had occasion to remark on the value of the use of oral composition, and to suggest to teachers the fuller employment of this aid to success, especially in the earlier stages. Conversational lessons, encouraging the use of language, are frequently found on the programme of our infant departments, and we can recall quite a number of cases in which a feature of the school instruction is a careful training in question and answer, which requires that every request and every statement made by a child to the teacher shall take the form of a sentence. Without strain-

ing after undue formality, we wish the practice were more general; but there is a good deal more that may be done. The children may, for instance, be required frequently to give oral accounts of something they have read or seen or learnt about in class, or where a story is read or told for purposes of reproduction an oral attempt, subject to class criticism and discussion, may well precede the written effort.

The influence of a sound training in grammar, treated with a view to its bearing on composition, is apt nowadays to be overlooked amid all the discussion on manual subjects, and we wish to emphasize its importance. Good grammar, it should hardly be necessary to say, can never produce good composition, but composition can scarcely be taught without a knowledge of grammar; it is composition's faithful handmaid, and as such should take its proper place among the subjects required for a Sixth Standard certificate. Geography might well give way to it. We should then have something like the Merit Certificate of the Scotch Code, which, we are informed, is becoming increasingly popular among Scotch pupils as the seal of their primary education and the token of admission to classes of the advanced stage. One obvious advantage of increasing value would be that pupils wishing to continue their education at a high school would have a better chance of starting another language on fair terms when they had already secured some acquaintance with the structure of their own. Geography itself would benefit by the change —in the encouragement of improved methods, in the introduction of a better type of matter and the increased possibilities of varied development, and (no small gain) in the partial or complete abolition of that "abomination," the petty text-book, with its snippets of information, which is now the well-nigh universal instrument of geographical teaching.

Handwork.—The progress made in handwork during the year is chiefly confined to the lower classes, the upper departments in general awaiting the issue of a revised syllabus and the adoption of some definite scheme of organization before venturing on a new departure. From our reports we find that clay-modelling is practised in thirty-nine schools or departments, brush drawing in forty-three, paper-folding in fifty-six, and other exercises of the ordinary kindergarten type—stick-laying, mat-weaving, peaswork, &c.—in fifty-nine. A few exceptional forms of occupation in basket-weaving and wire-work are also included.

The interest taken by the lady teachers in qualifying themselves to give instruction in occupations of the kind is beyond all praise. Large numbers of them have throughout the year given up their Saturdays to the work of preparation. Some hundred and fifty teachers are to be found attending brush drawing or other classes at the School of Art; Saturday classes in exercises of various forms have been in regular operation at the Normal School under the instruction of the head infant mistress; and similar classes, conducted in Ashburton by the infant mistress of the West Christchurch School and the mistress of the Ashburton Borough School, have entailed on the teachers even greater sacrifices, some coming regularly distances of fifteen and twenty miles to attend them. In the last two cases we have had an opportunity of inspecting the work done by way of examination at the close of the course, and could not but be greatly struck with the remarkable advance shown in a majority of the specimens. In the middle division of the schools a few examples of cardboard-modelling and, in the upper division, of chip-carving are the chief representatives of handwork as taught by teachers in school time. To these is to be added, however, the vastly more important work done in several centres in woodwork and cooking under the direction of specially qualified instructors. Ashburton as a woodwork centre has proved notably successful, owing largely to the interest taken by the neighbouring head masters in the work, and their ready co-operation in seeing to the execution of the necessary drawings and otherwise assisting. In Christchurch the cooking classes at the School of Domestic Instruction, which continue to be attended by large numbers from the city and suburban schools, excite most enthusiasm, and are evidently serving a very useful purpose. Many lady teachers are now qualified by attendance at cooking classes to act as assistant instructors, and when the special organization for this type of work is finally settled their services should prove very valuable.

As to the manner in which the requirements of the Act dealing with the question of physical drill in public and Native schools have been carried out in this district, we have the honour to lay before the Board the following statement:—

In nearly all the schools the subject of drill in some form or other receives due recognition, our reports showing that it is omitted only in some seventeen instances throughout the district, the omission being confined in the main to small aided schools, or to schools in sole charge of a mistress. Personally, it is to us a source of much gratification to note the efficient manner in which, in all the larger schools, the subjects both of physical and military drill are at present being treated. The instruction is given mainly by junior certificated members of the teaching staff who have themselves been trained by those officers of the Defence Department whose services were for some time freely placed at the Board's disposal, and whose hearty efforts have done much to create a healthy interest in the subject. The knowledge and experience possessed by a considerable number of the Board's teachers who are attached to various Volunteer corps have also been important factors in establishing all forms of drill on the present footing of unquestionable efficiency.

Apart from the question of military drill, we note that physical exercises based on the programme drawn up by the North Canterbury Public Schools Athletic Association have been taken up with much enthusiasm and with splendid success. The effective displays made by the girls of various schools have done much to awaken an interest in this form of training even in the most remote corners of the district, where, at our annual visits, we find wand or other exercises constituting a pleasing and a beneficial feature of the school routine.

We beg to state that in omitting to "make orders for fixing the times which shall be appointed and set apart for instructing boys and girls in physical drill" the Board has, in our opinion, exercised a wise forbearance, leaving the subject to be provided for as the circumstances of each school may best permit, and tacitly accepting its omission where for a time some special obstacle

may justify its neglect. The group of seventeen small schools referred to above may be expected to diminish from year to year as the teachers gradually become more familiar with the nature of the exercises recommended.

Supply of Teachers.—During the year the matter of greatest moment in our educational sphere has been the introduction of the colonial scale. The staffing under the scale accepted, as stated by the Inspector-General before the Royal Commission on the subject, is almost identical with the North Canterbury scale previously in use—less liberal at an average of eighty-one than that scale in its best form, and somewhat more liberal in the case of suburban schools with an attendance of four or five hundred. The new principle has consequently been applied here with less friction than in other educational districts. But the change brings in its train an issue of the gravest import to our local interests—an issue not altogether unforeseen, but none the less alarming. Salaries being now identical for similar attendances all over New Zealand, we are experiencing a constant draining-away of the most vigorous young men of our service, who are able to obtain better emoluments in more "needy" districts, and see elsewhere a better prospect of more rapid and surer promotion. During the early part of the year nineteen men were lost to us from this cause, and subsequent withdrawals, making a total of twenty-seven for the year, have now reduced us to sore straits in making appointments. All the flotsam and jetsam of the past twenty years, who two years ago could never have hoped to obtain employment from us, have at some time or other during the year been employed by the Board under temporary or permanent engagement. The loss sustained is almost entirely confined to men, and these of a type that we could ill spare. It is not altogether a new thing for a certain number of our young teachers to seek employment elsewhere, but the tendency is now so pronounced that we stand a good chance of not retaining in North Canterbury a single one of the young men whom we are at considerable sacrifice in training. Of the fifteen male students trained at the Normal School in 1900, only five remain with us; nine (and these by no means the least promising) have preferred to accept service elsewhere, mostly in Wellington and Hawke's Bay; and one has found a business career more attractive. What steps may be taken to counteract the tendency, or what inducements may be held out to retain men in our service, it is for those in authority to consider; and we trust the Board will seize every opportunity that the colonial scale presents, or that its own arrangements make possible, to secure so desirable an object.

The supply of pupil-teachers and trainees furnishes a cognate topic, on which the question of inducements has also an important bearing. Our present supply is short, and fewer pupils, and more particularly fewer boys, are year by year coming forward as candidates for apprenticeship. Happily we have here a remedy ready to our hand in a modification of the existing terms of service. There must be a number of young people of good standing—old scholarship-holders and matriculated students—who would only be too glad to serve an apprenticeship of two, or possibly three, years, and whose admission would greatly enrich the profession in ability and scholarship. That there are quite a number of matriculated students who are willing to serve for the full term of four years we have already ample evidence in the fact that nine of the twenty-seven nominally first-year pupil-teachers now on the roll take status in examination as third-year students. No better class of pupil-teacher could be desired, and if we can secure more of the same type by any reasonable concessions there are strong grounds for holding out the inducement. The device has been tried before and has failed, because of the reluctance of headmasters to recommend candidates entitled to the shorter services; but the present altered conditions are all in favour of the stronger claims, and the common good demands their recognition.

Whether the remedy gives promise of success or not, we have still another resource in the offer of training advantages (without pupil-teacher service) to those who seem specially qualified to profit by them, and that steps have already been taken by the Board in this direction affords us gratification. Teachers of ability, but limited experience, we can always turn into valuable public servants. Even two visits a year from an Inspector afford a training of profit.

We have, &c.,

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

The Chairman, Education Board, Christchurch.

Summary of Results for the Whole District.

Classes.	Number on Roll.	Present at Inspectors' Annual Visit.	Passed.	Average Age of the Pupils in each Class.
				Yrs. mos.
Standard VII.	330	207	...	...
" VI.	1,532	1,476	1,189	13 9
" V.	2,163	2,059	1,581	12 11
" IV.	2,587	2,487	1,987	12 0
" III.	2,530	2,449	2,037	10 10
" II.	2,317	2,218	2,015	9 10
" I.	2,182	2,100	1,958	8 9
Preparatory...	6,108	5,434	...	...
Totals	19,749	18,430	10,767	11 4*

* Mean of average age.

SOUTH CANTERBURY.

SIR,—

We have the honour to present the following report for the year 1902:—

During the year seventy-one public schools were in operation. After a brief period of existence the small school at Greenhills was closed early in the year. The Cannington School has fallen so low in attendance that it has been closed for the present. All the schools were examined, and visits of inspection were paid to all except two. The Roman Catholic schools were examined as usual in the middle of the year. There are five of these in our district, with a total roll number of 661 pupils, of whom 590 were present at our visit, and 354 passed in one or other of the standards, being a percentage of 85 of the number present in Standards I. to VI., and of 60 in Standard VI., the only class in which the passes are wholly determined by the Inspector.

The examination of pupil-teachers was held in the beginning of July, and the examination for scholarships in December, and reports of these examinations were submitted to the Board. The higher work of the Waimate, Temuka, and Geraldine District High Schools was examined at the time of our annual visit to these schools.

Meetings of householders in connection with the establishment of new schools were held at Kohika and Opuha, and the Board has resolved to erect a small school in each of these districts. A meeting was also held at Belfield to inquire into the advisability of shifting the present school buildings to a site that will be more convenient for the majority of the school-children, but the Board has not yet come to a decision on this matter.

The following is a summary of examination results for the whole district:—

Classes.	Number on Roll.	Present at Inspector's Annual Visit.	Passed.	Average Age of Pupils in each Class.
				Yrs. mos.
Standard VII.	163	134	...	14 10
" VI.	442	428	315	13 9
" V.	625	585	454	12 9
" IV.	629	603	496	11 9
" III.	600	581	514	10 9
" II.	580	567	541	9 9
" I.	531	508	480	8 10
Preparatory	1,501	1,367	...	6 11
Totals	5,071	4,773	2,800	11 2*

* Mean average of age.

The schools show for the year an increase of forty-seven in the roll number. The number of those that passed in standards is 2,800, a decrease of 108 from last year. Of 3,272 pupils in Standards I. to VI. present at our annual visit, 2,800 passed, a percentage of 85·5. The passes in Standards I. to V. were determined by the head teachers, except in those cases, happily few, in which we deemed it necessary to substitute our results for those of the head teachers. The passes in Standard VI. were determined by the Inspectors. The number of pupils examined in Standard VI. was 428, of whom 315 passed, giving a percentage of 73·5, as against 70 for last year. The group comprising the eight largest schools in our district presented approximately as many pupils in Standard VI. as did all the other schools taken together as a second group, and a similar grouping gave a like proportion last year; but whereas last year the percentage of passes in Standard VI. in the former group was 71 against 68 in the latter group, this year the corresponding percentages are 83 and 63. This is a gratifying improvement so far as the large schools are concerned, but a falling-off on the part of the smaller schools that, though unfortunate, was not unexpected in view of the unprecedented number of changes occurring in the management of such schools through resignations of teachers.

We have already referred to the fact that in a few cases we have been compelled to substitute the results of our examination for the head teacher's in Standards I. to V. This is a step which we take with great reluctance; and when we do take it it is a sure indication that we consider the teacher to have made a very grievous mistake in his classification. Frequently there are promotions made by the teachers that do not meet with our full approval, but it is only when these bulk largely in a schedule that we take the extreme step of substitution. In a greater number of schools this year than last we have given only a qualified approval of the teachers' passes; and we trust that teachers who have shown too great a leniency, a leniency that is prejudicial to the best interests of the pupils, will in the future insist on a satisfactory standard of proficiency being attained before granting promotion. To do otherwise is to pursue a shortsighted policy; neither pupil nor teacher is benefited thereby. The headmasters of the large schools show greater wisdom; they see that a pupil is sure of his ground before advancing him. Does not the higher percentage of passes in Standard VI. in the large schools point to a judicious thinning carried out in the standards leading up to the Sixth?

In most of the schools children's ailments of a more or less serious nature were prevalent at different times of the year, and it was exceptional to find a school with anything like the normal number of attendances recorded against the names of the pupils on the examination schedules. Much valuable time was lost to the classes as a whole through the closing of schools while the epidemics were at their height. Nor was this all; for the illness of individuals was not always

coincident with the closing of the schools, and the progress of the classes was hampered by the inconsiderateness of those who would not be ill with the crowd, but required a special time for themselves. It is only those that have come through the experience of such a year that can justly estimate the enormous strain entailed on the teachers in such circumstances; and had not our teachers been endowed with a greater degree of patience and resourcefulness than they are sometimes credited with, the work of the year would have suffered much beyond what it actually did.

The work of the schools has also suffered to a very great extent by the numerous changes of teachers that have occurred. In twenty-six schools—that is, in more than one-third of the total number—such changes have taken place; and there was not only the disadvantage of the interruption and dislocation of work through the going of one teacher and the coming of another, but in most cases there was also an intensification of the disadvantage because of the intervening period when the school was in the hands of a temporary teacher. Many of the changes were internal, teachers being transferred from one school to another within the district itself, but they were not all of this kind. We have lost about a dozen teachers of our own training, most of whom had given every satisfaction in their positions; and we have drawn from other districts a corresponding number of teachers, whose usefulness, we trust, will be at least equal to that of those whose places they have taken.

Reviewing the work of the year as a whole, we feel ourselves justified in reporting that it was as satisfactory as might be expected under circumstances that, as we have shown, were far from favourable. We do not intend to give a detailed criticism with regard to the several subjects of instruction; the defects and the excellences are such as we have more than once commented on in previous reports. During our inspection and examination visits we have taken every opportunity of giving, as far as lay in our power, help and guidance to those who seemed to need our services, and we are pleased to testify to the good grace with which our criticisms and suggestions have been received. As we go from school to school we never divest ourselves of the privilege of being teachers, and as such we aim at being something more than gaugers of the amount of knowledge of any subject that the children possess. Our business with a class is not done when we have made up our minds that "inferior," "good," or some such expression is to be entered against the subject in hand; that conclusion is often arrived at long before we cease our questioning, which, as most teachers have learned to know, is continued as a lesson for them—a lesson by example—and therefore more likely to be effectual than a lecture on how it should be done. We are learners also, and when we pick up something new and good from one teacher we are delighted to pass it on to others.

During the year sixteen schools earned capitation for "handwork," the classes in which this work has been carried on being, with one or two exceptions, the preparatory classes and Standards I. and II. In other schools besides the sixteen that earned capitation manual instruction in various forms has been given, so that in reality the district has been doing more in this direction than will appear in any formal returns. Owing partly to the deficiency of desk accommodation in the infant departments of some of the large schools, and partly to the unsuitableness of the ordinary school-desks for some of the occupations, the instruction has not been carried on under very favourable conditions. Teachers are wisely waiting for the promised new standard syllabus before introducing handwork into the upper standards.

Classes for the training of teachers in brush drawing, modelling in plasticine, and woodwork were held for a term of twelve lessons, Mr. W. Greene being instructor in brush drawing and modelling, and Mr. W. Parr in woodwork. The brush-work classes had a roll number of eighty-three teachers of both sexes, and the modelling classes of seventy-seven, the attendance at the classes being well maintained throughout the course. There were forty-four men on the roll of the woodwork classes, but the attendance of several members was irregular. Though there is no fee for instruction, and free railway travelling is granted to those attending the classes, many of the teachers are put to great inconvenience to be able to attend, and all exercise some self-denial in giving up their Saturday holiday for the sake of the classes. Under the Education Board as controlling authority, classes have been carried on by the Timaru and Waimate Technical Classes Associations, and negotiations are now in progress for the establishment of similar classes at Temuka, a former attempt in that centre not having met with sufficient support.

Remote as they are from the great heart of the Empire, the children have been deeply interested in the notable events of the year. They followed with close attention the exciting incidents in the final operations against the Boers, and recognised with pride the gallant stand made by South Canterbury lads during the wild night rush of De Wet's riders at Bothasberg. They shared in the general rejoicings over the termination of the long struggle in South Africa. They took their part in the preparations for worthily celebrating the coronation of the King; with their elders they experienced the awful suspense when the King drew near to death; and in their hearts awoke a new feeling of love and loyalty to the King when, the danger past, he was at last crowned in far Westminster Abbey. Unsettling factors these so far as ordinary school-work is concerned, but not without their effect in widening the mental horizon of the children, in deepening their sympathies, and in strengthening the ties that bind the colonies to the Motherland.

We have, &c.,

JAS. GIBSON GOW, M.A.,
A. BELL, M.A., } Inspectors.

The Chairman, Education Board, Timaru.

OTAGO.

SIR,— Education Office, Dunedin, 24th February, 1903.

We have the honour to present our general report for the year 1902.

EFFICIENCY OF THE SCHOOLS IN TERMS OF STANDARD PASSES.

Classes.	Number on Roll.	Present at Inspector's Annual Visit.	Passed.	Average Age of Pupils in each Class.
				Yrs. mos.
Standard VII.	572	528	...	14 2
" VI.	1,605	1,553	1,103	13 4
" V.	2,134	2,087	1,701	12 2
" IV.	2,420	2,372	2,003	11 8
" III.	2,576	2,533	2,143	10 6
" II.	2,269	2,234	2,036	9 7
" I.	2,088	2,069	1,966	8 8
Preparatory...	6,592	6,183	...	6 10
Totals	20,256	19,559	10,952	10 10*

* Mean of average age.

The bulk of the schools failed to comply with Regulation 81. The average length of the working year was 204 days.

In 1900 the roll number at the time of the annual examination was 20,506; in 1901 it had fallen to 20,191; but 1902 brought reaction, and the increase in number then begun gives promise of continuance. The increase of eighty-one shown in the Seventh Standard is due in part to the establishment of four additional district high schools. The attendance at some of these has more than justified the local demand for their establishment. The examinations in 1903 will doubtless show an increase of attendance, which, together with the increase in the preparatory class, should more than compensate for the number of ex-Sixth Standard pupils who accept the free places open to them in the high schools.

The increased Sixth Standard roll number has not given us satisfaction, and has doubtless resulted in keen disappointment to many families. To more than one-fourth of the pupils who presented themselves for examination we had to refuse the pass certificate, and in some schools the failures amounted to nearly 50 per cent. These failures were due in part to unnecessary interference with the ordinary school routine, and in part to injudicious pressure of pupils through the standards. In 1901 preparations for the reception of our Royal visitors had so seriously disorganized school-work that the City and Suburban Schools Conference asked for and obtained the concession that the Inspector's examination of the schools engaged in the preparation should be restricted to the pass subjects of the Sixth Standard. This was an acknowledgment that the pupils had not completed their standard course, and instead of increased promotion there should have been a decrease. It is not probable that a similar concession will be again required; but we have heard of minor interferences with school routine, in proportion quite as mischievous, and we are of opinion that they should not be permitted. If school-children are required to take part in any public entertainment or display, adequate preparation for it should be made in the ordinary course of school-work. If at any time, even in the last week of the school year, a departure from the ordinary routine is made, such departure should be shown in the school and class time-tables, which, being public documents, must be preserved for inspection.

Notwithstanding all that has been said and done against it, pressure through the standards still operates on our schools—pressure from School Committees, from parents, and even from class-teachers; and it is only the stronger and wiser head teachers who seem capable of resisting it. During the past year we have had it clearly in evidence that pupils had been promoted who were not fit for promotion, and that their promotion impeded not only their own progress, but that of their fellow-pupils, and seriously diminished the efficiency of the teacher's work. We feel that nothing short of the abolition of the annual pass examination and of pass certificates for all the standards except the Sixth will free the schools from what remains of the old pressure for pass results.

The average ages of those who in 1901 passed the Sixth and Fifth Standards were respectively thirteen years and ten months and twelve years and nine months. The average ages of the pupils in these classes at the examination in 1902 were thirteen years and four months and twelve years and two months. These averages, though not exactly the same in kind, are similar, and their disparity is to us a little disquieting. Under the regulations a pupil may be promoted on satisfying the requirements of three out of the five of his standard pass subjects and of two of his previous pass subjects. This is permissive, not mandatory. We are of opinion that such promotion should be made only in exceptional circumstances.

EFFICIENCY-MARKS IN SUBJECTS.

Pass Subjects.—Reading, satisfactory; dictation and spelling, good; writing, satisfactory; arithmetic, satisfactory; composition, fair; mean result, satisfactory.

Class Subjects.—* Geography, satisfactory; * drawing, satisfactory; grammar, fair; history, fair; science and object lessons, fair; recitation, satisfactory; mean result, satisfactory.

* Geography and drawing are pass subjects in the Sixth Standard.

Additional Subjects.—Singing, fair; needlework, very good; drill, good; mean result, good.

History and science are within a fraction of the minimum mark for "satisfactory," and the other subjects set down as "fair" are nearer the minimum mark for "satisfactory" than that for "fair." The mean result of all the subjects is "satisfactory"—that is, the schools made in the subjects of instruction a mean of over 64 per cent. of the marks attainable.

Handwork has been introduced into a few of the schools, and gives fair promise of success. By means of summer classes for the teachers of the outlying districts, Saturday classes for those at a distance from Dunedin but served by the railways, and evening classes for those in Dunedin and suburbs, preparation is being made for the general introduction of manual and technical instruction.

The central cookery classes were a marked success. In these classes over 289 girls from the Sixth and Seventh Standards of the Dunedin and suburban schools went through a course of twenty two-hour lessons in the theory and practice of plain cookery.

CLASSIFICATION OF SCHOOLS ACCORDING TO GENERAL EFFICIENCY MARK.

Weak, 2; fair, 28; satisfactory, 96; good, 72; very good, 7. Schools temporarily under peculiarly disadvantageous circumstances have been omitted.

We prefer the aspect of the work presented here to that presented above, and the more so that under the heads "good" and "very good" are grouped most of our large schools. It shows that a large number of our schools are in an efficient condition.

Reading is rated as satisfactory, but in most of the large schools and in a fair proportion of the small ones it merited the mark "good." The rapid reading of which we have had so frequently to complain is less frequently met with, and there has been a decided advance in clearness of enunciation and intelligent expression. In comprehension, classes do fairly well, readily explaining words and phrases, and correctly embodying them in sentences of their own; but they do not so readily seize and express the leading thought of a paragraph that has just been read. Our schools have been fairly free from what is erroneously styled "Austral English." It is now, however, we think, insidiously gaining ground, and teachers should be on their guard against it.

Spelling (including writing to dictation) is good. A large proportion of the schools earned "very good," and fourteen "excellent."

Writing is satisfactory; indeed, in a considerable proportion of the schools it is good. The writing of the spelling and dictation tests determines the efficiency-mark and the pass in writing; but in doubtful cases of pass and failure recourse is had to the copy-books. In most of the schools the rate of writing to dictation, even in the Sixth Standard, is painfully slow; and were the efficiency-mark determined by the more rapidly written composition or geography it would probably be but fair. In many of the schools writing is practised rather than taught, and that under insufficient supervision. In addition, we but rarely find the pupils properly seated and with hands and pens properly held. We too frequently see pupils sitting with back bent, spine twisted, and right shoulder much higher than left. Such positions may not affect the writing, but they must be injurious to the young growing body. Many of the pupils write with the forefinger and thumb unsupported by the middle finger, and bent so as to form a circle, the hand resting on its side instead of on the little finger, and the points of the pen pressing unequally on the paper. These pupils have little control over their pens, and when the rate of writing is slightly accelerated the writing produced is of a very inferior character. The habitually correct position of body, hand, and pen we regard as an essential mark of good teaching, and teachers should spare no pains to secure it. Head teachers and the teachers of the preparatory classes and lower standards should realise their special responsibility in connection with the formation of the habit to which we have referred. We acknowledge the difficulties involved, but we know that they can be overcome.

What we have said of writing-positions applies also to those of drawing. Drawing results are on the whole good, but possibly the lines on which we are working might be improved. Freehand drawing is restricted to copying with pencil fine-line drawings on a small scale. We think that the crayon and even the chalk might also be used, and that drawing on a large scale, possibly free-arm drawing, might be practised with profit. We might also have original drawing. In some of our schools drawing is used in the object lesson to compel accuracy in detailed observation. The object examined is a leaf, a pansy, a butterfly, and as the lesson proceeds the outline is drawn by the pupils, and feature after feature filled in as observed. Occasionally the drawing follows the lesson, sometimes from observation, sometimes from memory. The object lesson should not be made a drawing lesson, but the object lesson and the drawing lesson should be mutually helpful. In one of our schools, where the drawing of the preparatory classes is taught with much enthusiasm, the teacher has a collection of her pupils' original designs for ornamental borders founded on the straight line and circle. Some of these, drawn in our presence by seven-year-old children, show not only command of the pencil, but artistic temperament well worthy of development. Drawing is a mode of expression, and drawing from memory or from imagination is of high intellectual and economic value.

In the lower standards blackboard demonstration of arithmetic is good, and in the upper frequently excellent. There is still, however, too little concrete work in the lower classes, and too little memorising of brief statements of important principles in all. To the vast majority of the pupils much of the arithmetic prescribed in the regulations is of little practical value, and its disciplinary value is not sufficiently high to warrant the excessive demand it makes on time and energy. We would fain see the regulation requirements materially diminished. As a matter of fact, the life arithmetic of 50 per cent. of our pupils will be simple mental problems involving weights, measures, and money; and accuracy and rapidity in dealing with these should be a characteristic of our school-work.

Composition and grammar are improving. Colloquial errors less frequently disfigure the school compositions, and the children themselves are able to detect and correct common errors in

concord and government, though they are frequently unable to give reasons for their corrections. In our larger schools especially, grammar is becomming more and more the handmaid of composition and reading, to the improvement of all three subjects. Oral composition should be more freely practised, and answering in sentences should in the main be insisted on even in the lower standards.

In our larger schools and in some of our smaller schools science is satisfactorily taught. The teachers' science programmes provide a fair, in many cases even a large, amount of practical work. The elements of agricultural knowledge are generally taught in the country schools, but seldom satisfactorily. Most of the teachers have only such knowledge of the subject as can be acquired from text-books, and they teach it without enthusiasm and with poor results. There are great possibilities for our country schools in this subject, but they cannot be realised until provision is made for the instruction and training of those who are to teach it. A beginning has been made in cottage gardening, and we shall watch its development with much interest. The school cottage garden might be made an object lesson for the whole neighbourhood.

Singing is taught in almost every school. In most of the large schools and in a fair number of the small ones it is well taught; but in only a comparatively small number of them does it enter into the school life as it should. We cannot but condemn the infant-room management that does not make full and free provision for music, with and without marching and physical exercises.

The remaining subjects call for no special remarks.

As may be seen from the special reports on their work, the new district high schools have made a creditable beginning; and we are glad to be able to say that, notwithstanding the numerical inadequacy of the staffs, all the schools of this class are doing a large amount of good work. It is, however, our opinion that the Department's scale of staffs does not make adequate provision for district high schools, and in support of this view we may give an example. On inspection day there were present in one of those schools 193 pupils, grouped and taught as follows: (1.) Class P. (forty-eight pupils) and Standard I. (fifteen pupils), taught by the mistress, assisted now and then by the pupil-teacher. (2.) Standard II. (twenty-two pupils) and Standard III. (twenty-three pupils), taught by a female teacher. (3.) Standard IV. (nineteen pupils) and Standard V. (twenty-three pupils), taught by a male assistant. (4.) Standard VI. (ten pupils) and Standard VII. (thirty-three pupils—first- and second-year students), taught by the head master, assisted now and then by the pupil-teacher. No competent judge would, we venture to say, pronounce as adequate the staffing or grouping of (1) and (4). In our judgment, it is distinctly inadequate, and we have no doubt that the present head of the Department would be in entire agreement with this judgment. The secondary pupils even of the smallest district high school need the entire service of a competent teacher.*

In the district high schools there were 326 Seventh Standard pupils; in the Dunedin and suburban schools, 192 pupils; in the Oamaru, Pukeuri, and Weston Schools, twenty-one pupils; and beyond reach of high schools and district high schools, 144 pupils.

In our last report we urged that the Department should do for Dunedin children what it had done for those of the larger country towns—namely, make special provision for extending their instruction beyond the requirements of the Sixth Standard. At the end of the year, the work of which is now under review, the Department announced a scheme that provides such instruction for every pupil whose age does not exceed fourteen years on the 31st December following the date of his passing the Sixth Standard. This age-limit is, we think, a mistake, for it excludes from participation in instruction at the high schools a large number of boys and girls, many of whom are better equipped than are many of those whom the accident of beginning their school life at five years of age instead of at six or seven has enabled to pass the Sixth Standard at a lower age. Our contention has all along been that special provisions should be made for the more advanced instruction of all children who are willing to remain at school for a year or two after passing the Sixth Standard, and nothing short of this will, we consider, provide for the necessities of Dunedin and suburbs, where there are at present over five hundred Sixth and Seventh Standard pupils who, on the 31st December next, will be over fourteen years of age. Many of these will certainly wish to continue their education. What provision is to be made for them?

There yet remains the question of providing advanced instruction for the children who live beyond reach of high schools and district high schools, and whose needs we have set forth in previous reports, to which we beg to refer the Board. Should the Department not make provision for these children, modification of the scholarship regulations might, to a certain extent, meet their needs.

We have, &c.,

P. Goyen,
W. S. Fitzgerald,
C. R. Richardson,
C. R. Bossence,
Inspectors.

The Secretary, Otago Education Board.

SOUTHLAND.

Sir,— Education Office, Invercargill, 12th March, 1903.

We have the honour to present our report for the year ended the 31st December, 1902.

The schools, with the exception of three—Half-moon Bay, Holmesdale, and Hokonui—were examined, and nearly all were inspected. Through stress of work we could not find time to visit Half-moon Bay in November, the usual date of examination. Holmesdale, a new school, had been

* The staffing of district high schools is a matter for the Boards, subject to the approval of the Minister.—Secretary for Education.

open but a few weeks when the Inspector was examining the schools in the vicinity; and none but the teacher and Inspector attended at Hokonui on the morning of the day set apart for the examination, the children being kept at home owing to the inclemency of the weather.

Compared with that of last year, the summary of results for the whole district discloses no striking contrast, the only noticeable feature being a slight decrease in the percentage of promotions in the standards below the Sixth, which appears to indicate greater solicitude than was last year shown by some of the teachers to select for promotion really fit and deserving pupils. In Standard VI., which is examined by the Inspectors, the percentage of pupils receiving the proficiency certificate is practically the same as it was last year. The averages of ages show such slight variations from the averages of the previous year that they too may be deemed practically the same.

We submit here a separate table showing the total roll and the number of pupils in Classes VI. and VII. for the past eleven years, from which interesting information may be gathered :—

Year.	Total Roll.	Number in VI.	Number in VII.	Total in VI. and VII.
1892	9,053	382	102	484
1893	9,696	502	116	618
1894	9,328	412	143	555
1895	9,483	451	155	606
1896	9,522	444	153	597
1897	9,558	559	177	736
1898	9,494	593	187	780
1899	9,424	588	193	781
1900	9,432	616	212	828
1901	9,394	680	202	882
1902	9,539	718	238	956

It will be observed that, while from the year 1894 onwards the total roll on each successive year till 1901 does not vary by so much as one hundred, the increase in the number of pupils presented in the two highest classes has been, with but slight exceptions, rapid and continuous. Contrasting the figures of the present year (1902) with those of the year 1892, we find almost twice as many pupils in Standard VI. in the latter year as in the former, and more than twice as many in Standard VII.

No doubt various factors contribute to this noteworthy development, but we think we are right in saying that the chief factors are an increase in the efficiency of the teachers, and an increased desire on the part of parents to see their children taking full advantage of the education so generously provided by the State. Whatever be the explanation, there is open to the Board but one way of viewing the fact, and that is with unfeigned satisfaction.

During the year we laid before the Board some three hundred inspection and examination reports. As the tenor of these reports, in which schools and school-work are supposed to be faithfully mirrored, was but seldom challenged by the Board on the ground of unsatisfactoriness, it would appear that in respect both of discipline and teaching our schools maintain a uniformly satisfactory standard of efficiency.

Speaking of efficiency, we may point out that, through the operation of the new regulations concerning staffing, some schools are markedly more efficient than they were, some markedly less. This double phase of progress and retrogression has arisen thus: Some schools have received an extra teacher, being for this reason raised at once to a higher plane of efficiency; but the available supply of certificated teachers having been absorbed in the filling of the new positions, the positions vacated, and others arising in ordinary course, had to be filled by applicants of incomplete qualifications, and to this extent the general efficiency of the teaching in the district has been impaired. This deviation from the path of progress is, of course, merely partial and temporary, for the uncertificated teachers may be expected to establish their positions as soon as possible at the examination of teachers.

Referring in few words to the subjects of instruction, we shall deal first with the

Pass Subjects.—Reading: In the majority of the larger schools great care is bestowed on the teaching of this subject, the result being that most of the pupils are able to read at sight accurately and fluently. In many, perhaps most, of the smaller schools, on the other hand, there is much to be desired by way of improvement. The chief obstacles in the way of progress are want of time and want of reading-matter. Both the extra time and the extra books could be secured by the following simple rearrangement of the syllabus. Each child in each class should be given three books—one in picture literature, one in biography and history, and one in geography and travel—and the wearisome lecture on history and geography should be abandoned. It is only conservatism of the most pronounced type that delays the realisation of this proposal. Surely children would get more enjoyment and profit by reading aloud or silently from the splendidly prepared readers in history and geography now obtainable than by listening, very likely with the air and attitude of passive resistance, to the teacher's recitation of dry and often heterogeneous facts. The method of lecturing, even when the lectures are liberally interspersed with questions, is, except in the most skilful hands, doubly wasteful—wasteful of time and wasteful of energy. Under the conditions suggested, pupils might be expected to love their books and to realise in some measure the original purpose of a school as a place of leisurely development.

Spelling: We had occasion in our last year's report to deprecate the loose methods of treatment to which this subject was subjected in some schools. We are glad to say that the schools we had in mind in mentioning the matter have for the most part recovered themselves.

Writing: This is a subject concerning which much has been said during the year by men interested in it outside of the teaching profession. We are glad of this, for we are enabled thereby to give point to our remarks to teachers on the importance of good penmanship. As we have already pointed out to the Board in a special report, it is with the utmost difficulty that we can get many of the teachers to face the drudgery of attention to detail implied in the successful teaching of writing. Teachers will readily admit that good handwriting can be secured not otherwise than by patient and persevering attention to the minutest details, but, having given theoretical assent, in practice they straightway turn their backs on their own admissions. We dread uniformity in education as being the enemy of progress, but in the case of handwriting we make an exception, believing that it would be of immense benefit to the community if all the children in the public schools were taught the same style, the onus of designating the best style being thrown on the Education Department. We would go so far, indeed, as to say that New Zealand handwriting, on account of its uniformity and excellence, should be as easily recognisable in other parts of the Empire as New Zealand postage-stamps—without in any way committing ourselves to any statement as to the excellence of the latter.

Arithmetic: This subject, so far as the manipulation of formal sums is concerned, receives its full share of attention, and the various standard tests set by the Department were successfully met by the great majority of the pupils. We are, however, by no means yet satisfied with the amount of attention paid to mental arithmetic. If we only knew exactly the pressing requirements of men engaged in business and in industrial pursuits we should to that extent insist on an exhaustive treatment of the subject. Repeating a suggestion made in our last report, we venture the opinion that the Board should invite business-men to say whether, from their point of view, there are any serious gaps in the educational equipment of the young people whom they receive from the schools. Though we hold firmly by the principle that the primary purpose of the school is to make men and not machines, we at the same time think it most desirable that the school should be directly in touch with the life of the community, with its needs, its commerce, its manufactures, its primary industries. We have, indeed, a syllabus to guide us, but it should be regarded rather as the servant than as the master of our school policy.

Composition: The range of the quality of the instruction in this subject varies more than in the case of any other standard subject. Some teachers demand and secure from their pupils, in addition to an adequate knowledge of English construction and idiom, some evidence of the elements of taste; others are content with a collection of ill-assorted and not infrequently distantly related facts. It cannot be too often repeated that the first objects to be aimed at in the teaching of composition are accuracy of language and thought, and completeness and orderliness of statement. Quite so. But the fundamental difficulty does not lie here: it lies in the pupil's lack of material, of ideas capable of being expressed. The teacher may have every qualification for giving instruction in composition, but till his pupils' minds become stored with ideas he is helpless, unless, indeed, he imparts the ideas and the art of expression at the same time—a most laborious undertaking. When handwork has made greater progress, and when the area of the pupils' reading has been greatly extended, composition will become a part of school-work at once less difficult and more educative.

Class Subjects.—In not a few of the smaller schools grammar has fallen on evil days; it is crushed out; metaphorically speaking, trampled on. We need not say how much we regret this. History and geography would, we believe, fare much better if they were made part and parcel of English. Presumably, pupils will read biographical books and books of travel after they leave school; history and geography books as such, never. Concerning the average elementary science lesson and object lesson we are often, like the prophet of old, tempted to ask, "Can these bones live?" Without wishing to be irreverent, we answer, "Yes," when teachers are imbued with the spirit of the newer education and go directly to things and to nature for their information and inspiration. Drawing, we are glad to say, continues to improve. Books containing copies are gradually giving place to blank books, and the subject is becoming proportionately more interesting and educative.

Additional Subjects.—We may remark that, while the number of schools taking singing tends to increase, the number of schools in which the subject is really taught tends to decrease. This way of treating school song is as inexplicable as it is inexcusable, and, constituting as it does a breach of the spirit and letter of the regulations on the subject, as well as an omission that makes the social life of the community distinctly poorer, must really be improved on. In the formation of cadet corps in connection with the two chief town schools we find the realisation of a scheme we have advocated in these reports for years. We hope to be able in our next report to state that companies have been formed in other parts of the district, and that the town companies have been formed into a battalion. As to physical training, we may say that in view of Mr. Hanna's appointment we confidently expect that the subject will be taken up more extensively, and that there will be unmistakable improvement in the quality of the instruction.

Manual Training.—Great progress was made in this branch of school-work during the year. In almost all the infant departments some form of handwork was successfully taken up, and in several schools, notably the South (Standards I. to IV.) and Middle (Standards I. to VI.), the upper classes did work of capital quality. In this district manual training is now beyond the apologetic and experimental stage. Should any be still sceptical as to the value of this new departure as a means of elementary training, they would do well to study the proceedings of the educational section of the last meeting of the British Association. Said Professor Armstrong: "For a long time past we have been drifting away from the practical, and those who are acquainted with

the work of the school, especially the elementary school, are aghast at the influence they are exercising in hindering the development of practical ability." So Professor Dewar, president of the association, in an address on "Education and Progress": "Mental habits are formed for good or for evil long before men go to the technical schools. We have to begin at the beginning: we have to train the population from the first to think correctly and logically, to deal at first hand with facts, and to evolve, each one to evolve for himself, the solution of the problem put before him, instead of learning by rote the solution given by somebody else." And Professor Perry was so much impressed by the fatuity of much of the present-day methods that he invoked a conflagration or an earthquake to wreck the existing system of education, so that the whole business might be reconstructed on consistent and simple lines. The names of Perry, Armstrong, and Dewar are names to conjure with in education and science, so that we may take heart of grace when we reflect that we have committed ourselves to a policy in accordance with which our young people will be trained on the principles advocated in the educational section of the British Association.

We sincerely hope that the Board will adopt our suggestion regarding the institution of mid-summer classes for the benefit of teachers in remote parts of the district who have not hitherto had the opportunity of attending special classes. The further suggestion may be made here that, at the end of 1904, there should be held in Invercargill an exhibition of manual work, which might also include competitions in other departments of school-work, such as mental arithmetic, drill, singing, and recitation. Such an exhibition would do a great deal to stimulate educational activity amongst us.

Holidays.—We are often struck, upon the occasions of our annual visits to the schools, by the fewness of the actual number of working-days in the school year. Much is explained by the prevalence of sickness, by the temporary closing of the school for some other reason, or by the long-continued and oft-repeated bad weather. But when due allowance has been made for reasonable excuses, and for the regular holidays, the ratio of actual working-days to the possible number of working-days is often too small; and the smallness is often due to that bane of school work, the incidental holiday. Better for the children, better for the teacher, and better for the cause of progress would be a holiday or two granted regularly after the teacher's periodical examinations. The wretched incidental holiday, projected, as it often is, right into the middle of the week, destroys the continuity of school-work, unsettles the pupils, and tends to make them fertile in specious excuses for the shirking of duty.

Sanitation.—The instructions issued by the Board concerning intervals and the airing of class-rooms have been uniformly complied with. We almost invariably find the class-rooms and outside premises tidy and clean. We cannot say, however, that the water-tanks are always as clean as they should be, and we have heard of cases of serious illness being attributed to impure water drunk from the school tank. Every teacher should make the frequent inspection of the school tank an imperative duty, so that there may be no harbouring of impurities such as might cause sickness.

Free Secondary Education.—Viewed from our standpoint the regulations now in force regarding admission to the high school leave much to be desired. Pupils may now enter the high school accredited only by an incomplete Standard VI. pass. Such pupils would be more profitably engaged in revising the work of Standard VI. in a primary school. If they enter the high school to do Standard VI. work, we have reverted to the overlapping iniquity which we had deemed to be effectively purged away from our education system as operative in this part of the colony. The age qualification, being a purely arbitrary restriction, may result in rank injustice to individual pupils, and it certainly will result in mischief to the cause of primary education. Many pupils now pass too rapidly through their school course, and in this latest innovation we have a further premium put upon speed. The limitation as to age should be withdrawn, and a pupil's fitness to enter profitably on a course of secondary education should be determined by special examination at the Inspector's annual visit.

District High Schools.—A separate report on each of the district high schools has been prepared. We may merely mention here that the secondary department at Gore has been successful beyond our most sanguine expectations. It seems as if the department at Riverton, too, were to justify its existence; but in view of the latest conditions regulating admission to the high school it is questionable whether the secondary department at Winton can be raised above the experimental stage.

Annual Visit.—We find that if we are to overtake the work entailed by the inspection and examination of the schools and the other duties incidental to our department by the end of the year, we must commence making our annual visits at least a fortnight earlier than has been our custom hitherto.

School Influences.—We may, in closing, be allowed to enumerate the chief influences at work in shaping children's minds during their primary course, making the enumeration at the same time serve as the occasion of our pointing out one or two weak links in our present system.

The purpose of all school influences whatever is the moulding of a child's mind and character with a view to his becoming an efficient and honourable member of society. The chief influence is, of course, the mind and character of the teacher. These being determined to a great extent by the teacher's general and professional training, we find, in the absence of any adequate provision for such training, the weakest link of our system. The most that the majority of our teachers have had by way of training, in addition to their primary-school course, is a pupil-teacher's course, and preparation for the passing of the teachers' D and E examinations. Many have not even had the advantage of a pupil-teacher's course. It is a marvel, therefore, that the work of elementary education in this district has been so well done. Our present attitude towards this important matter, very largely an attitude of sheer indifference, is a reproach to us all. Let us hope that the time is not distant when all teachers will be introduced to their life's work under conditions

more rational, fitting, favourable, and hopeful—when no one will aspire to take charge of any but the smallest school who has not subjected himself to a course of general culture and rigorous professional training. Till then let us talk of our education system—well, to say the least of it, not boastfully.

The secondary influences are the statutory provisions as to syllabus and examinations. Herein we find a second weak link. The syllabus, as we have already hinted, cabins, cribs, and confines the teacher's activities; and our examinations are not directed towards sufficiently definite ends. There should be two chief examinations in a child's school life—one to settle whether he shall take up such subjects as grammar and elementary science, and another to determine whether he shall have the proficiency certificate. If we continue to shirk these questions progress in our schools will be largely illusory, and practical ends will be but badly served.

The tertiary or minor influences are many; there are the school and its environment, school games, school library, school garden, school workshop, school cadet corps, school specimen-case, apparatus, and appliances. All the schools, of course, have some of these; but if all the schools had all of them how great an influence for good would they cumulatively exert on the minds and lives of our pupils.

We are, &c.,

JAMES HENDRY,
GEORGE D. BRAIK, } Inspectors.

The Chairman, Education Board, Invercargill.

SUMMARY OF RESULTS FOR THE WHOLE DISTRICT.

Classes.	Number on Roll.	Present at Inspector's Annual Visit.	Passed.	Average Age of Pupils in each Class.
				Yrs. mos.
Standard VII.	238	206	...	14 6
" VI.	718	698	578	13 8
" V.	1,003	980	840	12 9
" IV.	1,189	1,164	1,000	11 11
" III.	1,135	1,116	983	10 10
" II.	1,140	1,118	1,056	9 11
" I.	999	976	932	8 11
Preparatory	3,117	2,984	...	7 0
Totals	9,539	9,242	5,389	11 2·25*

* Mean of average age.

Roman Catholic Schools.—Number on roll, 524; present at Inspector's annual visit, 514; passed, 310.

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