

revising and impressing on the mind the various processes. A problem that can be worked mentally in half a minute or so has all the educative value of one that would take ten minutes to work on paper. Teachers who appreciate the value of mental work, in introducing a new process, frequently fail to appreciate its value as a means of revision.

The oral composition of the lower classes is, as a rule, of very good quality, pupils even in the P. classes constructing well-framed sentences of three or four clauses. The written composition in Standard III. is very good, in Standard IV. is very satisfactory, but in Standard V. and Standard VI. really good composition is the exception, and for time devoted to its instruction shows very little advance on that received from Standard III. pupils. In fact, the upper composition is often merely very good Standard III. composition. The great fault in the structure of the sentences is the lack of condensation, which brings many other defects in its train. If this be attended to, involved sentences, with their consequent obscurities, will disappear and a better arrangement of words will be possible.

Something has been heard lately about the medical examination of school-children, but little of practical value has been done. We are strongly of the opinion that, before or shortly after admission to a school, every child should be thoroughly examined by a medical man. A certificate, given to the teacher, should show whether sight, hearing, &c., are defective, whether the child is suffering from or shows symptoms of any contagious or infectious disease, from what subjects and for how long it is desirable that the child should receive exemption, and so on. The certificate should show also what general precautions are to be taken with regard to the child in its own interests, and also in the interests of its classmates. Children are thrown together daily for so many hours during a most susceptible period that the neglect of very simple precautions may produce results which, through imperceptible at the time, may ultimately prove disastrous.

We have, &c.,
W. E. SPENCER, M.A., B.Sc., } Inspectors.
W. A. BALLANTYNE, B.A., }

The Chairman, Taranaki Education Board.

WANGANUI.

SIR,—

Education Office, Wanganui, 31st March, 1905.

We have the honour to present our report on the primary schools of the district for the year ended the 31st December, 1904.

At the close of the year there were 177 State schools in operation. Of these seventeen were opened during the year. The number of schools examined was 169, ten more than in the previous year. The majority of the schools were inspected. There is still, however, a considerable number that can be reached only once a year, though the opening of the railway-line to Taihape has made it possible to inspect as well as examine schools in the upper Rangitikei basin, which formerly could be visited only once. In addition to our own schools we examined the six Catholic schools in the district.

The following rough classification, according to average attendance, of the schools in the district is interesting and instructive: Average attendance below 21, 51 schools; below 41, 57 schools; between 41 and 100, 42 schools; over 100, 27 schools. From this it will be seen that considerably more than half are below grade 4, and nearly a third below grade 2.

In many cases the establishment of the small school is an absolute necessity, owing to the isolated nature of the settlement to which the children belong, and the want of anything like suitable roads; but applications are not infrequently made for schools in localities where the roads are good, and where the distance from the nearest established school does not amount to more than four or five miles. In such cases the adoption of the conveyance system is much to be desired, and we would strongly urge that wherever possible it should be brought into operation. We believe that the cost of education would be materially reduced, while there is not the least doubt that the efficiency of instruction would be greatly increased. Such is the universal testimony from districts where this scheme has been tried.

EXAMINATION.—No radical change was adopted in the method of examination, though in general the new regulations were followed. In the incoming year a serious attempt will be made to change what has been long looked upon as the routine of examination, and in another paragraph we refer specially to what we consider the changed functions and duties of the Inspector in carrying out the regulations that have recently come into force. In the large majority of schools the course of study worked through was that prescribed by the old regulations.

The following figures indicate the numbers and ages of the pupils in the various standards:—

Classes.	Number on Roll.	Present at Inspector's Annual Visit.	Average Age of Pupils in each Class.
Standard VII.	251	241	Yrs. mos. 14 6
" VI.	818	802	13 10
" V.	1,187	1,155	12 11
" IV.	1,402	1,357	12 1
" III.	1,580	1,534	11 0
" II.	1,558	1,514	9 11
" I.	1,466	1,419	8 10
Preparatory	3,987	3,538	6 11
Totals	12,249	11,560	11 3*

* Mean of average age.