1905.

NEW ZEALAND.

EDUCATION:
REPORTS OF INSPECTORS OF SCHOOLS.

[In continuation of E.-1B, 1904.]

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

AUCKLAND.

SIR,— Education Board, Auckland, 14th March, 1905.

I have the honour to submit a general report on the public schools of the Auckland District for the year 1904.

The number of public schools in operation at the close of the year was 427, including seventy-two half-time schools. This shows an increase of six schools since the close of 1903. The number of public schools inspected was 385, one of each pair of half-time schools being visited for this purpose. Special visits of inspection were also made to the secondary department of seven district high schools. The number of public schools examined was 418. The thirteen public schools that were not examined either were closed when the Inspector was examining the schools of the neighbourhood, or had been so recently started as to make it inadvisable to examine them until some substantial progress had been made in the work of the various classes. All the examinations were held under the old syllabus.

Besides the public schools above referred to, the Inspectors inspected and examined the twenty-three Roman Catholic schools that were in operation in the course of the year. The Parnell Orphan Home was also examined.

The examination statistics of the public schools for the year are shown in summary form in the following table. The passes in Standards I. to V. were determined except in very rare cases by the head teachers; those in Standard VI. were determined by the Inspectors.

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.	207	122	...	14 5
" VI.	1,983	1,933	1,486	13 6
" V.	2,768	2,656	2,310	12 8
" IV.	3,438	3,280	2,923	11 11
" III.	3,585	3,433	3,123	10 11
" II.	3,686	3,553	3,360	9 11
" I.	3,410	3,287	3,210	9 0
Preparatory	11,159	9,963	...	...
Totals	30,236	28,227	16,412	11 9*

* Mean of average age.

At the Roman Catholic schools there were 1,864 pupils on the rolls; 1,739 were present at the Inspectors' examinations, and 877 passed in one or other of the standards. At the Parnell Orphan Home the roll-number was 59; the number present was 59; and 31 passed the standard for which they were entered.

The public schools show for the year an increase of 419 in the roll-number; of 326 in the number of pupils present; and of 297 in the number of pupils who passed one or other of the standards. In Standard VI. 77 per cent. of the pupils examined passed.

Except in rare cases the promotions from class to class have been made by head teachers with satisfactory discretion. In a few schools of the smaller class the Inspectors had to take exception to some of the promotions, and in certain cases all the promotions were determined by them. In a few of the largest schools promotions have been determined with extreme strictness. In such cases there is a serious risk of discouraging meritorious pupils, for taking the work of a class for a second year is far from being an inspiring experience, and it should not be inflicted on pupils without good reason. Defects in reading, in arithmetic, and in composition, were the chief grounds on which promotions were objected to.

During the year the public schools have in nearly all respects maintained a satisfactory level of efficiency, and noticeable advance has been made in some directions. The larger schools continue to be well conducted, and most of those with a staff of two or more teachers show steady improvement in efficiency. In the large group of schools taught by a single teacher, the success of the teaching varies within wide limits, but a very fair number of them are now as well taught as we can expect under the conditions that necessarily obtain in schools of this type. The schools in which the teaching and management are poor or inferior grow fewer year by year, largely through the retirement of teachers of little capacity. The younger teachers, who take up work in the smaller schools, are now, for the most part, energetic and enthusiastic, working earnestly to earn advancement, which it is difficult and often impossible to secure for them according to their deserts. This is, unfortunately, inevitable, as the small school is more predominant in this district than in any other of the larger education districts of the colony.

The teaching of reading shows steady if slow improvement in all classes of schools; but the progress is less noticeable in the "sole teacher" schools. In these, indeed, the difficulty of finding sufficient time for practice of reading is ever present, and hard to surmount. Most teachers are content to give their classes such practice as they can superintend continuously, but this obviously needs supplementing. Further practice may be given in a porch or even in a corner of the schoolroom, where supervision is only casual or intermittent. If good discipline and an earnest spirit of work prevail, this plan may prove very advantageous, and it might well be more generally followed.

The progress in reading noted during the year has been chiefly in fluency, accuracy, and distinctness. In expression—the sympathetic modulation of the voice that proclaims a ready and vivid appreciation of the meaning—the reading shows little advance. The pupils of Standard VI., however, now read with greater accuracy and facility passages previously unseen, and display a more ready and continuous apprehension of the thought. A wider course of reading in the lower classes—those below Standard IV.—is still much to be desired, and if it were overtaken with reasonable thoroughness, the laboured and uninteresting hammering at the lessons in new books, still occasionally seen, would disappear. In a few schools three books have been read in these classes, and new lessons are then attacked with a power and an interest unknown where the preparatory course has been less complete. Without abundant and varied practice in lessons of a suitable character, reading cannot be easy; and if it lacks ease it must lack interest and all the higher qualities that depend on interest and understanding. In some of our smaller schools the concentration of the pupils' attention on the mere recognition of the vocables is such as to put reading of an intelligent type beyond their reach.*

Some of the Inspectors note improvement in the comprehension of the words and language of the reading lessons, but there is still much room for further advance. In all schools pupils of the upper classes should be trained to make adequate preparatory study of the language of the lessons in the principal reading-book, using for this purpose dictionaries and the help that friends and teachers would willingly give. For years we have been insisting on the importance of testing this preparation at the opening of every reading lesson, and nothing but systematic attention to this practice will provide the stimulus required to make careful preparation habitual. Notwithstanding this, pupils in the higher classes are often without dictionaries and are inexpert at using them. Even in Standard VI. one occasionally finds pupils unable to avail themselves of the guidance in pronunciation that every dictionary affords. With older pupils it would be better to make them use a dictionary to discover for themselves their errors in pronunciation, than that the teacher should correct them offhand. In reading and the comprehension of what is read, as in other departments of educational effort, resort to self-help should be as freely used as possible. Teachers must never forget that they are training their pupils so as to read and to understand later any book they may wish to peruse, and that their methods should aim at giving them step by step the power to do this.

The explanation by paraphrase of phrases and short sentences couched in difficult and uncommon language is an exercise for teaching in class. It now receives very considerable attention, and is on the whole very fairly taught. Work of this type is, however, too exclusively oral, and many pupils thus escape showing whether their interpretation is correct, or even whether they have reached any interpretation at all. A good share of this kind of work should be done in writing and on paper. This practice would soon reveal defects of comprehension that may otherwise be overlooked. The writing on paper of answers to questions, except at formal examinations, is too little used in our schools. If teachers would ask for supplies of a fair quality of printing-paper, School Committees would find it very cheap. It would be useful in many ways and especially in making it possible to have a fairly full record of the work of the more backward pupils. For many school purposes ruled foolscap paper is unnecessary.

* A thoughtful discussion of "The Aims and Methods of Teaching Reading" will be found in an address by Mr. Charles R. Long, printed in Melbourne for Messrs. Macmillan and Co.

One seldom sees a teacher investigate with his pupils the general thought of reading lessons, some of which, and especially the poems, invite such consideration. Elementary literary analysis should not be beyond the grasp of the older pupils, and it should certainly be applied to all poems that are committed to memory. This kind of exercise is of great value in connection with oral composition, and in developing the intelligence and taste of the older scholars.

Recitation of poetry is in general accurate, but often hurried and deficient in expression. This is mainly due to the excessive use of simultaneous recitation, an exercise that always tends to be "wooden"; indeed, all simultaneous reading and answering is prone to be tainted with this defect. Literary analysis and appreciation are often not attempted. If our aim here is to store the mind with beautiful thoughts beautifully expressed, the poems must be thoroughly learned, and the elements in which the beauty consists must be apprehended with some clearness; and this demands a careful consideration of the thoughts and their expression. Recitation should never be judged by a simultaneous test.

Spelling, within the range of the principal reading-book, is in general well taught. In many schools it absorbs a great deal of time. It should never exceed an hour and three quarters a week, and might be overtaken in an hour and a half, word-building included.

Writing now more generally bears the impress of the copy-books in use in the schools. It is seldom unsatisfactory, and is good in a large number of schools. In the smaller ones it varies considerably in quality. Writing in exercise-books is for the most part less careful than that in copybooks, and sometimes there is a discrepancy that teachers should be ashamed of. Experience shows that good writing and weak discipline are incompatibles: those who cannot account for their pupils' weak writing should ponder this. Proper pen-holding and proper writing-posture are still undervalued by many teachers.

Arithmetic is on the whole well taught below Standard IV. In the three highest standards, and more especially in Standard V., the results of the teaching are often disappointing. The work there is marred by inaccuracy and above all by want of power in dealing with the simple problems set. Only in Standard VI. have questions presenting any real difficulty been noticed. I find it hard to account for the rather backward condition into which the teaching of the higher classes in this subject has drifted; and teachers profess to be as much surprised and disappointed at the evidence of it as the Inspectors are. It looks as if many teachers did not really know what their pupils can do; but considering that their knowledge of the subject can be so readily and surely tested there is no excuse for this. Ample time is allowed for a thorough and an intelligent training in the subject. Insufficient mental and oral drill in dealing with simple problems, too exclusive practice of slate exercises often devoid of explanation of steps, and the overvaluation of mere quantity of work, are among the chief causes of the want of progress noted above. In former reports various suggestions have been offered to improve the teaching, and many might do worse than give these suggestions renewed consideration. I need add only that in a fair number of schools the upper classes have been as successfully taught as the lower, and that these are as often small schools as not.

In many cases the teaching of composition shows fair progress, and on the whole it is satisfactory. In the larger schools it is usually more than satisfactory, and is not unfrequently good. Sporadic exercises of superior quality are met with in most schools, even in these in which the average quality of the work is low, for special aptitude shows itself very markedly in this subject. In teachers' lists of composition subjects, abstract topics and others of which pupils have no direct or personal knowledge figure too prominently. The trail of the teacher, as Mr. Grierson remarks, is plainly seen in the pupils' handling of all such subjects. It is most important that pupils should have a full and in general a first-hand knowledge of the subjects on which they are asked to express their thoughts in writing. There are few districts so quiet or isolated as not to yield a considerable list of subjects satisfying this condition. The other branches of study, especially nature-study, observational geography, health and science, and suitable pictures, afford material well suited to supplement the list of local familiar topics. In a number of schools a good deal of carelessness in the correction of composition exercises has been noticed. In the large schools pupil-teachers, unless specially qualified, should not be allowed to correct and criticize this work. I am glad to find the practice of oral composition so strongly encouraged in the new syllabus. Under the name of "good oral answering" it has long received attention from the Inspectors in this district. Teachers will now probably understand more clearly the object of the training expected under this head, which has not been too successful hitherto, as it has often been thought sufficient if pupils gave their answers in a short sentence instead of a phrase or a bare word. Oral composition is naturally the handmaid of almost every other department of study in the school, and the constant occasion for its use should, under painstaking and skilful direction, make pupils much more ready and resourceful in the expression of their knowledge and thoughts in familiar language than they now are. There are few schools in which the pupils can readily state what they have learned, and even know after a fashion. The power to do this is really the only satisfactory proof that the teaching has been assimilated, and the knowledge truly gained. Systematic training in oral composition should do much to lessen the poverty of thought and the poor command of language that are the besetting faults of the inferior composition exercise. "In handling this subject it is of prime importance that a child should be trained to think about a subject so as to develop and expand it; such treatment is indispensable if we are to reach the best results" (Mr. Mulgan). It is in developing this power of thought that current teaching is weakest. Special lessons on oral composition should hardly be necessary in the two lowest classes.

For good or for ill the new syllabus has thrown out much that has been thought valuable in grammar, and has incorporated what remains in the composition course. With children who do not hail from cultured homes, definite teaching of the grammatical residuum will have to be continued, for this instruction cannot, in such cases, be adequately given incidentally in dealing with composition, though such treatment is in no way to be discouraged. I greatly regret that teachers should be advised to

refrain, as far as possible, from using definite and characteristic names for familiar and distinct grammatical forms and sentence-elements. To be constantly using roundabout descriptions and adumbrations of the nature and use of such forms and sentence-elements, is not only wasting valuable time and fostering nebulous thinking, but it ignores the fact that a name for a word-form, or a specific relation to other words, or a definite sentence-element, that we readily recognise and mentally distinguish, is a convenience so great and so insistent that we may fairly reckon it a necessity. Teachers will, I hope, prove wiser than to closely follow this unwise advice. During the past year grammar as defined in the old syllabus was satisfactorily taught in a very fair number of schools, but in some of the smaller schools the teaching clearly declined.

In Standard VI., where geography is a pass subject, much creditable work has been met with, but in many of the smaller schools the knowledge of physical and mathematical geography is still weak. In Standards I. and II. the subject has been efficiently taught; in Standards IV. and V. it has been less satisfactory, varying much in quality from school to school, and even from class to class. The new courses of study in geography present an extreme contrast to the old ones. They bring into prominence the direct observation of local features and phenomena, combined with a more general consideration of the agents of earth-sculpture illustrated by pictures and other aids to clear realisation, leaving political and commercial geography to be learned from the reading of suitable readers. The change in the scope of this study is likely to further the ends of education, but it will demand from teachers much thoughtful preparation and a decided departure from old methods of treatment. The necessary adjustment will take time, and for a seaeon work will, no doubt, proceed on tentative lines. The preparation of good local maps, representing the natural features of the district with which the children are familiar, will be indispensable, and should be proceeded with forthwith. I understand that the Education Department will make arrangements for supplying plans of the districts adjoining schools, but these will form nothing more than the basis of the fuller maps that must be provided for the intelligent study of local geography. The mathematical geography prescribed for Standard VI. will, I fear, prove a difficult and embarrassing study; time alone will show how far it can be successfully dealt with. That geographical studies should be founded on the experience and the direct observation of pupils is in every way desirable, and if the teachers conform to the aims of the syllabus with reasonable closeness there must be a decided gain in educative effect.

It is not desirable that text-books dealing with Course A geography should be placed in the hands of pupils. In most schools, indeed, the treatment of the subject will vary more or less widely, as the varying local features and conditions demand. The use of text-books would mean the continuance of rote-learning to a hurtful degree and the discouragement of direct observation, and of that reasoning about and tentative explanation of what is observed, that should form the backbone of the instruction. Such text-books may, however, be of much service in affording guidance to those who feel the need of it.

Drawing is well taught in a considerable number of schools, especially in the larger ones, and satisfactorily in most. Blank books are coming into use more and more, and they should be used everywhere. Under the advice of Mr. Harry Wallace the drawing of plain and coloured patterns and designs, many of the latter original, has made very satisfactory progress in the schools he has been able to visit. In many other schools promising work in brush drawing is being carried on, and pupils and teachers alike display considerable enthusiasm for it. It is desirable that brush drawing should be taken up in all schools in which teachers can give competent direction of it, for it imparts a much better training and yields a better means of artistic expression than pencil drawing, while above all its practice demands greater honesty and fidelity in the effort put forth by the pupils. Of the many new developments of recent years, this is, in my judgment, the most valuable and the least ephemeral.

I shall not refer in any detail to the other class and additional subjects. They have all received a fair share of attention, and have, in general, been taught with considerable success. Science shows some progress, but the knowledge gained is too often vague and inexact. In the course of the year the Inspectors have repeatedly given simple examinations in writing, and the answers to these show that teachers might with advantage more freely use this means of letting their pupils and themselves see how the instruction fares. Clearness and fullness in describing experiments demonstrated by teachers should be insisted on in all such exercises. In the larger schools there was evidence of much satisfactory work in this subject. Less has been done to provide suitable equipment for science-teaching than in recent years.*

The teaching of object-lessons has been, on the whole, more intelligent, and has given greater prominence to observation and simple experiments. These lessons will now in large measure give place to a definite course of nature-study. The special preparation for this, added to the special preparation required for Course A geography, will, for a considerable time to come, impose on teachers a grievous heavy burden, and liberal allowance for deficiencies will have to be made during the coming year. Nature-study, no doubt, possesses great possibilities, but it can be efficiently directed only by those who bring to its pursuit a loving interest in Nature and her ways, and a varied knowledge of and considerable insight into them. It will, no doubt, take a full year or more before a distribution of lessons suited to the various times and seasons of the year can be definitely arranged, and first arrangements will necessarily be tentative. There are now various more or less suitable helps to this study for teachers to digest, but we must remember that lessons taught mainly from book-work or cut and dried notes are very likely to fail in the chief aim of the teaching. Records of many observations and collections of many of the materials chosen for study will have to be made and kept in a permanent form, and there should always be specimens enough for all to see clearly and conveniently. This implies a great deal of work, and I trust that teachers will gain some real satisfaction from it all, in the consciousness that their pupils are learning to use their eyes and brains to discern the beauty and thewonder of familiar objects, and mayhap laying the foundation for pursuits of lifelong interest.

* Teachers of rural schools who give a course of lessons in gardening will get much help from "Nature-teaching based upon the General Principles of Agriculture," by Watts and Freeman, and published by John Murray.

There is but little time for teaching singing, which is, however, satisfactorily taught in a considerable body of schools. Many teach it as a matter of duty rather than from any high appreciation of its humanising influence. Few of our pupils gain the power of reading at sight even simple melodies in the Tonic Sol-fa notation, and the connection of this notation with the old notation is rarely considered. It is desirable that all school song-books should be printed in the dual notation or in both notations side by side. The real obstacle to a better teaching of singing is want of time; but there is nothing to prevent the more frequent use of singing as a change and a mental restorative in the course of other and more wearisome school pursuits, save only indifference on the part of teachers.

Handwork in some form or other is now taken up in a large number of schools, and is generally popular. On the whole it is bringing forth good results. It is especially valuable in the primer classes, where it introduces a pleasant variety of useful employments and has by its attraction helped to keep up a more regular attendance. The opportunities for language-training that it affords might in these classes often be turned to better account. At the manual training centres in the city and suburbs of Auckland the pupils have done highly creditable work, as the Director of Technical Education has publicly testified. This performance speaks well for the general training the pupils have received in the schools.

Needlework is on the whole very satisfactorily taught, but the work done in the public schools will seldom compare either in quantity or in finish with that done at the Roman Catholic schools which the Inspectors visit, though the time given to the subject is generally the same in both classes of schools.

I very much regret that nothing has been done to provide the schools with the apparatus needed for the efficient teaching of nature-study, observational geography, and general and agricultural science as defined in the new syllabus. I have twice brought this matter under the notice of the Board, but no fruitful steps have yet been taken to supply our more urgent needs, such as a barometer, a thermometer (preferably a maximum and minimum one), a strong balance, a mounted magnetic needle, a tray for modelling geographical features, and appliances for weighing and measuring. Teachers cannot be expected to provide these appliances, and the resources of School Committees do not as a rule allow of their doing so, though in some instances they have been making creditable efforts to meet the needs of the schools. There are, doubtless, directions in which the Board could economize in connection with school furniture and school appliances, in order to supply this urgently needed equipment. If educative training is to have that close relation to the ordinary life, experience, and surroundings of the children, which the new syllabus contemplates, the apparatus indicated above will have to be provided with as little delay as possible.

Drill has been greatly retarded in most schools by the long persistent wet weather that prevailed during the latter half of the year. The same cause inflicted on the Inspectors a great deal of hardship cheerfully and uncomplainingly encountered. The way in which pupils turned up at rural examinations, in spite of forbidding weather, affords striking testimony to the value the great mass of the people attach to the schools and the training they impart.

The order and discipline of the schools are in general highly satisfactory. The moral force that secures easy control, and insures steady and earnest application from the pupils, shows itself more widely year by year. The call for repression and driving grows less needful. Still we are far from having attained that smooth and trustful co-operation between pupils and teachers that forms so admirable a feature in American schools. This, indeed, is the feature in school-management that most needs encouragement amongst us. The chief influence working against it is the excessive dependence of pupils on the teachers' assistance; for the mass of our teachers do much more to help pupils over difficulties, and to spare them the healthful effort to think for themselves and to seek their salvation in the resolute exercise of self-help, than is beneficial or in any way necessary. Some even proceed as if their scholars were little empty pitchers waiting to be pumped full of so-called instruction. The ideal we must strive after, by the exercise of severe and habitual self-restraint if need be, is to create in our schools an atmosphere of real friendship and of mutual confidence and helpfulness between teachers and taught. All true and fruitful teaching consists much more in skilful guidance of pupils' efforts, with sparing interposition of the teachers' help, than in clear and forceful instruction, which indeed has its place though in general a subordinate one.

In many directions the influence of the public schools is telling beneficially on the life of the rising generation. Mr. Grierson, not without warrant, writes as follows: "It seems to me a matter for general congratulation that in the countrysides—many of them remote—the influence of the teachers on the manners and general demeanour of their pupils should be so clearly marked and gratifying. During the past year, as in each other year of my work as an Inspector, I have met with unvarying good behaviour, civility, and obedience from pupils in the schools, in the precincts of the school, and wherever I have chanced to meet them." This is largely true of the greater centres also, where other social influences considerably qualify the good effects of the school training. The behaviour of school-children in the railway-trains and probably in other public means of conveyance is not, however, such as teachers can regard with pride or even satisfaction, and I much regret that the authorities in public, private, and advanced schools do not take pains to inform themselves of such ugly and notorious facts, and strenuously exert themselves to secure amelioration. This, I have no doubt, they could with proper exertion do.

The teachers as a body continue to show praiseworthy diligence and in very many cases genuine enthusiasm in their work. To the younger teachers who are creditably conducting so many of the smaller schools, to "the admirable body of mistresses that has grown up in recent years in the larger country schools" (Mr. Grierson), to the head teachers who so efficiently direct the work of our largest schools, and to several of the Inspectors who by addresses and otherwise have helped to break down difficulties in meeting the requirements of the new syllabus, a special word of commendation and encouragement is due from me.

I have, &c.,

The Secretary, Auckland Education Board. D. Petrie, M.A., Chief Inspector.

TARANAKI.

SIR,— New Plymouth, 10th May, 1905.

We have the honour to lay before you our annual report for the year ending the 31st December, 1904.

During the year seventy-seven schools were open. Three newly opened schools were not examined, nor were two which were closed for a portion of the year.

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

Classes.	Number on Roll.	Present at Inspector's Annual Visit.	Average Age of Pupils in each Class.
			Yrs. mos.
Standard VII.	80	71	14 5
" VI.	226	216	13 11
" V.	431	421	13 3
" IV.	566	548	12 5
" III.	662	644	11 3
" II.	638	623	10 3
" I.	643	628	9 3
Preparatory	1,645	1,449	7 1
Totals	4,891	4,600	11 6*

* Mean of average age.

As compared with the return for 1903 the following increases are shown: Roll, 93; present at Inspector's annual visit, 150. The number of pupils absent at the annual visit was 291—95 in the standards and 196 in the preparatory classes. Last year the absentees numbered 348—106 in the standards and 242 in the preparatory classes. The number of pupils in Standard VII. shows an increase of eight. Of the eighty pupils in Standard VII., fifty-one were receiving free tuition in secondary subjects at the Stratford District High School, and in addition to these forty ex-Standard-VI. pupils were enjoying a similar privilege at the New Plymouth High School.

For the first time the three Roman Catholic schools at New Plymouth, Stratford, and Opunake were inspected and examined by the Board's Inspectors. The summary of results shows, roll, 267; present, 246. We are pleased to report that the work done, especially in the middle and lower classes, was highly satisfactory, and that the teachers were in a very high degree zealous and painstaking.

Though the new regulations did not come into force until the end of the year, we informed teachers that it would be noted as commendable if, so far as time and opportunity permitted, they introduced any of the new courses of instruction. In many cases this was done, and with very satisfactory results. One result, at any rate, has been that teachers who formerly considered the new syallbus an almost impossible one, now look upon it less unfavourably, and we are convinced that greater experience will lead to a deeper appreciation of its merits. The Course A geography, which at first raised so much opposition, was well attacked, particularly by the more experienced teachers, but, to the less experienced, some parts of the course present difficulties which can be overcome only by the formation of classes for the instruction of the teachers themselves. One department of nature-study is often misunderstood by those teachers whose inclinations lead them to take up plant-life, but whose knowledge is limited to general principles. Because they do not understand botanical classification, and cannot give the name of any plant brought to them by the pupils, they underestimate their capabilities to train the observing and reasoning powers. The names, though useful, are by no means essential, for the educative value of the lessons lies in discovering similarities and differences, and, by deducing the reasons for these, in leading the pupils to a recognition of general principles. Looked at from this point of view, terminology plays a very insignificant part.

In most schools, and particularly in the large ones, reading has reached a high standard of excellence, being marked by accuracy and by intelligence of expression. On the other hand, in some schools the reading is neglected in the lower classes, with the result that passages well within the understanding of the pupils are read without any attention to the sense, and the reading degenerates into a mere saying of words. It should be remembered that the reading, no matter how elementary, must contain all the elements of good reading, and that pupils, from the very earliest stages, must be led to grasp the writer's meaning, and then to give expression to that meaning in the words of the passage. In fact, in testing reading we do not even look at the book. We listen for the writer's meaning as interpreted by the child. Teachers would do well to adopt this practice more frequently.

The graphic system of writing has been introduced into the majority of schools, and we are pleased to note that wherever the principles have been studied and carefully taught the change has proved highly successful. Of the general neatness of the clerical work, we can speak in the highest terms.

The arithmetic tests were as a rule by no means well answered, and, even when the method of working was known, we were often astonished at the general prevalence of inaccuracies in the simplest mechanical operations. Nor was it only the mechanical work that was defective. Questions well within the syllabus, and which the teachers described as fair ones when the cards were handed to them before work began, were quite beyond the pupils. In great measure this arises from the lamentable weakness in mental arithmetic, which has been reported year after year without any appreciable improvement. Mental arithmetic is a means not only of inducing mental alertness, but also of rapidly

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.,
W. A. BALLANTYNE, B.A., } Inspectors.

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.
			Yrs. mos.
Standard VII.	251	241	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.

Standard VII. shows a decrease from 384 to 251. This is accounted for by the disestablishment of the District High School at Palmerston North. The average ages compare favourably with those of last year, Standards II. and VI. remaining the same, while the others are lower. There is a difference of six months in Standard VII. in favour of 1904. It is doubtful whether in the case of this class this is a good or a bad sign. It may mean that a great many of those who enter Standard VII. stay there for only a short time—a year or less—and it certainly points to the fact that only a minority stays two years or more.

The results of the examination of Standard VI. show that out of 802 who were present, 602 gained certificates of proficiency and 92 certificates of competency; that is, 86½ per cent. gained one or other of the certificates, while 75 per cent. gained the higher one. Comparing this result with last year, we find that 81 per cent. gained certificates in 1903, as against 86½ per cent. in 1904, which would go to show, if an inference can be made on the results of one year's trial, that more pupils will pass Standard VI. than formerly, but fewer of them will qualify for free places at secondary, district high, and technical schools.

ARITHMETIC.—Last year we commented adversely upon the teaching of arithmetic in this district. Our judgment of the subject is based upon two points: (1) the accuracy shown in working the written test, and (2) the rapidity with which these and mental tests are worked. Generally speaking, in Standards I., II., and III. the written test was good where sufficient time was given. The result in the upper classes was almost satisfactory, as the following figures show. These are the average of the results gained in a considerable number of schools. The number of sums in each test was 5. For Standard VI. the average was 2·9; for Standard V., 2·6; and for Standard IV., 3·2: or, Standard VI., 58 per cent.; Standard V., 52 per cent.; and Standard IV., 64 per cent. Taking the larger centres alone, the results were slightly better. The time given was about an hour and a half for Standards V. and VI., and somewhat less for Standard IV. We found great differences in the time taken. In some schools, even in the upper classes, every pupil was through in about an hour; in others an hour and a half was too little. Teachers should train their pupils to put their work straight down on the paper; a great saving of time may be effected by insisting that only what is absolutely necessary shall be worked out on slate. There is no need that sums should be first stated on slate and then copied on to paper. We would urge that still greater efforts be made to secure rapid work. Much will be done towards this end if complete mastery of the tables be insisted upon in the early stages, and mental arithmetc be given daily in every class.

ENGLISH.—In our last report we dealt somewhat fully with English, under the two headings "Reading" and "Composition," and indicated points in which improvement was needed and methods by which this could be gained. Among other things, two outlines were given showing the kind of questions which might profitably be asked when "poetry" was being taught. We would again direct attention to those outlines, and would like it to be clearly understood that no value whatever is attached to the mere "gabbling" of lines to whose meaning the attention of the scholars has never once been directed. It is not expected that pupils should be able to understand the exact meaning of every line; that is impossible, but they should know in a general way the meaning of the pieces they learn, and should understand plain references. For example, a subject frequently taken in Standard V. is "The Destruction of Sennacherib's Army." Is it too much to expect that some attention be paid to the historical circumstances referred to in this poem? Yet, over and over again, the ignorance of the pupils showed only too plainly that no attempt had been made to enlighten them. This is only one example out of many. A very real difficulty confronts the teacher with regard to the subject-matter of the reading lessons in the three upper standards. It is absolutely impossible to deal fully with all the lessons in the book and at the same time give an adequate amount of reading. Observations and experience show that some of the lessons present more difficulties than do others—difficulties of language, difficulties in words, difficulties in geographical and historical references. We have recommended that a dozen or so lessons be selected for special treatment, the aim in such being to give the pupils complete mastery over the thought and power to express that thought adequately and distinctly. The remaining lessons may be treated more as sight reading, the teacher to content himself with seeing that the pupils understand in a general way their meaning and purpose, and select for study only such phrases as present special difficulty We would again emphasize the need of daily exercise in phonics in the lower classes, and of frequent practice in syllabification in every class. If due attention were paid to phonics and word-building in the lower classes, the mechanics of reading should offer no difficulty in the upper, and it is of the utmost importance that such a condition of affairs should be attained We are a long way from it yet, and the consequence is that a great deal of valuable time of the upper classes is used up in dealing with difficulties which should have been mastered at an earlier stage. From what we have said it will appear we are by no means satisfied with our work in this department of English. Too much time is still wasted in the needless rereading of lessons. We would insist upon the fact that, except in the case of the lessons which are singled out for special treatment, there is little gained by reading the same piece twice, so long as other suitable reading-matter is available.

WRITING.—The writing of our schools is from time to time subjected to criticism by business men. The complaint is made that the boys who enter their employment show very poor penmanship; it is ill-formed and hard to read. It must be at once granted that the public has a right to demand that not only would-be clerks, but all scholars leaving our schools after having passed through all the classes, shall be able to write neatly and legibly; and in view of the dissatisfaction which is said to exist we must either defend our schools from the charge laid against them, or admit it and straightway begin to reform. We are pleased to be able to say that, in so far as the large majority of our schools is concerned, the charge is quite groundless. Writing is in most schools well taught, and the exercise-books and examination exercises show careful work on the part of the pupils. This applies especially to our country schools. In the larger centres it is unfortunately only too true that the writing of many

of the pupils is not what it should be, and we look for a marked improvement during next year. Good writing is always more difficult to obtain in town than in country schools, for two very obvious reasons: (1) the larger classes and consequent greater difficulty in individual supervision, and (2) the fact that the classes change teachers at least once a year. We do not offer these reasons as excuses for the bad writing which exists; no adequate excuse can ever be offered It is the duty of the headmaster, by careful supervision of the work of each class, and of every pupil in each class, to see that negligence on the part of any member of his staff in writing or any other subject is not allowed to interfere with the progress of the pupils. The constant insistence on careful work all the way through the school will inevitably bring about good results. The question of changing the style of writing was submitted to the teachers for their consideration. The present style has now had a fair trial. It is one form of the medium slant The voice of the teachers was against a change, and we think wisely so. The style in use has much to commend it. The slope which it embodies is that now being almost universally recommended, and the good results gained where it is thoroughly taught justify its being continued in our district. We are inclined to think that in the two upper classes the use of blank books would be conducive to better results from the business-man's point of view. By the time Standard V. is reached pupils should have a thorough knowledge of the formation of letters, and more freedom would develop individuality in style. We should like to see some of our teachers experiment in this direction. We doubt if our schools will ever yield just the results in this subject that business-men would like to see. It may be that they expect too much. We concede that they may reasonably expect careful and legible writing—they have a right to demand that—but if they expect much in the way of definite style, or of speed combined with style, it is probable they will be forever disappointed. Experience goes to show—experience of office men as well as school men—that a definite style is not formed until a youth is well on in the teens, full control of the finger-muscles used in writing not being gained at the age at which most of our boys and girls leave school.

Discipline.—The reports show that for the majority of schools the mark gained under this head is "Good" or "Satisfactory." A minority of them gained the higher mark, "Very good" and "Excellent." In only a very few schools did the pupils show by their behaviour and by their work that the teacher had very little control over them, and was quite capable of securing their attention. In a large number of schools the problem of discipline is not how to keep the children quiet—their attitude is too often one of painful silence—but how to arouse within them that responsiveness in their manner and bearing which tells not only that they are well governed but that they are well taught. If this responsive attitude is absent, it is a very serious reflection upon the teaching. If the teacher presents his work in an interesting and well-directed manner, he cannot fail to inspire his pupils to habits of thoughtful attention. Children brought up in towns are naturally more alert than those brought up in the country; but it is simply astonishing how much good teaching and wise methods of government can do in the way of bringing up children who, from the conditions of their upbringing and environment, are naturally unresponsive. A few minutes in a schoolroom will reveal the kind of government and of teaching which have been used, and the general means of discipline employed. Where undue harshness has been the law, the children are subdued and timid; where undue laxity has prevailed, they are careless in their movements and thoughtless in their answering; where thoroughness and insistence have been combined with sympathetic and intelligent teaching, the children willingly respond, are enthusiastic in their work, thoughtful in their answers, and generally anxious to do as well as they can. We not infrequently have to blame teachers for failing to arouse their pupils. Some seem to regard a listless attitude with great indifference. They blame the scholars. Every teacher knows that he himself is to blame in nine cases out of ten for the unresponsive and listless attitude of his pupils towards his teaching.

Attendance.—The following figures show the progress in attendance made during the past ten years: 1895—Number of schools examined, 106; average attendance, 7,488; percentage of attendance, 76·8: 1904—Number of schools examined, 169; average attendance, 10,391; percentage of attendance, 84·2.

Only once previously, in 1902, was the percentage of attendance higher than it was last year. It is gratifying to see that in this respect our district is improving, though we have not yet reached what should be regarded as a satisfactory point. A comparison with other districts will show where we stand in this respect. We give the figures for 1903: Auckland, 84·4; Taranaki, 82·7; Wellington, 82·6; Hawke's Bay, 83·2; Marlborough, 82·6; Nelson, 82·4; Grey, 84; Westland, 84·5; North Canterbury, 82·1; South Canterbury, 84·9; Otago, 86·8; Southland, 85; Wanganui, 83.

A difference of 4 or 5 per cent. in a school attendance means a very great difference in the work of the teacher and the progress of the school. It is to be feared that in some districts parents take a good deal of liberty with the School Attendance Act, and that exemption certificates are granted much more readily than they ought to be. How can the work of a school be good, and how can the progress of an individual pupil be satisfactory unless there is regular attendance?—It may be the case that some teachers do not exercise sufficient vigilance or take sufficient interest in the matter of the regular attendance of their pupils. There is a very real connection between good attendance and the personality and influence of the teacher. Given normal conditions, one might say almost that the attendance of the pupils is proportionate to the individual interest the teacher takes in them, and is a very fair measure of their regard for him and his work.

Manual Training.—It is with pleasure we record a decided movement in respect of manual training. Its claims are now more fully recognised than ever before, and in the majority of the schools room is found on the time-table for at least one of the recognised branches. Teachers, too, are more alive to the importance of manual training as a basis for mental development and as a source of increased interest on the part of the pupils in the general work of the school. It may not be out of place to state here a few of the reasons adduced by educationalists for giving manual training so prominent a place in the work of the primary school.

1. The psychological reason: Manual training aids in mental development. Some modern psychologists state the position much more strongly. They assert that unless suitable manual training be given between the ages of four and sixteen certain parts of the brain are only partially developed. At any rate it is undoubtedly true that a sounder mental training is secured when manual training is made to play a prominent part in the life of the child. All experience attests the fact, and the unquenchable desire of the growing child to do and make on its own account is a fact too well known to be ignored.

2. Manual training tends to develop the power of attention. "This is due partly to the pupil's interest in the work and partly to the nature of the exercises given. The correct construction of a piece of work can be accomplished only by a careful concentration of the mind upon the task." The boy who finds little to interest him in the ordinary lessons of the school becomes keen and alert in the presence of tasks in which he himself is the chief agent.

3. Manual training exercises a potent influence for good over the whole work of the school. An increased amount of attention gained in one subject is available for all the rest of the work as well, and the interest aroused in one subject may be the salvation of a pupil so far as his whole school career is concerned. This has been proved over and over again; and it is a significant fact that manual-training exercises provide the only real avenue of approach to a very large number of our pupils. "Learn by doing" should ever be the motto of the schoolroom, and if we cannot apply it always, let us at least do so as often as we can, so that the appetite of the growing pupil for "doing" may be satisfied, and thus his interest in the school be better maintained.

So far as this district is concerned we are in respect of manual training but yet in the beginning of things. We are feeling our way with a good deal of hesitation, and often with misgivings; but let us be assured that we have entered upon a right departure and move steadily on, trusting to the enlightenment of experience to guide us towards the best subjects and into the best means of dealing with them. Each teacher has his own problem here, and though he may be helped by others towards its solution, the solution must in the end rest with himself. Each must choose and act according to that for which he is most suited.

The great success attending the establishment of the woodwork and cookery classes at Palmerston and Hawera, and of the woodwork class at Wanganui, urges us to seek a further development of this scheme; and we trust that before long these two subjects will become part of the course of instruction at all our centres. It is vain to hope that at some not far distant day provision for cookery and bench-work will be part of the equipment of every school, and that the training given by a suitable course in these subjects will soon be deemed as important as the learning of problems in stocks and compound interest.

We are pleased to find, especially in the larger schools, that sewing, perhaps the most important subject for girls, is being taught in a more educative manner, and that the practice of many teachers in cutting out and placing the pupils' work for them—a task that makes extraordinary and quite unnecessary demands upon the teacher—is giving way to the more rational and the only educative one of insisting that the pupils shall place and cut out for themselves. Most of our large schools are now provided with sewing-machines, and the girls in the upper classes obtain valuable practice in the use of these.

Perhaps the most important development of the work of our rural schools has been the establishment of cottage-gardens. A very large number of teachers encourage the formation of flower-borders around the school, and this is an excellent thing; but we refer here to those gardens whose aim is to teach the elements of agriculture, and where operations are upon a much larger scale. This work was inaugurated under the provisions of the manual and technical regulations, the initial cost of tools, &c., being provided out of a special grant by the Education Department, and the upkeep maintained by a liberal capitation. It is felt on all hands that this is a step in the right direction. No more practical move has before been made. The work has been enthusiastically taken up by several teachers under the Wanganui Board; their efforts have been supported loyally by the parents, and the pupils have taken to the new departure with great zest and interest. The great possibilities latent in this movement can scarcely be estimated, and it is to be hoped that the Minister of Education will do all he can not only to maintain the gardens already established, but furnish the means for the establishment of more. Such gardens should be part of the equipment of every rural school.

EQUIPMENT.—Under this heading we include desks, maps, charts, apparatus, pictures, &c.

Most of the schools in the district are equipped with dual desks; in only a very few are the old long ones still to be found. The policy of the Board in removing the old high infant galleries and replacing them by dual desks is in every way commendable, and we trust that before very long every gallery will have disappeared. If any children are deserving of special consideration, surely the infants are; the best possible equipment and the best available teachers should be given to them. Though the dual desk is a vast improvement on the old long desk, it is, nevertheless, not the best arrangement. One desk for each pupil is the ideal we should aim at; and there is little doubt that in the near future the single desk will supersede the dual. The advantages of the former from the point of view alike of comfort and of discipline need hardly be pointed out. We have again to thank the Board for the generous manner in which they deal with our recommendations regarding maps, charts, and apparatus. During the year a great many schools received grants towards the purchase of apparatus for science-teaching. No school need be without such apparatus. Every reasonable application made during the past year received favourable consideration. We frequently hear from teachers that they have not this or that piece of apparatus, and on inquiry find that it has never been applied for. "He that asketh receiveth." It is not to be expected that the Board should supply everything. Home-made apparatus is always the most effective, and where such can be readily devised for any particular experiment it should be used. Such apparatus as barometers, thermometers, balances—necessary parts

of the equipment of every school—cannot be readily constructed by most teachers, and those requiring them should apply for them. It is frequently a matter for adverse comment that sufficient care is not taken of maps, charts, and apparatus. A little attention at the proper moment—the stitch in time—would help to prevent maps from falling into disrepair. Teachers should regard themselves as the custodians of the Board's property, and should make it a part of their duty to preserve it to the best of their ability. If there is one thing more than another that gives a bad impression of a school, and of a teacher, it is the sight of badly-kept apparatus, half-torn maps, untidy cupboards in which nothing seems to have a definite place, mantelshelves thick-coated with the "dust of ages," and blinds torn to ribbons and hanging in all stages of disorder. Surely it is reasonable to expect that every teacher shall take a pride in keeping his room or his school tidy, and in doing all he can to preserve apparatus and maps. Towards the end of the year two stereoscopes with a series of geographical pictures were purchased by the Board. These are now available for any teacher who may wish to supply added interest to his course of geography. A lantern and a series of selected slides would also be a welcome addition to the available apparatus of the district. No better means can be found for enlarging our knowledge and vivifying our ideas of other people and other lands. We should be glad if the Board could see its way to provide one during the incoming year.

The Teaching Force.—The efficiency of the work of instruction depends upon the efficiency of the teachers taking part in that work. If the teachers are strong and enthusiastic the teaching will be good, thorough, and progressive; if they are weak and indifferent the reverse will be true. The efficiency of a teacher is composed largely of the three elements: scholarship, training, and personality. Scholarship is attested to by certificate or degree; training is given through a pupil-teacher's course or a training-college, or both; personality is that native element peculiar to the individual which in the last analysis separates between the efficiency of one man and another.

Where do the teachers of Wanganui stand in respect of these three essential qualities?

(1.) *Scholarship.*—The teachers roll shows that of a total of 296 teachers in our primary schools 1 possesses the A certificate, 6 the B certificate, 12 the C certificate, 91 the D certificate, and 108 the E certificate, while no fewer than 78 are unclassified. This does not include pupil-teachers. Taking the D certificate as a satisfactory limit of scholarship, it appears that 186 teachers are below the limit. The E certificate is not now recognised by the Department in its examination for teachers, and no young teacher should be satisfied to hold it. The large number of uncertificated teachers constitutes a great source of weakness in our staff. It is impossible that the best work can be done by those whose scholarship is so low.

We would urge upon our younger teachers their duty in the matter of obtaining the highest certificate within their reach. The time is coming when, other qualifications being equal, the holder of the higher certificate will carry off the best positions. It is especially important that all, whatever certificate they hold, should constantly undertake such reading as will influence their methods of teaching Stagnation in teaching is one of the worst faults; yet it is only too apparent that many teachers take no means to prevent themselves getting into a rut. It is really astonishing how few seem to read books or magazines with the definite object of improving their methods. From time to time books are recommended, but there is little evidence that these have been studied carefully, and less that any serious attempt has been made to incorporate in the work of the school the ideas they contain. A single new book each year carefully studied would have an enormous effect for good upon the work of our schools.

(2.) *Training.*—An adequate training should include (*a*) a high-school or district-high-school course of two or three years, (*b*) an apprenticeship as pupil-teacher for two years, and (*c*) a training-college course of two years; and we trust that in the future it may be said of all our teachers that they have had such a training. In the light of such an ideal we find how inadequately trained are most of the teachers of the Wanganui District. A great many have had no training of any sort. A few only have had the advantage of attending a training-college in addition to their pupil-teachers' course: the majority of those who hold certificates have passed through a period of apprenticeship as pupil-teachers. It is greatly to their credit that, considering their disadvantage in the matter of training, so many are proving themselves efficient. It would be well if all teachers were to take advantage of the regulation of the Board which allows them to close their schools for one or two days each year for the purpose of visiting other schools. This opportunity might be taken advantage of more generally than it is. To see another teacher at work, even if he be not superior to one's-self, is an inestimable gain.

(3.) *Personality.*—This is the greatest factor in the success or failure of a teacher. Indifferent scholarship and inadequate training—defects greatly to be deplored—are much atoned for by a personality which is forceful, sympathetic, and attractive; and, on the other hand, without such a personality, the well-trained and adequately equipped, scholarly teacher often signally fails. We have only one way of judging of the personality of a teacher and that is by observing the effect of his work on the pupil, on the school, and on the district. Disorderly and inattentive pupils tell of weakness and lack of force; an untidy room and dusty walls tell of unpardonable blindness to the necessity of providing the best possible environment for the child. Of the impression the teacher makes through the children upon the district at large we are not in a position to speak. This only would we say: that he who secures the co-operation and goodwill of his pupils, and succeeds in gaining their interest in their work, never fails in securing a high place in the regard of the community.

The Wanganui District is fortunate in the character and personality of the majority of its teachers. Lack of scholarship and training are in many cases made up for by a personality which cannot fail to be influential for good in the development of the children under their care, and, so far as we are able to observe, the majority of our districts are being well and faithfully served by a faithful band of teachers.

We would summarise this section of our report in a sentence: the ideal teacher should be a person of strong, sympathetic, and attractive personality, thoroughly in earnest about his work, ever on the alert to gain information about new and better methods, and constantly in touch with literature that will better equip and more fully inform his mind. Can we aim at this?

Some Aspects of the Inspector's Work.—"The old order changeth, yielding place to new" is being verified at present in our educational world. Old methods of presenting the various subjects are giving place to better and more scientific ones. A system which depended too exclusively on memory-tests, and made examinations to consist largely in the reproduction of memorised facts, is breaking down before the onrush of methods which demand that a more all-round view of child-nature be incorporated alike in methods of teaching and of examinations. Individual children must have their individual peculiarities considered. Now, it is clear, that if the teacher is to come into as large a place of freedom as he ought to have, the old examination method, too, must be abolished or very largely changed. The work of the Inspector, too, must undergo certain modifications, and it will be well to state here some of the principles we are seeking to establish in our work and in our relations with the teaching staff of the district.

1. The Inspector must be the expert adviser and exponent of methods of teaching and management, who is prepared to take charge of class or school and exhibit the better methods which it is his duty from time to time to bring forward. It is not enough that he be a critic. For the majority of teachers, who are faithful in the discharge of their duties, it is essential that the attitude of the critic be almost entirely laid aside. The Inspector must be prepared to show, by example, the more approved methods which his wider experience and better training have enabled him to acquire. Unfortunately there is a minority of teachers for whom the attitude of severe criticism alone suffices. Fitful in their work, and often unfaithful in the discharge of their duties, they impose upon the Inspector the disagreeable task of exposing their neglect and of bringing their work into that condemnation which it thoroughly deserves. The majority, however, are not in this category, and we believe that much more can be done than has yet been done to make the Inspector's visits a source of real strength to them.

2. There must be more frequent conference between Inspectors and teachers. Their interests are one, and they are working towards a common goal; and we believe that the work both of Inspectors and teachers can be greatly facilitated and greater all-round progress secured by discussion in which Inspectors and teachers join. We have already broken ground in this direction. Last year the Inspectors met the teachers at all the centres in the district, and these meetings have already been productive of much good.

3. The examination method, except for Standard VI., which is practically fixed by regulation, must be so altered that the habit of mind which grew up under the old *régime* of working for a "good result" or "a good pass," as it was called, will be, if possible, completely eradicated. The real welfare of the school was imperilled by a system which attached so much importance to the result of one visit from one man. We do not wish to detract from the importance of the Inspector's annual visit; on the contrary, we trust it will be more important than ever—more important in that it will be more searching as to the real quality of the methods employed during the year by the teacher—but it should be clearly understood by all, and teachers should let their scholars understand it, that their promotion depends, not on the results gained by them at the Inspector's visit, but on the attention they give to their tasks, and the progress they make during the whole year.

Lines of Advance.—At a time when we are face to face with a new departure in our course of study, and when the spirit of impatience with old methods is so much with us, it is well to place clearly before us what should be regarded as most essential in any course of study, so that our schemes, plans, and time-tables may show a proper appreciation of the relative values of the various subjects which we are called upon to teach.

1. It is absolutely essential, if our schools are rightly to discharge their function, that we aim at thorough training in English, arithmetic, and penmanship. These must ever be regarded as the most important subjects, and must ever receive an adequate share of the available time. There is a grave danger at the present time of our attempting too much, with the result that there is apt to be failure in those points where success is most necessary. Everything cannot be taught in a school course, and the claims of the subjects we have mentioned are paramount.

2. It is also essential, in order that an intelligent interest in school and its occupations may be more fully developed, that a larger place be given to manual training and individual practical work by the pupils in all subjects that lend themselves to practical treatment. This point really marks one great difference between what is called the "new education" and the "old." It is a change of method, a change of attitude to the child. He is to be more the agent and less the passive recipient. He is to be brought into contact with things, is to discover processes for himself, and verify results of calculations by making actual measurements. His constructive faculty is to be the more frequently and more systematically used.

3. Physical culture must be more fully recognised. Daily exercises towards this end should be given. We do not depreciate the value of "weekly drill" when we say that it is no substitute for regular daily practice of five or ten minutes in such exercises as tend to develop proper attitude of the body, a good style of walking, &c. If such work cannot, on account of the weather, be taken outside, it should be taken inside. We have, as yet, notwithstanding all the attention that has been given to military drill, scarcely begun to realise the importance of physical culture during the school period of life, and the necessity of allowing some portion of every day for this work.

4. There should be a constant aim, from the day a child enters school, to interpret to him the phenomena he meets with daily in his contact with nature. This leads out to practical work in geography, science, and nature-study, and it is important to observe that it is not the amount taught, but the method used in connection with these subjects that is most significant. Each child must be

led to investigate and inquire for himself. The facts and processes he memorises must be those he has discovered and seen for himself, not merely those stated in text-books. The text-book has an important place, but it is a subordinate one. It should be used to amplify and verify the knowledge that has been gained by experience. The aim of teaching science, physical geography, and nature-study, so far as the primary school is concerned, should be to give the child a good working-knowledge of the forces operating in nature around him—forces whose actions and results he sees every day of his life.

The following pregnant paragraph from Professor Dewey's most suggestive book, "The School and Society," is deserving of close study by all who have to do with the work of our public schools. It contains the essential principle which should ever be our guide in all our schemes, our methods, and our management. After showing clearly the outstanding defects and weaknesses in our present curriculum and methods, he concludes thus: "I may have exaggerated somewhat in order to make plain the typical points of the old education: its passivity of attitude, its mechanical massing of children, its uniformity of curriculum and method. It may be summed up by stating that the centre of gravity is outside the child. It is in the teacher, the text-book, anywhere and everywhere you please except in the immediate instincts and activities of the child himself. On that basis there is not much to be said about the life of the child. A good deal might be said about the studying of the child, but the school is not the place where the child lives. Now the change which is coming into our education is the shifting of the centre of gravity. It is a change, a revolution, not unlike that introduced by Copernicus when the astronomical centre shifted from the earth to the sun. In this case the child becomes the sun about which the appliances of education revolve; he is the centre about which they are organized." To grasp the full significance of this great principle would mean something like a revolution in the methods and management of our schools.

In concluding, we would express our appreciation of the faithfulness displayed by most of our teachers in the discharge of their onerous duties and of the readiness with which they act upon our suggestions.

To the Board, for the consideration our work receives at their hands, and to the office staff, for the assistance they render us as occasion demands, we tender our thanks.

We have, &c.,
WM. GRAY,
JAS. MILNE,
T. B. STRONG,
Inspectors.

The Chairman, Education Board, Wanganui.

WELLINGTON.

SIR,— Wellington, 1st March, 1905.

We have the honour to submit our report for 1904 on the primary schools in the Wellington District.

STATISTICS.—During the year 156 schools were in operation. Of these, three were opened towards the end of the year, and four (all aided schools) were closed at the time of the Inspector's annual visit. The remaining 149 were all examined. Eight Catholic Schools with a roll number of 1,266 were also examined, making a total of 157 schools in all, with a roll number of 17,359 children. The following is a summary of the standard classification of the Board Schools in the district:—

Classes.	Number on Roll.	Present at Inspector's Annual Visit.	Average Age of Pupils in each Class.
			Yrs. mos.
Standard VII.	696	677	14 4
" VI.	1,091	1,062	13 9
" V.	1,552	1,521	12 10
" IV.	1,879	1,821	11 11
" III.	2,076	2,006	10 11
" II.	1,899	1,847	9 10
" I.	1,792	1,733	8 11
Preparatory	5,104	4,467	6 11
Totals	16,089	15,134	11 2*

* Mean of average age.

The numbers on the roll show an increase of 306, and those present at the annual visit an increase of 415, on the corresponding numbers for 1903.

During the year a Truant Inspector was appointed, and the satisfactory improvement that has already taken place sufficiently indicates the energy with which he has entered upon his duties. We do not think, however, that any scheme dealing with truancy will be a thorough success until a truant school is established in the city.

GENERAL REMARKS.—Making due allowance for those schools which have during the year been working at a disadvantage on account of epidemics of sickness and changes in the staff, we are well satisfied with the condition of the district in educational matters. A reference to the National Scholar-

ship results will show the creditable position occupied by candidates from this district. Of the 149 schools examined we have classified 108 as satisfactory to good, 28 as fair, and 13 as inferior. Changes have been effected in the management of eight of the thirteen schools classified as inferior, but as the majority of these schools are in grades 0, 1, and 2, with small salaries, and situated for the most part in isolated localities, they offer small inducements to the teaching profession, and year by year increased difficulty is experienced in finding competent teachers for them. In some instances applications for vacancies have been advertised for on three separate occaisons without response from a single certificated teacher. Whilst this state of things lasts we are not hopeful of improving the efficiency of schools in this class.

SYLLABUS.—A "circular note" dealing with the syllabus and more especially with matters connected with school method will shortly be issued to all head teachers. As a copy will be laid before the Board we shall here confine ourselves to a few general remarks on these topics. We have recorded in previous reports our opinion that the tests in Standard V. and Standard VI., arithmetic are in many cases too exacting. We are firmly convinced that the exacting of too high a standard is an obstacle to a rational and intelligent treatment of arithmetic. The great fault in the past has been the hurrying-on of the child to difficult processes and examples before true principles have been grasped. In all books on method great stress is laid on the necessity of oral treatment, with easy, and above all, reasonable concrete examples, but the teacher is not encouraged to work on these lines, if his results in, say, interest or profit and loss, are tested by examples consisting of cumbersome amounts in pounds, shillings, pence, and fractions of a penny—amounts which are certainly not to be met with in ordinary business transactions. In testing any subject due regard should be paid to the amount of time available for teaching that subject, and, in view of the requirements of the rest of the syllabus, the time allotted for arithmetic should not exceed four and a-half or five hours a week, in which time the subject could receive full justice from the point of view both of its commercial function and of its efficiency as an instrument for training and strengthening the mind. But in order to make this time suffice, the examination requirements should correspond. We do not wish to undervalue the capablilties of the children of average intelligence, but we recognise the fact that in every class there is a considerable percentage of children below the average intelligence, and it is in attempting to get factitious results from these that both time and method are too often sacrificed.

We propose in the circular note to make strong representations to teachers with regard to reading. We regret to notice in many schools the prevalence of defects and errors in the pronunciation of some of the commonest words in the language. The evil is a serious one and we have impressed on teachers the necessity of making strenuous efforts to correct it. The remedies (not the least of which is example) are very obvious, and we do not expect in the future to have to lay special stress on this matter. For the purpose of encouraging more thorough and intelligent instruction in comprehension of subject-matter and knowledge of the language, clause 37 of the new regulations recommends teachers to pay special attention to the lessons for recitation, and to certain chapters selected from the reading-book. We have strongly recommended teachers to take advantage of this provision. True comprehension of the written thought is the first essential of reading, but there is a tendency to substitute mere oral expression for comprehension. In previous reports we have mentioned causes which we consider mainly responsible for this. The time has come for a change in the reading-books in use in the district, and we have already advised the Board to that effect. Consideration of the matter has been deferred for the present, but we hope to see a change made by the end of the year.

It would be premature at this stage to express decided opinions on the working of the new syllabus, especially as all schools examined prior to the winter holidays were examined under the old system, but we have noticed that gratifying results have been obtained by those teachers who have entered most heartily into the true spirit of the new regulations. In those schools in which an intelligent scheme of nature-study has been adopted, there was a marked improvement in the composition, both oral and written; and the "object-lessons," more especially those of the junior classes, were superior to anything we have yet seen. With regard to geography, we meet with some disinclination to depart from the lines of the old text-book, nor are the recommendations of the syllabus in the matter of the actual observation of physical phenomena and the giving of lessons outside the schoolroom adopted as readily as we could wish. As we said in our last report, the changes in the syllabus are more in the direction of method than of matter, and it is in geography that the greatest changes in method have been made. We shall in future look for a little more alacrity on the part of some of our teachers in adapting themselves to the new requirements in this subject. A great change has taken place in the views of educationists with regard to the teaching of science in elementary schools. Scientific method and the cultivation of the spirit of observation and inquiry are to take the place of the old system of elaborate syllabuses and mere demonstration lessons. We notice that in the "English Code for 1904" the course of instruction in what was formerly scheduled as "elementary science" is given as: "Knowledge of the common phenomena of the external world with special reference to the formation of a habit of intelligent and accurate observation, and to the application of that habit—in conjunction with simple forms of experiment—in the daily life and surroundings of the scholars." Some schools are following the excellent example of Mauriceville West with regard to "agricultural knowledge" combined with cottage-gardening. Satisfactory work is also being done in physiology, physics, and domestic economy. Two schools, which are earning the chemistry grant under the regulations of the Manual and Technical Instruction Act, are doing practical laboratory-work. In others the instruction in chemistry consists mainly of demonstration lessons. Botany is practically confined to a few schools. Country schools should adopt such a syllabus as is laid down in clause 56 of the new regulations. Up till 1902 the Board annually set aside a fund for the purpose of supplying schools with apparatus and material necessary for elementary-science teaching. We hope to see this fund re-established. An excellent suggestion made at a meeting of the Board, that up to a certain limit a pound-for-pound subsidy should be granted for the purpose, would, if carried out, be a great encouragement to schools in which nature-study or elementary science is made a special feature.

In history most schools have used reading-books, and in some these have been combined with oral lessons with fairly satisfactory results; but the idea that the study of history, when properly conducted, is of high moral value is not fully realised by many of our teachers. Leading incidents in our history can be brought before young children by means of stories of great men, and an intelligent interest in individuals can thus be aroused. At a later stage it can be pointed out that these men were leaders in certain movements, that they represented the spirit of their time, and thus gradually the growth of the British constitutions can be dealt with. Such stories should be well told, and, to make them living, they should be associated with something coming within the experience of the children. If we trace the struggle for freedom through the course of British history, we meet with so many examples of heroism, of self-sacrifice, of devotion to principles, of true patriotism in fact, that lessons so chosen cannot fail to inspire and awaken a spirit of emulation. The early struggles of the pioneers of our colony afford many such examples, and these, if utilised by the teacher, would do much to make a New-Zealander more thoroughly realise the obligation he is under to do his share, however small, towards making the future of our colony worthy of the best traditions of the British race.

During the year the cadets were inspected by Lieut.-Colonel Loveday, who expressed himself as satisfied with the progress made in the equipment and drill of the corps in the district as a whole. He has also forwarded us a report on each school. The physical drill taken in the schools consists of free exercises and exercises with clubs, dumb-bells, or poles. These exercises are generally fairly satisfactory, though in many cases special breathing exercises should be given, and more attention should be paid to the recommendations of the syllabus. In six schools where the exercises were not systematically given, arrangements were made at the annual visit for the instruction to be given on better lines. This subject was marked as "Good" or "Very good" in sixty-one schools.

Good work is being done in drawing. Handwork is also finding more favour with our teachers. Eighty-six schools have claimed capitation under the Manual and Technical Instruction Act, and nearly all the subjects mentioned in clauses 19, 20, and 21 of the regulations under the Act are represented on these claims, plasticine and brush drawing being the favourite subjects. Other subjects represented are first aid and ambulance, swimming, cottage-gardening, elementary agriculture, elementary physics, and elementary chemistry.

Instruction to Teachers.—The cooking classes under Miss Millington and Mrs. Neeley were continued as before, and the Saturday classes for teachers at Wellington, Masterton, and Pahiatua were well attended. The teachers' classes for physical instruction have made a decided improvement in the physical drill of many schools, more especially in the free exercises and in the exercises with clubs and dumb-bells. When the district high schools are in working-order and the much-needed training-college established, all these classes will require to be reorganized.

With one exception all the pupil-teachers in the service were promoted on their work for the year. The Board has decided to make new regulations, the chief change being the abolition of the four annual examinations during the term of service, and the substitution of two examinations in their place, the Junior Civil Service Examination at the end of the second year and the Matriculation or D Certificate Examination at the end of the fourth.

Scholarships.—In 1904 the Board adopted new scholarship regulations. Senior scholarships have been established for pupils under sixteen years of age, and the age for the junior scholarships has been reduced from fifteen to fourteen. The schools have been reclassified, and a more liberal allowance has been made for the small country schools. The National Scholarship Examination has been adopted, with this advantage, that, while there are three scholarships—National, Queen's, and Board—for which a child can compete, the awards are made on one examination.

District High Schools.—A marked feature of the year has been the extention of the district high-school system to different centres in the district. At Masterton and Pahiatua secondary departments have been in operation for some time, and permission has now been granted to Levin, Hutt, Greytown, Petone, Terrace, and Newtown to establish classes for higher work. The object of the district high school, as we understand it, is to give facilities for higher education to children who, from financial and other reasons, would not be able to receive any secondary training. To obtain this benefit, their parents are willing to delay the withdrawal of their children form school for some two or three years after the completion of a course in the primary school. The question at once arises, "What is the best curriculum for a school of this class?" A recent writer on "The Choice of Studies" has said, "A rationally conceived curriculum must be the resultant of these two forces, the nature of the child and the requirements of the community." Both these factors have been overlooked in the past, and will be neglected in the future if the curriculum is to consist only of those subjects which form the usual high-school course, selected because the mental discipline afforded has hitherto been considered of inestimable value. Again, to select subjects from the bread-and-butter point of view alone would perhaps be as serious a mistake The idea that finds most favour to-day is that the studies of the last year or two of school life should be arranged "so as to allow of some preparation in a general way for a pupil's future occupation, but not so as to invade the province of those institutions which prepare directly for special trades and professions." That the education afforded to children entering these schools should have a direct bearing on their future life—that is, should be adapted to their environment—is now generally admitted by educational authorities If we look at schools established to meet similar needs in Great Britain, France, Germany, and elsewhere, we find that courses of work on scientific, commercial, and industrial lines have been adopted, and the necessity for a wide educational training has also been kept in view These courses have been drawn up, not as preliminary courses to university work, but as finishing courses to prepare the pupil for his future occupation. The District High School Regulations of the Department have been drawn up to allow of the adoption of such courses, and our district high schools should adopt courses of work suitable to the environment of each. A good training in English and arithmetic (including mensuration), geography, and history taught to make the children

realise their duties as citizens, and a course in science, in which each child carries out his own experiments and makes his own observations, should be provided for in every secondary class. Local requirements should then guide the teacher in making a selection from the additional subjects. One centre may desire to make a strong feature of a commercial course, another of an industrial course, another of a scientific course, the last perhaps chosen as a preparation for agricultural knowledge. Much has been said about preparing for the Junior Civil Service and Matriculation Examinations, and, while this view should not be altogether lost sight of, these examinations must not be made idols of. The Junior Civil Service Examination has been adapted lately to meet the needs of any scholar preparing for a commercial or scientific course, and thus it is not so much a danger as the Matriculation, in which the teaching of an extra language (Latin or French) is required. Of the many children who enter these classes only a few will matriculate in three years; and if every child has to learn Latin or French for the sake of these few, much time will be wasted. For instance, in a town like Masterton a commercial course would probably be preferred by many scholars, and here the course in science should be so drawn up as to form a basis for a sound knowledge of agriculture. In Petone, again, the development should be on industrial lines.

The city schools raise another question. When secondary departments grow in size they are likely, under present conditions, to become unwieldy attachments to primary schools and so impare their efficiency. This is one of the dangers of the system which must, under all circumstances, be most carefully avoided. The Legislature has foreseen this difficulty by providing for the disestablishment of a district high school—with a view to establish a high school—where there are not less than sixty pupils who have obtained a certificate of proficiency under the regulations of the Public-school Syllabus. About a hundred children have entered the secondary departments of each of the city district high schools, and, as over two hundred have applied for admission to the Technical School day classes, it is evident that there are nearly four hundred children in the city the majority of whom are prepared to remain at school a year or two longer if instruction can be provided for them. This shows the necessity for establishing another secondary school in the city, without in any way interfering with the work of the Wellington College or the Girls' High School. We have on previous occasions advocated the establishment of a secondary school which would, in addition to giving a wide educational training, prepare children for a commercial or an industrial life, and we recommend the Board seriously to consider the question of taking steps at once for providing such an institution. Moreover, it was clearly understood at the time of their establishment that the Terrace and Newtown District High Schools were to be regarded merely as temporary expedients for a high school.

In other centres, such as Masterton and Petone, the secondary departments are likely to grow to such an extent that the Board will have to consider the question of taking advantage of the provisions allowed in section 88 of "The Education Act, 1904."

If the terms "old" and "new" may be used, we may say that the old education laid too much stress on the memorising of mere words, while the new education devotes itself to arousing the power of thinking and independent judgment, and, therefore, lays the greatest stress on the methods of inciting self-activity in the child. This means, as we have said before, a change in method rather than in matter, and quality rather than quantity should be the aim of the teacher. We are quite satisfied that our teachers are as earnest and conscientious as any body of workers, but we have found some of them discouraged on their first reading of the new syllabus. We can assure them, however, that careful study will clear away many difficulties, and they will find that many things in it which appear new are merely different settings of the old. A recent writer has expressed this so well that we beg leave to quote his words: "We believe in the new education as we believe in a new tune, though it contains not a tone that was not in the old despised one. We believe in it for the spirit of humanity underlying, overlying it, inspiring it, which makes the living child its subject, its untiring study, its ceaseless hope; for its truer appreciation of the child-nature in its restless eagerness, its longings, its love of nature and of life, and its ceaseless strivings to acquaint itself with its powers, its capabilities, and its surroundings; and for the wiser presentation of subjects suited to each stage of its advance and development, skilfully guiding its unrepressed and gladsome activities into the fruitful paths of experience and wiser satisfactions, turning aside from the dreary waste of enforced drudgery into the fresh and flowery fields of earnest, because curious, effort; and we believe in it especially for the better understanding of things and their names, its nicer observation of qualities and forms, its clearer conception of ideas, and its finer expression of thought."

In concluding a report expressing satisfaction with the general condition of educational matters in this district, we desire to place on record our appreciation of the earnest and commendable spirit shown by the teachers as a body in carrying out the onerous duties which fall to their lot. The matter of the payment of teachers is a question of State policy, and one that strictly speaking does not lie within our province; but, having regard for the true interests of education, we sincerely hope that the time is not far distant when provision will be made for more adequately remunerating men and women who are undertaking some of the most responsible duties of our social system.

We have, &c.,

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

The Chairman of the Education Board, Wellington.

HAWKE'S BAY.

Sir,— Napier, 31st March, 1905.

All the Board schools were visited, examined, and reported on before the close of the school year. Altogether, eighty-eight public schools and six Catholic schools were examined. In eighty schools, one or more certificated teachers are engaged, and it is pleasing to note that most of the pupil-teachers now hold certificates of competency. Three new schools and one side-school were opened.

The buildings or additions completed during the year are: Waipiro, on the East Coast; Te Karaka, at the terminus of the Poverty Bay Railway; and Waipatiki, between Dannevirke and Weber. The buildings to be erected at Whatatutu and Port Awanui will supply long-felt wants, and I shall rejoice when something can be done for the benefit of the important Native settlement at Mohaka, where there are more than seventy children receiving instruction in a hired building 23 ft. by 16 ft.

The opening of small schools containing half a dozen pupils is, in certain cases, of benefit to outlying settlers, but their establishment opens up new difficulties in the way of examination. Inspection rather than examination must be held to satisfy the conditions, as the time cannot be spared for the examination of three or four children qualified in the standard work. For example, it can hardly be expected of me to spend much time in the examination of the Motu district schools, where recently I had five pupils at one school, thirteen at another, and six at another. Five hardworking days were spent in carrying out this work!

School Attendance.—The school attendance for the year shows a fair improvement. The regularity for 1904 was 84·5 per cent. of the pupils entered as belonging to the schools, compared with 83·2 per cent. for the previous year. This improvement in the regularity of 1·3 per cent. for the year is satisfactory, considering the state of the country roads during the winter season and the long distances some pupils travel to and from school. It is a pity that some arrangement cannot be made by the Central Department by which a true comparison may be drawn between the school regularity in the several education districts. The plan adopted now does not enable this to be done. Were the actual number of pupils who are present in any one week taken as the basis for calculating the regularity of pupils, correct comparisons could be drawn as well between separate schools as education districts, but as the school roll is not "purged" by all teachers in the same way, a low apparent regularity when compared with the school roll may really be a high regularity when compared with the number of children who have actually attended school during a school week. In other words, the number of pupils present at school in any week should be taken as representing the school roll for the week. In quite a number of school districts, even under present conditions, the regularity of pupils is very high, some reaching as high as 96 per cent. of the roll-number. My own view is that efficiency and regularity are complementary to each other. Without the help of the police regularity at school will improve just as the tone and efficiency of a school improves. The very incoming of the police within the precincts of a school is contrary to the spirit of true education, and it is pleasing to find that without the Truant Officer and the policeman the school regularity continues to improve year by year.

School Buildings.—The schoolhouses throughout the district are in very fair order. There are a few exceptions, but the expenditure for maintenance for the current year will be small, unless the Board decides to carry out the painting or distempering of some of the rooms in the larger centres. Several of the residences are barely habitable and require renewal. In one instance the master's furniture has been spoilt by the depredations of tl borer, and the residence should either be replaced or house-allowance granted.

Accommodation.—Omitting the districts where the attendance is nominal, the accommodation supplied suffices for the several school districts, except at Gisborne and Woodlands Road, near Woodville. A new building is needed in the latter district, and the recent destruction of the school buildings at Gisborne necessitates their renewal as soon as possible. The latter town is growing rapidly, and as the population is scattered, it would be as well if the central school were limited to about six hundred pupils, and one or two smaller schools erected for the benefit of children in the more remote parts of the districts. Accommodation has to be provided at present for over nine hundred children.

School Gardens and Grounds.—There has been a steady advance in the number of children's gardens. School Committees appear to realise that neat school-grounds add to the attractiveness of a school, and efforts have certainly been made in quite a number of districts to make the public school a place where education can go on outside as well as inside the schoolroom. The neatly kept gardens are doing much to train and cultivate the tastes of children, and they provide a storehouse for the fostering of "nature-study" among teachers and pupils.

The following tabulation contains the number of pupils who were attending schools under the Board at the time of my annual visit. The figures include all pupils belonging to the senior division in the four district high schools. These appear under Class 7, which also includes the Standard VII. pupils from other than the district high schools:—

Classes.	Number on Roll.	Number present at Examination.	For Corresponding Period, 1903.	
			Number on Roll.	Number present.
Standard VII.	160	136	114	106
" VI.	511	502	557	541
" V.	829	803	759	739
" IV.	983	948	1,045	1,015
" III.	1,162	1,102	1,030	1,002
" II.	1,077	1,034	1,119	1,084
" I.	1,164	1,114	1,069	1,008
Total	5,886	5,639	5,693	5,495
Preparatory pupils ...	2,795	2,494	2,682	2,254
Grand Totals	8,681	8,133	8,375	7,749
Catholic Schools	645	575	746	701

These figures supply the barest information of the school-work and classification of the 8,681 pupils who were entered on the schedules as belonging to the schools at the date of the annual examinations. Compared with the numbers for the previous year there was an increase of 306 pupils. If the comparison is made according to classes, there were 160 pupils in Class 7 or Standard VII. compared with 114 for the previous year. Most of the children in Class 7 do secondary work as they are under special teachers at the district high schools. The anomaly continues to exist at the Napier North School of a Standard VII. class, the children being excluded from the Napier High School as free pupils, although they would be admitted as free pupils at the Hastings or other district high schools.

The pupils in the four highest classes numbered 2,483, which shows an increase of only eight compared with the number in 1903. It will thus be seen that the increase in the school attendance during the year was made up mostly of children new to school life.

The system of examination that came into operation during the year presents so many changes, when compared with what has done duty since the passing of the first Education Act in 1877, that much of the work has been of a tentative character. Teachers in most cases strove to mould together the new and the old, but the task was a difficult one. Promotions are now in the hands of teachers themselves, and the work of the Inspector is to test the judgment of the teacher with respect to school classification and efficiency rather than to discover the strength and weakness of individual pupils. Where examinations and promotions are in the hands of teachers variations in the character and quality of the work are sure to arise. Although all pupils were examined by me as usual no alteration was made in the classification, as it seemed far better to throw the responsibility of promotion upon the teachers at once so that they might adopt their methods to the requirements of the new syllabus. With respect to Standard VI. there was a falling-off in the number of pupils for examination, and the average quality of the work was certainly below that of a few years ago. Allowance, however, must be made for what was a transitional period, and, what is of more importance, for the wider scope of work that is now required for a certificate of proficiency.

Some subjects under the new regulations are compulsory as to preparation, but are not estimated in marking the efficiency of a candidate for a pass. The list of subjects to be taken in the different classes is a formidable one, but I am not yet prepared to affirm that the constant increase in the subjects of instruction is of greater moment than thoroughness in a few. By all means let the essential work be widened, but the permit in Regulation 4 under "Inspection and Examination" does not work, in my opinion, either in the interest of a pupil or of a school. In subjects like English and arithmetic a common standard should be necessary before promotion is possible, and a leaving certificate of competency ought not to issue unless the candidate is qualified in the essential work that the certificate is supposed to represent. But this difficulty can be easily remedied. One important advantage possessed by the new scheme is the opportunity it gives for the discovery of individuality and originality among teachers, In far too many instances the teachers appear as if afraid to think out a scheme of work for themselves, The regulations, suggestive as they are in English, arithmetic, history, and geography, remain in most schools simply as the regulations that have done duty for years past. It is the old story over again. Many teachers live isolated as individuals, and become slaves to routine. The regulations merely change, but change of method and matter under such conditions cannot take place in a moment by a mere instruction or Order in Council.

As for "nature-study," it seems a very mystery of mysteries to a large proportion of the teachers. The weakness in centralised forms of government is the tendency to mechanical methods. Initiative among workers is seldom fostered, and now that more freedom is given to teachers they fail to realise what power it places in their hands, and what responsibilities the power imposes upon them. The old habits are so strong that many teachers think everything is to be learned from a book, and that "nature-study" cannot be taught without one. No doubt books are aids to the gathering of information, and as helps to scientific description, but the book that "nature-study" implies is the Book of Nature, a fair knowledge of which can be gained in every school-ground and its vicinity by training children in the habits of observation. The common weeds by the wayside, the grasses, the flowers, shrubs, insects, stones, soils in and about the school-ground present a storehouse of facts for observation and inquiry. The children see such things as wholes day by day, but they are ignorant of their names, their habits, and their uses. When children know something of realities as they appeal to them through the senses, then is the time for the book containing other experiences and other facts. A few schools only, up to the present, have shown an intelligent interest in the pursuit of "nature-study." The following remarks are made on the teaching of "nature-study" in several of the schools. The mistress of the Papakura School says, "After reading some of the leaflets issued by the Agricultural Department I thought that a study of weeds and wild flowers around us would be useful to country children. I therefore encouraged the children to gather specimens of the various plants and press them. Lessons in drawing plant-forms were then begun in all standards and took the place of our old freehand drawing copies. In Standard I., children placed a simple leaf on their slate and drew round it. Then they tried to make a freehand copy of the leaf. First attempts were, of course, very bad, but I found that the children liked the work and soon improved. Sometimes they took an impression of a leaf in plasticine and then cut it out. In Standard II., children drew simple leaves in their books—freehand—and occasionally a stem with a few leaves on it. Standards III. to VII. continued this course, so that Standards V. to VII. were able to make a good drawing of a piece of plant-form. Each pupil in the upper classes gummed one of the pressed wild flowers on a page and made a drawing of this plant beside it. The drawing was then coloured, a fresh plant having to be used as a copy when colouring, as the pressed flower often loses the beauty of its colour. The children and I gathered what information we could about each plant, its uses, habits, &c., and after a conversational lesson about it the children wrote a description of the plant on the page opposite the pressed flower and its copy. This lesson serves as a composition exercise. I have found Cassell's 'Eyes and No Eyes' series very useful for studies of plant-life and also of insect-life."

The headmaster of the Kaikora North School writes, "The school is in a transition state between the old and the new syllabus work. The work for the year was practically finished in the upper standards in March last. The headmaster has used the interim in prospecting and experimenting in the new field of work. In particular we have taken up "nature-study" from nature, the whole material for the lessons being supplied by the children themselves. Another subject of great interest to the children is elementary geology as far as it affects geography—as the erosion of rocks, the formation of soils, &c. The new method of dealing with English has also been introduced. The arithmetic in the school has always been taught on a system similar to the new syllabus system. The above have been necessarily experiments. The results are as follows: (*a.*) The new style has proved very attractive to children and is a great relief to the teacher from the old mechanical syllabus. (*b.*) There is wonderful opportunity for combining one lesson with another. (*c.*) The experiment has been tried of making the work of a whole day revolve round a subject, say, geography, as follows: Reading lesson is taken from the geography book. Spelling consists of geographical names. Writing consists of geographical definitions. Drawing consists of maps, sections, and diagrams. Composition, of subjects such as the sun, the action of frost, the seasons, or a description of a country and its people, as China, Japan. Arithmetic, sums relating to distances between places, areas under cultivation, calculation of local time, percentage of total water in Pacific, Atlantic, &c. Science, of lessons on the formation of plains, &c."

From these two descriptions it will be understood how wide a scope there is for the study of nature, and no two schools need be alike in cultivating the habit of observation and of expression among the children.

At Motu, for example, the children, with the help of the master, have collected specimens of the principal bush flora, and they have a knowledge of the more important of the forest-trees, including their characteristics and uses. A list also has been kept of the birds seen in the vicinity of the school, with the date and a brief description of each. At a recent visit paid by me to the district a young pigeon was brought in by a surveyor, and the Chairman of the Committee undertook to make a photograph for the benefit of the children. At Petane the observations in the way of "nature-study" are of a different character, but they are nevertheless of much interest and future value to the children. The weekly compositions describing the things observed and the thoughts arising therefrom are suggestive and of much promise.

I have purposely given these examples to show what is possible where teachers choose to make "nature-study" a reality. The training of infants in "nature-study" is of a somewhat different character, and the mistress of the infants' department in the Napier South School describes her work in the following words (the syllabus of the course is omitted): "In the first lesson each child was supplied with a pea, a bean, a grain of wheat, and a grain of maize. These were examined and described by the children. The skin was peeled off, and each child found that the pea and the bean split into two parts while the wheat and maize remained whole. The class learnt that all seeds have either two seed-leaves or one seed-leaf. Specimens of these seeds were planted in a box. Other specimens, including a lupin, were germinated behind glass or in saucers on moist flannel, and a monitress was appointed to water them. All were kept on the mantelshelf before the glass, and each morning the children were required to notice them and describe the process of growth as they saw it. The most forward of these young plants were afterwards planted in the school-garden and tended by the children. In the succeeding lessons the children brought the specimens required. Each child was told to find out the name of the plant from which the specimen was taken, and where it grew. The class has been frequently taken out to the school-gardens to observe the process of growth there. In addition to the above work Standard I. has been taken to the beach for a lesson on the natural phenomena observable and on the contour of the land. As evidence of the interest which the children have manifested in their nature lessons, and of the growth of their observant faculties, they have spontaneously brought the following objects with a request that teacher should tell them something about them: Fossil shells from Bluff Hill, a piece of wood covered with young shell-fish from the beach, frogs and fishes from the swamp. One morning we found across the fireplace a perfect spider's web with the spider in the middle. With such a splendid illustration to work upon, the spider and its comparison with the fly became the subject of a number of lessons, including one on perseverance, for our friend the spider had its web swept away three times, and each time it wove another in exactly the same place, taking refuge meanwhile in a very conspicuous corner of the mantelshelf, where it remained for three weeks. The children often had the opportunity of seeing the spider secure and feed on its prey. The above lessons have been correlated with the plasticine lessons in P1 and P2 classes, and as far as possible with the brushwork and composition of Standard I."

Unfortunately few of our teachers possess the necessary books of reference bearing upon the flora and fauna, &c., of this country. Hutton and Drummond's book on "Nature Study" in New Zealand is of help, and so is the recently published work by Mulgan, "The New Zealand Nature-study Book," but teachers require something more than these if they are to interest their children in the vitalising pursuit of carefully observing the things around them. "Nature-study" is all-embracing in the power it gives to children in the way of rational enjoyment, and every encouragement should be given to the teachers by providing the schools with works of reference bearing upon matters that relate directly to the country. More than once attention has been called by me to the need of diagrams to illustrate the flora and fauna of New Zealand, but if "nature-study" is to become a reality in the schools I would suggest the following works of reference for use in all the larger schools, whilst those relating to birds and plants could be supplied to the smaller: (1) Buller's "Birds," (2) Featon's or Hetley's "New Zealand Flora," (3) "Indigenous Grasses of New Zealand" (Buchanan), (4) "Forest Flora of New Zealand" (Kirk), "New Zealand Mollusca," Brown's "Coleoptera," "Manual of New Zealand Entomology" (Hudson), "Animals of New Zealand" (Hutton), Hochstetter's "New Zealand," "Annual Reports of the Agricultural and Survey Department," "New Zealand Year-book," and "Maori Art"

(Hamilton). Such books as these are necessary in the schools. The cost of providing them would be somewhat considerable, but a few thousand pounds expended in the proper equipment of the schools of this country would be an investment likely to bring in an abundant harvest of good things.

In quite a number of districts attention is being given to the study of atmospheric phenomena. The barometer, the maximum and minimum thermometer, rain-gauge, and mariner's compass are being diligently studied and records kept that will prove of much value in the years to come. Some arrangements might be made whereby schools in remote districts could be brought into touch with the meteorological authorities in Wellington. An explanatory circular on the taking of observations and keeping of records would be of value at the present time.

District High Schools.—The four district high schools are showing signs of vitality, and judging by the results of the December examinations their future is assured. The establishment of district high schools and the employment of special instructors for secondary subjects has introduced difficulties into school management and control that will require the most careful consideration. The staffing of the primary schools include the headmaster, and the question is whether a headmaster should be allowed to do secondary work. The primary work is the essential work and cannot be subordinated to the success of the secondary classes, and as the master is counted in the primary school-staff, his services should be employed in making efficient the primary work of the school.

Technical Classes.—The school classes under the Manual and Technical Instruction Act are making but slow progress. Gisborne has now a Technical School, and both school and special classes have been established. Hastings has a room for woodwork, but Napier is yet without a properly equipped Technical School, and other places have been unable to proceed with classes in woodwork and cookery there being no rooms available

The proposal to employ instructors in cookery and dressmaking for six months alternately in Gisborne and Napier as centres, is likely to be of much benefit to the places named, and should the plan prove successful, other classes will be started in the southern part of the district.

The Saturday Special Classes for teachers have been carried on at Dannevirke and Napier as centres. The Gisborne centre was discontinued owing to the heavy expense incurred, but the classes are being resumed at the Technical School—in cookery for the lady teachers and woodwork for the men. Other classes will be started when suitable instructors can be obtained.

In Napier seventy-one teachers attended special classes in design, stencil-cutting, and brushwork in plant-form, and eighteen men teachers joined the manual-training class in woodwork.

The efforts that were made some time ago by the Board to interest the local public bodies in helping to provide for the salary of a special instructor in botany and agricultural science, following upon the lectures delivered to farmers by the Inspector-General of Schools, show the lack of interest manifested by public bodies generally in the promotion of technical education. I still think, however, that grants-in-aid would be given if the aim that the Board has in view were better understood. Two hundred and fifty pounds a year from seven or eight public bodies represents but a small sum from a large and rich district like Hawke's Bay, especially when it is proposed to expend twice or thrice that sum in furthering the agricultural and pastoral interests of the district.

Pupil-teachers and Scholarships.—The new schemes of examination by the Central Department for pupil-teachers, and for granting of scholarships, have had the effect of lessening my work in the preparation and examination of papers. The district high schools have, however, in a large measure counterbalanced this, but with the opening of small schools and the time taken in visiting them I am reaching the limit of work it is possible for one man to accomplish in so extensive a district. In addition to the eighty-eight public schools, I have examined as far as my time allowed the six Catholic schools that are established in this district. Nothing better shows the high ideals of the teachers in these schools than their strong desire to have their work examined in accordance with the Government requirements. As in the public schools, the work varies in quality, but much of it is creditably done and the teachers, like the Board's own teachers, are imbued with the desire to do honest and good work. Sometimes the requirements have not been reached, but the reason may be found in the operation of causes over which the teachers themselves have no control.

School Libraries.—The school library is beginning to receive more attention in certain schools. Teachers find that good books are among the best aids to high intelligence, nor do I think the task would be difficult for an experienced examiner to discover, even among the children, a great reader and lover of books. In too many cases, I fear, the "School Readers" are the only books that children possess. Wells, in his suggestive book, "Mankind in the Making," remarks that "A school without an easily accessible library of at least a thousand volumes is really scarcely a school at all—it is a dispensary without bottles, a kitchen without a pantry." Lovers of good books will appreciate the force of these remarks. Reference has been made already to certain needful books to assist teachers and pupils in "nature-studies," but it is difficult to make the country realise the great value of interesting books for children when essential books of reference are not even thought of as being necessary for the schools. And to illustrate the limited vocabulary of otherwise intelligent and well-trained children, the following examples are taken from the English paper of Standard VI. pupils in a recent examination. One of the questions to be answered was: Make sentences to show the proper meaning and use of the following words:—"Transgress": Sentence given—"Thy brother said he would *transgress* the river." Abdicate: Sentence given—"we sent an *abdicate* to the Minister." Degrade: Sentence given—I *degrade* down the hill." Retrograde: Sentence given—"I *retrograde* him." Automatic: Sentence given—"The *automatic* opinion of the young lady was very great." Aneroid: Sentence given—"The *aneroid* appearance of the stars on a moonlight night is very beautiful." Scores of similar examples might be given, but these suffice to show the superficial character of much of the school-work, when little more than class-books make up the full tale of reading for a pass in Standard VI.

Reading should be fostered in the schools much more than it is, and the school library, with books dealing with the wonders and beauties of our own country, ought to be provided, if the teachers are to

teach what is best for the children of the country to learn. A small paper approved by the Minister of Education has lately been issued in Christchurch called the "Zealandia School Paper." Were such a paper distributed free to all of the schools and to all the pupils in the classes for which the paper was intended, the good would be inestimable and would far outweigh the cost of carrying out such a proposal.

I desire once more to express my satisfaction with the generally high tone of the schools and with their gradual betterment. Men and women of probity and good attainments are working throughout the district, and honourable rivalry between them is shown in the school-sports meeting that annually takes place both at Poverty Bay and Hawke's Bay. And as showing the growing ideals of teachers I would like to point out that the Dannevirke Branch of the New Zealand Institute has decided to meet on special days for the discussion of methods of instruction as best adapted to the new scheme for the schools. I heartily recognise the good that is likely to ensue from meetings having so laudable an end in view, and the result must be the further improvement of the schools in tone and ideals.

I am, &c.,
H. Hill, Inspector.

The Chairman of the Education Board, Napier.

Summary of Results for the Whole District.

Classes.	Total Roll.	Present at Inspector's Annual Visit.	Average Age of Pupils in each Class.
			Yrs. mos.
Standard VII.	160	136	15 0
" VI.	511	502	14 2
" V.	829	803	13 2
" IV.	983	948	12 3
" III.	1,162	1,102	10 11
" II.	1,077	1,034	9 10
" I.	1,164	1,114	8 9
Preparatory	2,795	2,494	7 8
Totals	8,681	8,133	11 5*

* Mean of average age.

MARLBOROUGH.

Sir,— Education Office, Blenheim, 27th January, 1905.

I have the honour to submit my first general report on the public schools of the Marlborough Education District.

Number of Schools.—There were sixty-one schools on the list at the end of 1903; four of these have not been open during the past year, and four others were closed. Nine schools were opened. This gives sixty-one schools open at the end of 1904, an increase of two over those actually in operation at the end of 1903.

Inspection.—Immediately on taking up my duties in the beginning of July I made the inspection tour of the district, and though this part of the work was necessarily somewhat curtailed, nevertheless forty-nine schools were visited. The teachers in general appeared earnest and conscientious in their work; but as might be expected in very small schools a considerable number labour under the disadvantage of a lack of training. It is still to be hoped that when the training-college in Wellington is open special facilities for entrance will be afforded to the teachers of these small schools. The Education Committee, while recommending the £60 a year in fees and boarding allowances to ex-pupil-teachers, and £40 to such as gained "credit" in Junior University Scholarship or kept one year's terms, conclude that they do not deem it advisable to recommend allowances to uncertificated teachers who desire a course of training. The last decision is a matter of regret. After three years' service such teachers should be allowed to enter the Training-college on the same footing as at least the second group of entrants, and with the prospects of more assistance in literary work than the pupil-teachers generally require. It is strange that while the ideas of Kant, Pestalozzi, Froebel, and Herbart dominate educational method in the presentment of subjects a reaction should come in respect of teachers. The great educators agree that skill is a corollary of doing work. Yet the Committee is of opinion that a pupil-teacher's course prior to entrance to a Training-college is not satisfactory. The crusade against pupil-teachers appears to be largely due to impatience with a beginner. Every headmaster would doubtless like his pupil-teacher to be a fully responsible assistant. Under this system, which appears to have worked admirably in New Zealand, whatever may have been the result elsewhere, technical skill is ingrained into the teacher by four years' steady apprenticeship to the art, the whole of his daytime in the most impressionable part of his life being devoted to the actual practice of his business. Under the Training-college system most of the time will be devoted to lectures. These lectures will indeed be on the pedagogic art, but they cannot be a sufficient substitute for the actual practice. One cannot appreciate

books on methods of teaching till experience has partially opened the eyes to the smooth and thorny places. The former method of sending pupil-teachers to a Training-college after their period of apprenticeship appears, notwithstanding the finding of the Committee, more in accordance with the precepts of the modern exponents of educational theory. It is said that with a pupil-teacher system a number of children suffer by being placed under incapable management, but the new system appears to result in a famine of trainees of any kind. In the Minister's last annual report it is mentioned that the Public-school Teachers' Salaries Act appears to have strengthened the staff by increasing the ratio of adult teachers to pupil-teachers, the ratio being as follows: 2·79 to 1 in the year 1901, 3·98 to 1 in 1902, and 4·29 to 1 in 1903. It is true that the pupil-teachers have been reduced in number, but the main result so far appears to have been a reduction in the number of teachers in training. If the above ratios be taken to indicate the proportion of fully qualified teachers to unqualified it is deceptive. Included in the number of adult teachers are probably those in charge of little country schools of grades 0 and 1. These should rather, in many cases, rank not higher than pupil-teachers, for most of them have only a Sixth Standard qualification, and they are not subject to the advice and direction of skilled head-masters. These schools number 499, and in them 348 teachers are uncertificated. There must surely be many children in such schools who suffer from unskilled management. If, however, the suggestion be adopted that these teachers be drafted into the Training-colleges after, say, three years the defects of the present system would be largely remedied. In the country schools, without danger of doing much harm, they could get an idea of their deficiencies. It should be compulsory on them to proceed to the college at the conclusion of the term mentioned, and such as failed to qualify for higher work would nevertheless be better fit to carry on the smaller schools. Having such a course open before them they would be stimulated to proceed with their literary studies during the time of teaching.

While on the inspection tour I was much struck with the fact that some schools were placed with more regard to appearance from the road than to the comfort of those using the buildings, the windows in some cases facing to south and west. This causes the schools to be very cold in winter. In other instances the form of the buildings, long and narrow, and the arrangement of doors, leave little option to the teacher but to keep the children so seated as to throw a shadow on their work—a state of affairs highly prejudicial to the eyes. Many of the schools and residences require repainting. Application was made in 1902, renewed in 1903, and again in September last for a special vote for painting—without success. By the new mode of calculating the maintenance vote this Board is likely to suffer severely. Small Boards should be granted an extra sum of £250, as is the case with general maintenance, for with small schools in out of the way places expenses of upkeep are more than proportionate to that on large buildings of corresponding capital cost.

In some schools fifteen minutes' recess is allowed in morning and in afternoon. One school had twenty minutes in each case—twenty minutes a day is ample. Many schools had no summary attached to the time-table. This should be regarded as a necessary accompaniment of the time-table, as also should the time-tables of pupil-teachers' instruction, of ground supervision, and of alteration of subjects under the new syllabus. Although generally accurate, the registers were incomplete in a sufficient number of cases to call for a word of caution: as the register is the teacher's ledger it should be attended to with minute care. Slate-work generally was capable of improvement, both in writing and in the setting-out of the work. In some schools the clocks were in bad order; this requires attention from the Committees. There should be in each school an inventory of apparatus which each incoming teacher should receive and check. Papers on education, circulars, reports, &c., issued to the schools appear to be treated as the individual property of the teacher. All such should be filed and preserved as archives.

Examination.—Fifty-seven puplic schools and two private (Convent) schools were examined. Under the new regulations the promotion of pupils from standard to standard is, unless in exceptional circumstances, left in the hands of the head teacher. As the small schools administered by the Board are permanently situated amid exceptional circumstances I shall continue the practice of the past and determine promotion on the yearly visits. The teachers in these schools are mostly young women and girls with a Sixth Standard qualification, and, as might be expected, there was considerable diversity of opinion as to what was necessary for promotion. The programme of examination was that of the former syllabus, but the results were laid out as far as possible in accordance with the latest regulations. This being my first examination visit in Marlborough I made a thorough test of all subjects.

The two private schools examined had a combined roll of 156 pupils, of whom 143 were in attendance on examination-day. Twenty pupils were tested for leaving-certificates in Standard VI. Four certificates of proficiency and three of competency were awarded.

In the public schools the roll at times of examination amounted to 1,935 as contrasted with 1,970 for the year 1903—a decrease of thirty-five. There was also a decrease of ninety-one in the attendance —1,834 as compared with 1,925 of the former year. Twenty-seven schools had all the children on the roll present at examination.

The Truant Officer's report summarised is as follows: twenty-one informations, twenty convictions, one case dismissed. Fines, £2 11s. Costs (eleven cases), £4 10s.

When the Flaxbourne Settlement is made the returns in Marlborough should improve. It is necessary that in the cutting-up of the estate provision should be made for school-sites in suitable localities.

Sickness has not been so prevalent during the past year, although slight epidemics of measles, influenza, whooping-cough, scarlatina, and mumps were experienced. Where the irregularity of attendance was accompanied with weakness in pass subjects the certificate of proficiency in Standard VI. was withheld, and in the other standards the teacher was enjoined to take this into consideration in determining promotion. A school cannot be considered to be doing its duty if it is not open 420 half-days in the year. This leaves ten weeks for holidays—enough to allow six weeks at Christmas, two weeks for midwinter, and two weeks for casual holidays. In actual fact, however, only twelve schools attained the standard.

The roll of Standard VI. was 181: of these, 176 presented themselves for examination, eighty were awarded certificates of proficiency, twenty-nine certificates of competency, sixty-seven failed to qualify for either. The proficiency certificate is practically the former Standard VI. certificate. The requirements of the competency certificate are met by competence in fewer subjects. The above numbers reduced to percentage show 44·8 per cent. gained proficiency, 16·2 per cent. competency, and 38 per cent. failed to qualify. While the number in Standard VI. increased greatly (from 164 to 181) the average age decreased from 14 years 2 months in 1903 to 13 years 9 months, which is below the mean (13 years 10 months) for the colony. As 80 per cent. of the pupils present in Standard VI. passed in 1903 probably many very old pupils left the schools.

Unless the competency certificate for Standard VI. be introduced with a view to preparing the way for an abandonment of geography and drawing as pass subjects, it is difficult to see what purpose it serves. Cases can easily be conceived where one could obtain the proficiency certificate and yet fail to obtain the competency. In New Zealand it does not appear right to lay so much stress on English subjects as is required in America where the difficulty of dealing with a great alien immigration necessarily makes the teaching of that language a matter of first importance. (In the Junior Civil Service Examination the marks for English are equal to those assigned to three others out of the five subjects.) A working-knowledge of English is not so difficult for a New Zealand boy to obtain. It is, on the other hand, highly desirable that, as a needful corrective one in so isolated a region as New Zealand, we should make geography a speciality rather than a superfluity. Additional importance should also be attached to civics and economics. "Anarchy or despotism," says a great French writer, "has been the fate of those nations whose people became free before they became enlightened." The movements that take place in the political world in New Zealand, Australia, and further afield, especially those that result in Labour Ministries, show that, as a corrective to partial views, there is urgent need for a close study of economics in the schools. In schools where a boy who has gained a proficiency certificate continues on with the intention of pursuing his studies further the head teacher is recommended to choose from the list of subjects set forth for the Junior Civil Service Examination such a number as will in due course lead his pupil up to that test.

The fifty-seven schools examined may be classified as follows: Good, 7; satisfactory, 26; fair, 15; moderate, 9.

A general summary for the whole district, extracted from the annual report is appended:—

Classes.	Number on Roll.	Present at Inspector's Annual Visit.	Average Age of Pupils in each Class.
			Yrs. mos.
Standard VII.	34	30	14 10
" VI.	181	176	13 9
" V.	204	203	12 9
" IV.	231	225	12 0
" III.	261	251	11 0
" II.	274	261	9 8
" I.	232	228	8 8
Preparatory	518	460	7 0
Totals	1,935	1,834	11 3*

* Mean of average age.

The teachers in the employ of the Board are classified as follows:—Head teachers—certificated 11; assistants—certificated 11, uncertificated 3; sole teachers—certificated 13, uncertificated 37: total 75. There are also nine pupil-teachers.

The regulations for examination of the pupil-teachers are still under revision by the Department. During the past year these young people have been seriously hampered in their studies by the indefiniteness of requirements and the sudden change in the middle of April from the programme of former years to that of the Junior Civil Service—one much more difficult. The special text-books also were not named till April. The result of this examination could therefore hardly be expected to do credit either to the pupil-teachers or to their instructors. In addition to the Department's examination the pupil-teachers were tested by myself in reading, recitation, and writing. To this, during 1905, will be added a special examination by "criticism lesson."

Special Subjects.—*Reading:* The new syllabus prescribes two books for each standard; this should improve the reading, which is not as a rule fluent. There was a painful frequency of simultaneous work, in imitation of the teacher phrase by phrase. When pupils so trained were asked to read a whole paragraph by themselves they showed a hesitancy that betokened a want of self-reliance. The blackboard appeared never to be used to illustrate graphically the modulation of the voice, the general character of the reading being somewhat horizontal and monotonous. The sewing-hour can frequently be utilised for practice—the pupils in turns reading aloud page by page from an interesting story-book while their classmates ply their needles. This means of giving practice in lengthy passages is adopted in other districts with much profit. In many of the schools comprehension was far from ready. In the lower classes oral composition and spelling should be correlated with reading to a much greater extent than appears to have been done. An appreciation of literary beauties should be cultivated as far as may be from the lowest standards upwards—*e.g.*, "A Song for Little May," which appears in the Imperial Reader for Standard I., has many striking combinations that would well repay study by the

whole school—*e.g.*, " Waters singing," " o'er their way," " the words the waves repeat," " the rosy dawn is breaking," " the wooing breeze," " the blossom'd orchard trees," " the drowsy hum of bees," " silver voices." Such a poem may be used to illustrate personification, metaphor, alliteration, transferred epithet, the attention being drawn to the examples even if the words that designate these varieties of literary expression be not given. Children of the Sixth Standard should, however, know them. This poem also illustrates the strength of simple English words; and its breezy joyousness makes it a healthy study. The extent to which a teacher will proceed with the cultivation of literary appreciation will vary with the standard. The new syllabus suggests that special attention should be given to the pieces set for recitation and to say six of the best lessons of the reading-book. In Standard VI., if the reading-book were rightly used, the pupils might easily be led to introduce more of literary variety into their compositions. These were mostly arid statements of fact. When the child comes to a passage like " I wandered lonely as a cloud," the unskilful teacher allows the opportunity to pass.

A primrose by the river's brim
A yellow primrose is to him,
And nothing more.

But the watchful teacher leads his pupils to a conception of the vast solitude of that upper air with the great blue meadows of the sky above and the dizzy abyss of gorge and sea below. Again, the verse in which occurs, " My heart dances with the daffodils," is a beautiful vignette in words, whose rounded beauty reminds one in the region of verbal expression of the sonorous purity of the bell-bird's richest notes.

Spelling.—There appeared to be an inclination to treat the different subjects on the watertight-compartment principle; the spelling received insufficient attention in composition, geography, and in other general work—*e.g.*, " Masculine Ginger is the name of a man," " A volcano is a burning mountain which sends out steam and larvæ." This tendency to draw vertical lines of division between the subjects is most noticeable in the case of handwork—*e.g.*, sticklaying and bricklaying could be correlated in single lessons with drawing, reading, and number without setting apart a special period on the time-table for these subjects. So, too, plasticine should be used to illustrate parts of the geography or in teaching letters, number, and drawing, or design, without the necessity of keeping it as a separate subject. I should like, if special capitation be continued, to see it granted for drawing when taught by concrete methods, geography, arithmetic, and the elements of reading likewise, rather than the present mode of subsidising, say, bricklaying for an hour a week. The subsidy tends to obscure the fact that handwork is simply a method of teaching the ordinary subjects. Perhaps with the advent of new training-colleges a general capacity for introducing the handwork of different kinds in illustration of the various subjects will be attained by those trained in these institutions. At present there is too little versatility in the modes of presentment. Throughout the district, spelling, arithmetic, and geography gave the worst results, 67 per cent. of success in spelling, 51 per cent. in arithmetic, 45 per cent. in Standard V. geography.

Writing.—A fresh series of copies is required containing the requisite invoice-forms, &c., set for the different classes from Standard IV. upwards. In the lower classes it was frequently evident that the ruling of the slates had been left to the pupils—the lines were irregular and the writing could not be expected to be better. In most cases the children have to bring their own pens: the result is not fortunate; with bad pens good writing is impossible. It would be better if the Committees could see their way to supply the pens and so insure uniformity in this extremely important branch. In a number of schools the writing appears not to be done under direct supervision and direction. There was much need of teaching the formation of the letters; even where the transcription was specially prepared it could often ill stand looking into, and in some cases, though few, was disgracefully bad. In one school half an hour a week was devoted to the copybook—a portion of the time-table altogether inadequate. Samples of good writing from the better schools appeared to give a number of teachers the needed suggestion, and I expect improvement in this subject. A good bold round hand should be cultivated. Where the slope in the headline is too pronounced the children tend to a crabbed, lean, and cornered writing, and indulge too frequently in using the side of the pen.

Composition.—The essays were in general composed of bald statements of fact. After a study of figurative language in the reading-book; after also a definite direction of the pupils' attention to the beauties of nature in form, colour, and adjustment, the pupils of Standard VI. should be able to show taste in adorning their efforts. The vertical division of subjects was again very noticeable in composition, where spelling, writing, reading, elementary syntax, and science meet as it were on common ground. Side lights thrown on these subjects would tend to improvement in each of them: at present composition is mostly the production of information essays varied with studies of sentence and paragraph structure. The greater freedom of the new syllabus should lead to improvement in this subject. Oral composition or the art of thinking aloud, in well-constructed sentences, with consecutive thought, on given themes, has not hitherto received much attention. Several schools have entered into correspondence under the London School Board letter scheme. If these letters are used as a means of disseminating knowledge of the children's surroundings and aided by the occasional interchange of photographs, views, and the leading magazines or newspapers, a notable work may be done in making the children more observant of natural phenomena about them and in broadening their outlook. In view of the greater importance placed on composition as an essential to promotion it may be well to reiterate common defects—misspelling of simple words; non-use of capitals—*e.g.*, with names of days; omission of apostrophe; repetition of same word; use of same word twice, with different meanings, in the same sentence; ellipsis—*e.g.*, " Soon as you rise," &c.; mixing the tenses; use of a pronoun in reference to a noun antecedent to some other prominent noun.

Arithmetic.—As the cards issued by the Department were on the programme of the new syllabus, a selection had to be made to suit the work of schools still operating under the former code. The table

of results in this subject is by no means cheering, the percentage of success in the various standards being: Standard VI., 40; Standard V., 30; Standard IV., 47; Standard III., 63; Standard II., 57; Standard I., 71. The result in Standard II. is no less striking than that in Standard V. In most of the larger schools this subject is as bad as in any of the smaller ones. Counting on the fingers was far too prevalent. The tables in a number of schools were heard simultaneously with apparently no concrete illustration. Under the new syllabus, especially in Standards I. and II., there should be a continual resort to the concrete. A very good book for the teacher is "How to teach Primary Arithmetic," by Levi Seeley (Kellogg and Co., New York). In the higher classes more use of easy examples illustrating the rules should secure better results.

Geography.—Standard VI. showed 55 per cent. of failures in this subject. When one considers how important geography is as a means of broadening the intellectual horizon of the child and how interesting it can be made by the comparative use of several text-books, maps, newspapers, and a judicious treatment of the illustrated magazines, it cannot fail to be thought serious that such poor results should obtain. The children were frequently unable to draw the maps required, and the detail was generally conspicuously rare. We can re-echo the remark of the Wanganui Inspectors, "The knowledge possessed of our own land and of our own district was too often of the most meagre description"—*e.g.*, If the children were asked to mention the names of a volcano Mount Vesuvius was often specified, but Mount Tarawera hardly once. The merits of plasticine as a means of teaching geography are little appreciated. In one or two schools the plasticine was merely made into strings and these laid down in the form of the outline of a map. The surface should mirror fact and be in relief. Good maps of the education district and of the school districts are urgently required. We shall be pleased to hear that the Department's intention of presenting each school with a map of its immediate neighbourhood is likely to bear fruit.

Drawing generally received satisfactory treatment. In a few cases only three to six studies were shown in the book produced at examination. It appears as if the instruction in the "class group" of subjects had been somewhat spasmodic. These subjects should be taught regularly, as the time-table shows, every week throughout the year. A check will in future be kept on this practice by the necessity of keeping in each school a book recording examination, progress, and promotion. In some schools freehand alone was shown. The exhibits of freehand at Marlborough Exhibition were mostly good; the maps also were generally good in outline, but poor in detail. In small schools Standards V. and VI. should do model-drawing in one year and geometrical drawing the next year—preserving the books in the school till the end of the second year. A certain amount of drawing from objects had been undertaken, but it was rarely well lined in, thus presenting an unfinished appearance.

Grammar.—Where this had been taught as a separate subject it was examined as such. Children of Standard VI. were not always able to give the parts of speech correctly, not to mention answers to more subtle queries.

History rarely receives the attention merited by a subject at once so important and so interesting. It also appears to be taught at regular intervals. The small demands made by the former syllabus under the head of dates were by no means satisfactorily met. The results of the test in the scholarship examination were not at all peculiar to the schools furnishing candidates; indeed, with the general work of these schools I had for the most part occasion to express myself well pleased. The results attained in history in that examination are therefore instructive. The candidates were requested to mention any twelve dates they had been taught. One answer contained twelve dates, another five, a third one, and the remaining three none whatever. Again, in the programmes submitted at examination, social history was frequently not represented. A practice has grown in some quarters during late years of dealing with isolated events in history. It is one thing when passing along a river to stay a day or two at particular spots to make a closer inspection of special regions; it is far different, however, to travel, as it were, by night, waking in the morning amid new surroundings, especially if such travelling takes one back and forth without plan or map to indicate and correlate the places visited. Yet this species of globe-trotting through history is attempted in several schools. The new syllabus itself appears to me to err in this respect by suggesting that the procession from the present to the past is synonymous with proceeding from the known to the unknown. The wars of Cæsar occurred in bygone times, but every child knows what a fight is, and can appreciate it at once without any train of reasoning. It is a distortion of history to trace events backwards. It is contrary to the spirit of the new syllabus also, which even when suggesting procedure from effect to cause does so merely as a preliminary to passing from cause to effect. To read history backwards is like discovering the design on tapestry by studying the direction of the threads on the back. The most elementary rights are illustrated best in simple states of society. Can any one imagine studying English law by reading the latest leading cases and so working backwards to the principles of common law or utilising them to excogitate a statute. The life of a people flows like a river yet not as a river, for changes of thought, sentiment, and objective pass over the nation and modify its life as greatly as heat modifies the piece of ice which, simply growing warmer at first, turns anon with radical and unexpected change now into water and then into steam. These modifications are best studied in consecutive order. This idea of taking history backwards appears to have originated with Diderot, the encyclopædist. Compayré, the historian of education, refers to it as a whimsical notion. The new syllabus lays stress, and rightly so, on moral lessons. The best product of our school is not the clever and well-equipped pupil. It is the child endowed with all these gifts, and, in addition, possessed of sterling character and right ambition. This upbuilding of character is a large part of the teacher's work and nothing reinforces his precepts so much as the study of history, for herein he taps perennial springs. It enables the teacher without lecturing to introduce an atmosphere of ideal duty into the schoolroom. Where pupils have brought honour to their school by gaining scholarships and in other ways it is pleasant to find the fact recorded on honours boards. A few of our schools possess these, and in addition some have the privilege of a memorial to one or more who on the battle-field paid

"the last penalty of patriotism." Provided the child is taught that those distinguished in this way brought honour not so much to themselves as to the school, the memorials will form an inspiration to effort—an inspiration that, being based on an ideal outside of the child, endures when school days are past. The scientific trend of the new syllabus is applicable to history, as to the other subjects. It requires no great stretch of the imagination to connect the Wars of the Roses and the distribution of the monastery lands with the democratic tendencies of modern England, or to find side-lights on the Reform Bill, and free and compulsory education thrown by the experiments of Bacon and the laws of Newton. It is conceivable that sociological phenomena will yet be as subject to prediction as at least the weather is to-day.

Science, Object-lessons, Nature-study.—Only six schools failed to present work under this head or to present the alternative of handwork. The object-lessons were, however, sometimes few in number, several schools presenting a list of only six to twelve.

Science in the forms of agriculture, ambulance, or physiology is taught. Sometimes the agriculture is combined with practical work either in flower or in vegetable gardens.

Geography.—A course will in future, if adequately treated, provide the science of many small schools. Under the new syllabus more stress is laid on scientific method than on scientific information. That is to say, the subjects of science will be continually a search for causes and effects, a combination of inductive and deductive reasoning, a precision in statement, such a use of experiment as will accustom the pupils themselves to use experiment and induce in them an inquiring and experimenting frame of mind. It is hoped that while the child is acquiring such a habit of mind, he will also gain much useful information. "Studies in Plant-life in Australia," by Gillies (Whitcombe and Tombs), is interesting in form and scientific in conception. Some other books lately produced, while full of scientific information, are not imbued with the scientific spirit—being merely lumber-rooms—inventories of facts observed. The book mentioned, however, will repay the reading. In their last report the Wellington Inspectors remark concerning science, "Every subject is to be treated not as a branch of science, but as a training in scientific method." The one who sets out to learn a science tries to accumulate a knowledge of fact, and any one branch will give a man a life's work. It is clear that such a treatment of science is not the object of our schools. It is rather their object to create in the pupil a scientific way of looking at things and handling them, to bring the idea of a casual connection of things above the threshold of consciousness, and make this sense a permanent factor of his life. This is capable of exemplification in subjects not directly scientific—*e.g.*, in the study of English may be noted the progression of consonants under the influence of physiological differences. In the light of this principle the story of Babel acquires a new significance. We see the nations in a common family and with a common tongue. Then comes a slight change of larynx, a thickening of the lip, a raising of the palate, and men are divided off as if by mountain-ranges. Mr. Joynt, at the prize-distribution of Nelson College, while advising teachers in secondary schools to study the new code, remarked that "It would be carrying the idea too far if instruction was to be considered defective if it carried with it any information." The object of the new treatment of science is to use the facts as the material to work on rather than the end in view. This will entail a conning of the fact to understand the principle involved, and even the memorising of facts for illustration, but only to the extent necessary to meet our objective—a principle to be learnt, a faculty to be trained, a habit of mind or body to be formed. The study of principles is as much the work of the specialist in science as is the accumulation of fact. One does not need to know all the principles in order to have a scientific bent, any more than he needs to know all the facts of science in order to live, or indeed in order to live well. The equipment of our schools in regard to science is poor. As the Canterbury Inspectors suggest, simple and inexpensive apparatus requires for effective use no simple and inexpensive training in the manipulator. Considering the way in which most of our teachers are recruited, and the lack of opportunity they have had for acquiring a scientific bent, considering further that the recommendation of the Education Committee of the House practically debars our younger teachers from the benefits of the training-colleges, the hope that the spirit of the new syllabus will noticeably permeate our schools, seems unlikely of realisation for some time to come.

In *Recitation* forty-two schools of the fifty-seven examined acquitted themselves in a manner varying from satisfactory to excellent, which number shows that a creditable amount of attention had been bestowed on this part of the work. A few schools presented a long list of pieces, none of which had been well learnt. It seemed that more discrimination might be exercised in selecting the verse to be memorised. The poetry in some of the reading-books is frequently of a lugubrious, morose, introspective, or morally reflective character. It were better, for the most part at least, to set before the child something in which the thought keeps close to the concrete, verse animated with a breezy joyousness of life—*e.g.*, "Nelson and the North," "Britannia needs no Bulwarks," Wordsworth's "Daffodils." There is something essentially pagan and unwholesome in the pessimism that characterizes most of Australian poetry. Classes may be grouped in this subject. The pieces selected should be the subject-matter of one or more lessons in English before being memorised.

Handwork of some description was practised in eighteen schools. The branches undertaken were modelling in plasticine, brushwork, flower and vegetable gardening, bead-work, mat-weaving, tablet-laying, making of fern baskets, paper-weaving, work in worsted, embossing, perforated-card work, and ambulance. If the Education Department could see its way to grant capitation on agriculture as a school subject from Standard I. upwards, there is little doubt that this branch of handwork would be much more widely taught. The elements of the subject are not so abstruse as to be beyond the capacity of ordinary children in the lower classes. Where this subject is taught, the gardens should be placed in parallel strips with rows of the same kind of vegetable stretching in one line through all the gardens; it could then be seen at a glance which section had the best growth, and the whole of any particular line of crop might be sold to provide a prize for the one producing the best specimens, and

so on with each class of vegetable in turn. It would probably be found that boys would select the seed sown, and only sow from good samples; the effects of various manures would also be watched. Judging by accounts from Canada and the United States, the farmers in the neighbourhood of the schools generally take great interest in such experiments. Several teachers showed commendable energy in working up exhibits of handwork for the Marlborough Industrial Exhibition, and the outcome of their efforts provided a valuable object-lesson to visiting teachers and pupils.

Classes for teachers in brushwork and first aid and ambulance, began in the latter half of the year. Classes in other subjects are in contemplation. Receipts on behalf of classes operating under the Manual and Technical Instruction Act amount to £12 1s. 9d. for material, and £12 3s. 4d. for capitation. The amended regulations maintain the higher rate of capitation in woodwork and cookery. It would economize time if the ordinary register sufficed for school classes in ambulance.

Late in the year an attempt was made to establish technical classes in Blenheim, but the advance of summer and the attractions of the Marlborough Exhibition militated against success. This endeavour will be renewed in 1905. The Borough Council was approached *re* granting a site, but could not see its way to do so. It would greatly assist advancement in handwork-studies if the Department could arrange in the different education centres for periodical exhibitions of the work done in modelling, drawing, &c., at the higher schools of art in the colony.

Singing was not taught in thirty-one schools. This proportion of the total number of schools is far too large, and should be much reduced during 1905. After the inspection visit, both singing and drill were taken up in a number of small schools, and the very fair beginning made is encouraging the teachers to continue their efforts.

Needlework.—Much excellent needlework was produced in a number of the schools. The samples carried round from the best schools should cause improvement in those which showed inferior work.

Drill.—There are thirteen of the smaller schools where physical training is neglected. It is desirable that there be none in this category during 1905. Military drill is taught in the larger schools, and opportunity was taken on inspection and examination visits to initiate the children of some of the others. A creditable display of physical exercises was made by several squads in the competitions held during Marlborough Exhibition week.

According to the last report of the Officer Commanding the Cadets, Marlborough had four corps with a total of 201 of all ranks. A battalion has also been organized. The new regulations concerning recognition of "sections" may cause extension to take place. A difficulty prevented the concentration of cadets in an instruction-camp during the last school week, inasmuch as the officers are usually teachers and could not be spared from comparatively small schools without closing the schools altogether.

In order, tone, and discipline few schools were lacking; eighteen being accounted excellent, twenty-one good, and only five unsatisfactory. Where tone was defective the want appeared due to lack of direction rather than to intention.

THE NEW SYLLABUS.—Inform, teach to observe, elicit, experiment so as to train both sense and mental faculty, follow the psychological growth of the child: these mark the main stages in educational theory, and the skilful teacher uses a combination of all. At one time it was thought that education consisted in a large accumulation of fact-knowledge, and in the youth of the sciences the educators naturally looked more to history and the humanities for their store of desirable facts. With the growth of inductive science a vast array of attractive facts was gathered in the fields of knowledge that deal more directly with nature than with the human mind. The educator accordingly began to divide his effort, aiming at teaching scientific as well as classic fact. As the sciences grew and ramified, the mass of material became so large that the facts culled from this region began to crush out those of the humanitarian order. At length they became so numerous that educators were brought face to face with the absolute absurdity of trying an inculcation of all the garnerings of the centuries. Collaterally with the growth of inductive science and as an offshoot from it had grown psychologic science or the inductive study of the growth and development of the human mind. It was thus discovered that the mind was not as the older educationists had thought, simply a receptacle for whatever might be thrown into it; nor as the later school—the school of Locke—taught, a purely plastic substance subject to external moulding but without initiative. The psychologists under the leadership of Kant discovered that the child was above all a centre of original action, and that the mind was capable of growth and development; and, further, that the child's development must proceed along the natural lines of growth. A close study of child-life was made in order to discover these natural lines. It was found that abstract reasoning was a late product, that the interesting was easily taught, that the child likes explanation, that he likes to do things, and, further, that there are as it were flood-times when certain classes of facts and phenomena are more interesting and their lessons assimilated more easily than at other times. These discoveries have reacted on educational method, making the approach to a subject consecutive, making books attractive with bold print and pictures, causing more stress to be laid on cause, effect, and purpose, introducing handwork to educate the senses and to afford scope for the child's desire to act and impress his individuality on the things about him, and it has also led in America and Germany to a concentric system of pouring all one's powers into special classes of work at what seems the right psychological time. Under the old syllabus the child might have been the receptacle of the older educationists, or the plastic material of Locke, but the new syllabus treats him from the point of view of the psychologist and tries not to cram him with facts, nor to mould him like the clay of the potter, but to elicit, to strengthen, and develop his faculties, whether of mind or body, as they arise in order of time, and to fit him to act and react on the world around him—to endow him with sufficient knowledge both of fact and principle to enable him to energize to the fullest of his powers, and especially to train him to reason rightly when brought face to face with new classes of facts. This is the spirit of the new syllabus. It is no longer a controversy between instruction and education, it is a compound of Herbartian psychology and American utilitarianism. Its object is not to proceed from the easy to the

difficult (although it does so), but to proceed from the simple to the complex, from cause to effect, to introduce the element of self-expression, and to recognise always that the child is a psychological entity, whose peculiar features are not to be eradicated, but trained and directed. Hence the new setting of arithmetic for the lower classes, the introduction of oral composition, the grading of the spelling, the attempt to reduce the boundaries of geography to what can be reasoned on at first hand and by the medium of the child's own experiment; hence, also, the emphasis laid on nature-study and handwork, including drawing of plants and objects seen. It is recognised that a certain amount of knowledge is necessary for right action, so adequate provision is made for putting within the child's reach the facts of general geography and history. Everywhere casual sequences are to be followed. But in these two subjects only the facts in juxtaposition with human life and its requirements should be dwelt on. In the syllabus as first issued the teacher was too heavily weighted by the fact-material proposed to be taught to the child. Given too much ground to be covered the spirit of the new syllabus was likely to pass stillborn. The Conference of Inspectors and the Conference of Inspectors and Teachers remedied this defect by a liberal use of the pruning-knife, and the Education Committee of the House approved of most of the suggested alterations. Any faults can be adjusted as they show themselves. There is no doubt that the syllabus is now in substantial accord with the spirit of our times, and those that introduced it deserve some of the credit that falls to those who explore the great trade-routes of the mind.

During the inspection-tour a cursory explanation of the work set forth under the new syllabus was frequently made, and in addition to this the teachers were met in conference in Blenheim and Havelock. By courtesy of the Department free passes were granted on the railway to enable the teachers to attend the conference in Blenheim. Facilities in regard to leave of absence were also afforded by the School Committees, and as the Marlborough Industrial Exhibition was open at that time the visit was doubly profitable.

It is manifest that if education be scientifically conceived its objects can be attained only by those trained for the task. Education has during the past year been recognised as a subject for a degree course at the University. It is something also that teachers at their certificate examinations are required to show that they have studied the history of education, but it is of first importance that the promised training-colleges should at once be put in order. A second corollary is that if so great demand be made on the teacher, if he is to be expected to bring to his profession as much scientific capital as he would need for engaging in more remunerative occupations, he must not be expected to do this for the wage of unskilled labour. Some writer says that an employment requiring its workers to be martyrs in one generation will be carried on by hypocrites in the next. If education is to realise the ideals of the day, it must not fall into the hands of these. "The Education Act Amendment Act, 1904," was designed to enable the teachers in the smaller schools to pay the premiums necessary for the working of the Superannuation Fund. It is to be hoped that superannuation itself will take definite form this year.

Scholarships.—Revised regulations have been forwarded to the Minister for his approval. They divert most of the scholarship moneys to schools beyond convenient reach of the High School, except that small amounts are proposed for competition throughout the district as bursaries for buying books. By "The Secondary Schools Act, 1903," the moneys hitherto available for Commissioners' scholarships are paid over to the Governors of the High School. The Education Board was therefore able to offer only one country scholarship this year, the several scholarships current absorbing the rest of the funds. In Standard VI. examinations ninety-two pupils throughout the district qualified for free secondary places, thirty-five will probably avail themselves of the privilege.

The Minister's report for 1903 suggests an increase of Junior University Scholarships. If these be given to encourage advanced work on the modern side of the high schools, they would tend to strengthen a part of our system where it is weakest.

The reasoning that led up to a charge of 5s. being imposed on candidates for Junior National Scholarships, is not very evident. The fact that the fee is reimbursed to the successful ones does not clarify the matter, for the scholarships are presumably aids to those in need, and the very ones who do not get the scholarship have to pay.

The revised regulations for Junior Technical Scholarships propose a definite examination to the candidates. An increase may therefore be looked for in the numbers taking advantage of these scholarships. The regulations also postulate attendance at a class for advanced arithmetic and a technical subject, as well as at one for advanced English. By relaxing the time-limit for continuation classes these scholarships would benefit teachers in small country schools, encouraging them in the work of Standard VII. According to the reports of the Mosely Commissioners, education, both primary and secondary, in American schools is free, and books are provided. We have therefore still heights to reach.

Marlborough Industrial Exhibition.—Many of the children were requested at examination to write essays on what they had observed at the Exhibition. The result showed that as an educative institution it had been a success. The objects that struck attention of most were the weaving-machine, the writing tests, needlework, wax figures, the two-headed trout, the collection of mineral specimens, old armour, &c. ("there was a bunder busted gun at the Exhibition"), drawing, mapping, drill, recitation, hobbies. The exhibit showing the varied collection of what could be produced on a farm made a marked impression.

With a view to encouraging Committees to help themselves the Board has determined to subsidise pound-for-pound moneys raised locally in aid of school apparatus, library, sanitation, and improvements of playgrounds.

I have, &c.,

D. A. Strachan, M.A., Inspector.

The Chairman, Marlborough Education Board.

SIR,—

NELSON.

We have the honour to present the following report on the schools of the Nelson Education District for the year 1904.

One hundred and eighteen schools were at work during the last quarter of the year; this is one less than the number reported last year, the following changes having been effected: five schools have been closed since last examination; five household schools have been started or reopened, and the separate boys' and girls' schools at Richmond have been amalgamated. Two of the new schools had been at work such a short time that the children were not prepared for examination, and on account of the resignation of the teacher the children of Sandy Bay did not present themselves at a neighbouring school, so that the number of public schools examined by us was 115. Five private schools and the junior forms of Nelson College and Nelson Girls' College have also been examined. The total number of children represented in these schools was 402, and of these 389 were present at examination. One hundred and twelve of the public schools were also inspected during the first half of the year. This number, which includes all but the most distant household schools, is greater than any previously undertaken.

The average weekly number on the rolls for the September quarter was 5,569, that is twenty-one lower than for the corresponding quarter of last year. The number on the rolls at the time of our examination amounted to 5,547 as compared with 5,581 of the previous year.

The average attendance for the year has been 4,712, or 84·2 per cent. of the average weekly number on the rolls. Although this is not a high average as compared with other districts of the colony, and not so high as that for this district in 1902, it is considerably above that of last year, when juvenile epidemics were general. The percentage for the colony was 83·9 in 1903, and 84·9 in 1902.

Several of our leading teachers, on their own application, have this year been appointed Truant Officers for their respective districts, and, in some instances, marked benefit has already followed their appointment. They are to be congratulated upon the zeal they have displayed in undertaking a task so uncongenial to most, and yet one that has a direct bearing upon the welfare of their charges, and is in the interests of the whole community.

The attendance for the March quarter, on account of the loss in the fruit- and hop-picking districts, is always the worst, and greatly reduces the yearly average. We notice that this year one school failed to obtain a working-average on a single half-day of the quarter. On the other hand, the last December return for the whole district is higher than that of the same quarter for many years previously, and the percentage for the June and December quarters are respectively the highest we have yet recorded for those particular quarters of the year. We have, as usual, made a careful comparison of the average attendance at each school throughout the year, and find that many deserve great credit for extreme regularity. Of the schools held in private houses, from which the possible might well be expected, seven return an attendance of 100 per cent. Of other schools, fifteen record 90 per cent. or over, three of the smaller ones actually attaining 100 per cent., although, in the case of one of these, several of the children to our knowledge have nearly four miles of hill-travelling between their homes and the school. Three schools 68, 72, and 73 per cent., in different parts of the district and working under different conditions, afford striking illustrations of the negligence of parents in regard to their children's mental welfare, or of the selfish tendency to subordinate the children's interests to the parents advantage.

The number of teachers in the regular employ of the Board on the 31st December, 1904, was 165, and their classification was as follows: Head teachers—certificated or licensed 29; assistants—certificated or licensed 38, uncertificated 6; secondary assistants—certificated or licensed 3; uncertificated 1; sole teachers—certificated or licensed 44; uncertificated 44. There were in addition 23 pupil-teachers, of whom only one is a male. As several of our schools have fallen below the minimum attendance of forty-one, that entitled them to the services of assistants, their teachers now rank as sole instead of head teachers. The difficulty to which we referred last year of obtaining qualified teachers has had the effect of increasing the proportion of the uncertificated. We regret, too, to find that several of our best and most highly qualified head teachers are now turning their attention to the better inducements offered by other professions, especially that of the law. The absence of any great prizes in the teaching profession as compared with the better prospects in some other pursuits, the uncertainty of promotion, and the poor attendance in this district, are all urged as reasons for the proposed changes. The able and ambitious are naturally tempted towards the more lucrative professions. More honour then to those gifted men, who, conscious of their peculiar fitness for the vocation, through love of the work for the work's sake, continue to labour zealously and conscientiously, giving of their best ungrudgingly to the cause of enlightenment, preferring the public good to personal advantage.

We are pleased to see that the Education Act Amendment Act of last session, whilst raising the salaries of junior male assistants, improves the position of sole teachers, and especially of those in charge of very small schools, thus tending to remedy a defect which we pointed out when the Public-school Teachers' Salaries' Act had just come into operation.

The following is a summary of results for the whole district as compiled for the Inspectors' annual return:—

Classes.	Number on Roll.	Present at Inspector's Annual Visit.	Average Age of Pupils in each Class.
			Yrs. mos.
Standard VII.	128	109	14 11
" VI.	417	411	13 9
" V.	580	568	12 11
" IV.	669	652	12 0
" III.	648	634	11 0
" II.	656	641	9 11
" I.	741	714	8 9
Preparatory	1,708	1,551	6 11
Totals	5,547	5,280	11 3*
Totals for 1903	5,581	5,127	11 4

* Mean of average age.

The number in Standard VII. shows a further decrease of twenty-nine, probably an indication of the continued popularity of the free-place system at the Nelson College. The unusually large number —eighty-three—who presented themselves for the Junior Civil Service Examination in December also points in the same direction, as many of these were college pupils desirous of retaining their free places for a longer term.

The total number on the roll is as we have pointed out somewhat less than it was last year, Standard III. lower by eighty-five and Standard I. higher by eighty-seven, showing respectively the largest decrease and increase per standard. The number present at examination is higher than last year, though not so high as in 1902, and we were pleased at the large number of schools, fifty-three, at which every child was present. The average age, except in Standard VII., is generally a little lower. A comparison with last year's figures, shows a loss of 113 and 114 respectively upon the possible number of presentations in Standards VI. and V., thus showing that a great number are leaving school without gaining or attempting to gain proficiency certificates. Now that a certificate of competency is issued only on direct application to the Inspector, who must satisfy himself of the applicant's ability, its value will probably be enhanced in the eyes of parents. If so, a direct incentive will be given to stimulate them to keep their children regularly at school till, at least, the Fifth Standard limit is reached.

The number of Standard VI. certificates obtained by pupils of the public schools was, of proficiency 258, of competency forty-nine. Very few that were not on the school roll made application to sit, the applicants being usually pupils from schools previously examined who had been unable to attend at the annual visit or who wished to attempt a second test.

In accordance with Regulation 24, a special examination was held in Nelson in November, and brought out eleven candidates for proficiency certificates, of whom four passed.

The percentage of candidates that obtained the proficiency certificate was very nearly the same as in 1903, though, in our opinion, the award was more easy of attainment than in former years. In some cases, too, an anomaly was created in that the proficiency certificate was gained by candidates whose marks would not entitle them to the lower or competency certificate. For the latter a pass in each of four out of five subjects is required, though a bad failure in two of the English subjects may not disqualify for the proficiency certificate. The anomaly may readily occur if 50 per cent. is the pass limit, and to lower the minimum much below that appears to us to render the certificate of little value as an indication of the holder's attainments.

The examination-papers this year have been set upon the course of work prescribed in the new syllabus. This is, we understand, the only district of the colony in which teachers have made an attempt to follow the lines laid down. Considering the short time since the change was definitely decided upon, complete development of the new system could not reasonably be expected unless, Minerva-like, it could in a moment spring into perfect being. From the date of the appearance of the revised syllabus —the result of the Conference of Inspectors and of the joint Conference of Inspectors and Teachers— the schools last examined had only the possibility of six months under the new conditions, and those taken first of only two. Consequently, in the matter of new departures, the work has been mainly tentative, but we are only too pleased that the ice has been broken, for the opportunity has been given to clear away many misunderstandings, and we are satisfied that the next year's programmes will be more fully and heartily undertaken, as teachers will have before them a more definite conception of the lines they are expected to follow, as well as of the amount of work they can reasonably expect to cover. The want of suitable text-books in arithmetic, drawing, writing, and especially in geography and history, has been a serious handicap, and we still await the appearance of these from the publishers, as well as from the Department, of the approved list, from which selection must be made. In several subjects teachers have been compelled to give oral lessons only, a serious tax upon sole teachers, whose attentions have to be divided between many different classes.

A brief criticism upon the different subjects taught will best show how far, in our opinion, aims have been realised.

We have grouped the schools according to efficiency as follows: Good, 13; satisfactory to good, 1; satisfactory, 88; fair to satisfactory, 3; fair, 8; moderate, 1; inferior, 1. In estimating the efficiency of a school, we have attached an equal value to each subject required to be taught, and the efficiency value of the school is given in accordance with the value of the majority of the subjects. It will thus be seen that in our opinion the schools generally have been satisfactorily conducted. The few exceptions are mostly the result of a broken school-year, irregular attendance, ignorance of requirements, or the inexperience of newly appointed teachers. A less number than usual maintained a very high standard, none being deemed excellent, though several were classed as good.

READING.—Very satisfactory work continues to be done under this head, two readers being prepared as hitherto in every class of school. The use of the aspirate still presents difficulty in a few localities, the home influence being hard to overcome, but we cannot name any marked fault that can fairly be described as general. The neglecting of the preparation of one book for spelling and the permission given in the new syllabus to substitute a geographical or historical reader for the second, have, we regret to say, suggested to many that only one literary reader should in future be prepared. This would we think, be a decidedly retrograde step.

The use of a geographical or historical reader as a second one might be advantageous in schools under sole teachers, but we hope that, in the interests of their pupils, head teachers will continue to prepare two literary readers, using, if desired, the suggested historical or geographical reader as an additional one. The advantages of a wide course of reading must appeal to every educationalist, as it has a direct bearing upon the child's general intelligence, and particularly affects his composition. The necessity, too, for enlarging the vocabulary was made very patent by the ignorance displayed by the children in using selected words in the composition tests. We admit that many of these given to Standards VI. and VII. were unusual, but we were often astonished at the weak attempts made to employ in sentences words which are in common every-day use.

COMPOSITION.—Tests for the examination in composition for Standards III.–VII. were set by the Education Department for the first time. The results obtained in Standard III. were much the best, the work set seeming to present but little difficulty, only eighteen schools out of eighty-two falling below a satisfactory requirement. A general weakness, however, was observable in the synthesis of sentences, the fault being an inability to unite simple sentences into a complex form, even when the proper connectives were given. This failing was all the more marked in the written composition, where the sentences were often of a very abrupt and detached form. This weakness may be due to the fact that most practice has been devoted to the correct formation of the simple sentence, without going further —a course of work that is now laid down for Standard II. The failing referred to might be readily remedied in the treatment of the oral composition, which is now required in every standard class. In this branch of the subject, many are satisfied if the pupils are able to form correct, simple, but entirely detached, sentences on the subject treated. While this power is, of course, absolutely necessary in the earlier stages, we venture to think that in the finished work of Standard III., the child should be able to give expression not only to one principal thought, but to add in proper form other modifying and qualifying ideas. If this is methodically worked out in the oral composition, it will be found that the child will soon become familiar with the proper use of the more common connective words. In short, the demand in the oral composition should be a continuous, connected, and complete narrative from each child.

In Standard IV., of ninety-one classes examined only fifty-one reached the satisfactory mark. The new form of question here seemed to present difficulty. The composition exercise usually set was the reproduction of a story which on the whole was satisfactorily done.

Coming to Standard V. we found a much greater weakness than in either of the two lower standard classes—in fact out of ninety-four classes examined, only 37 per cent. were classed as satisfactory or better. Here again the first part of the tests, which contained questions in what is now demanded in grammar, was not well answered. There was a somewhat general failure to grasp what was actually asked.

In the question "Pick out the words that stand for the names of persons or things," the great majority supplied a list of nouns. Again, many failed to distinguish between a clause and a phrase, while in only a few cases were the prefixes known. These defects in the preparation of the prescribed standard-work were no doubt due to the lateness of the introduction of the new syllabus.

In Standard VI. a better result was obtained than in Standard V., but still some 57 per cent. of the number of classes examined were unable to reach the satisfactory limit. The tests were on similiar lines to those of the other standards. As in Standard V., the exercises in the blending of sentences and clauses, and in the conversion of one construction into an equivalent one, seemed to offer the greatest difficulty, while the knowledge of the form and functions of the different kinds of clauses was very limited.

In this standard the last question usually took the form of a business letter, which was on the whole satisfactorily set out. Some improvement might be made in the neater arrangement of the work handed in.

One point in regard to the form in which the tests were printed that seemed to be in a great many cases confusing to the children, was the use of the numbers 1, 2, 3, &c., both for the general question and for the subdivisions of it. This seems a somewhat trivial matter, but the confusion was so general that it might be advisable to adopt more distinctive lettering.

Though in general the cards demanded a fair and complete knowledge of the requirements of the syllabus, they were rendered uneven in difficulty by the fact that some contained phrases and words quite beyond the capacity of children.

WRITING.—In the teaching of this subject the copybooks in general use are Collins' New Graphic Series and Jackson's Vertical In general the results may be considered satisfactory, though there are some twenty-six schools that are classed as only fair. In a number of cases the writing presented still shows a lack of adequate supervision, without which no merely mechanical subject can reach its highest standard of excellence. Common errors in the formation of the more difficult letters and in the method of junction should be altogether stamped out in the lower standards, so that in Standard VI. mere copybook writing might to some extent be dropped and practice given to promote greater freedom of style and greater speed than is possible while the child is learning to write in the copybook. There is room for some improvement in the transcription tests presented for examination. In many cases the writing was inferior to that of the copy, in others there was a want of conformity with the style adopted, while many did not attempt to show the work prescribed by the regulations.

SPELLING.—The dictation tests for Standard VI. were as usual taken from previously unseen passages, with the addition of a selection of words from a prepared reader. In the lower classes, contrary to former practice, both of the tests for each class were taken from only the one book. This lessening of difficulty has evidently been appreciated, for the majority of the children found little trouble with the spelling, the work in more than four-fifths of the schools being satisfactory, forty-one of them being described as "good" and twenty-one "excellent."

The word-building was not always systematic; at any rate it was often difficult to find out the teacher's plan of action, or even to find any traces of such action. Good work was often done by those who, especially in the lower classes, had simply followed the lines suggested in the syllabus. Unfortunately some had omitted "to use each word in a sentence," thereby neglecting the linking of this subject with composition, much to the detriment of both.

In recitation this year the absence of specially prepared pieces gave to the work in some schools the appearance of want of finish, but we were pleased to find the subject so well treated on the whole, and that scarcely any had found difficulty in preparing the amount prescribed for each class. Improvement might yet be made in interesting the children beforehand in the selections made and enabling

them to obtain a thorough comprehension of the matter to be committed to memory. The wrong conception of a single word may mar the effect of a whole passage and give the learner a sense of disgust rather than the desired literary taste. Mechanical drill in the meanings of words, too, may become irksome and just as nauseating. Happy is the man who can choose the golden mean and make the research interesting, instructive, stimulating, and enobling. We wish to remind teachers, that in general instructions in regard to reading, they are recommended to give special attention to a few selected lessons, among which the pieces for recitation must be included.

ARITHMETIC.—Our hopes of an immediate improvement as the result of the lightening of the syllabus for arithmetic have so far not been realised. Judging by results the proportion, 53 per cent., of the scholars that were able to do the tests supplied by the Department is no higher than last year's, and we were very generally disappointed with the work of Standary V., where scarcely a third of those that attempted it were equal to the task. In the different classes the actual percentages were : Standard VI., 44 ; Standard, V., 32 ; Standard IV., 61 ; Standard III., 74. The failure of Standard V. was general, only three schools attaining the distinction of a " good " mark for the class.

In Standard VI. a little improvement was shown, but the general result was below satisfactory, the failure of the children to obtain 30 per cent. of the required marks being by far the most common reason for withholding the proficiency certificate. The children in our very small schools of grades 0 and 1 are so deficient in the higher-standard arithmetic that one is forced to doubt whether many of our sole teachers have themselves a thorough grasp of the subject. Very few of our teachers (in spite of much explanation) had clear notions of the course of work now prescribed for the Preparatory and Standard I. classes, so that when tested by us Standard I. made a poorer exhibition than any other class except Standard V. Methods were often faulty and even though the oral work was attempted, the majority had neglected the written. The thorough understanding of one number that would readily enable the child to comprehend the next higher one was seldom aimed at. The writing of the signs + and − should be practised as soon as the child begins to count, the aim being in the first year to master the oral and written processes of the addition and subtraction of any number up to 10. In the second year the signs of multiplication and division, which have so far been withheld merely to prevent confusion in the beginner's mind, should be introduced and the four processes with each number in rotation from 1 to 20 be mastered, the early steps especially in the first year being always made with the aid of concrete illustrations. A marked feature of the system is that each unit is thoroughly and exhaustively treated before the child is even introduced to the next. We mention these details to suit the mental attitude of many teachers, for we were in this as in other subjects of the new syllabus often struck by the utter lack of originality displayed by some. Where a free and unfettered course lay before them, in which almost any movement would indicate progress, they shirked the responsibility of action and preferred to be guided by the experience of others. It is doubtful whether too extensive a range of work is not laid down for Standard I., especially as Standard II. found our tests comparatively easy. But it is certain that if the work is thoroughly grasped the children will be well equipped for all the mechanical work of the higher classes. In spite of the deficiencies mentioned teachers were promoting their lowest form as freely as ever with a laxity that in the case of arithmetic is now, since the dual classification of English and arithmetic has been introduced, less excusable than ever. It is probably owing to this laxity in former years that so much difficulty is now experienced with the higher arithmetic.

Reference to the cards issued by the Department may not be out of place. In the Standard VII. tests that were supplied for the first time and were generally used, a question involving an elementary notion of book-keeping presented difficulties to most. Although the cards were intended to fit either syllabus, several of the sums set for Standards IV. and V. were unsuitable, as they required a knowledge of troy weight, and compound practice was repeatedly set for Standard IV., while questions on the papering of walls, &c., seem to us too difficult to be classed as examples of mensuration purely, and might well be reserved for Standard VI.

As the school may now be classified separately for arithmetic the tendency to force any backward children should disappear and leave the teacher free to use the methods and courses of work best adapted to the child's mental growth. Given rational treatment we certainly expect improvement. In estimating the general efficiency of a school we have allowed each subject the same weight ; in future we intend to attach greater importance to our estimate of the treatment of this subject, both on account of its importance as a study and as a basis of classification.

In passing, we notice that last year's reports show a very general chorus of complaints from the different districts of the colony, though few of the Inspectors' reports state what proportion of the scholars or schools are successful with the tests supplied. The subject has for many years presented the greatest difficulty, and we can only hope that more blackboard teaching, combined with oral explanation of the different processes by the pupils, a separate classification for this subject, and a sounder training of the junior classes, both in their oral and written exercises, will so far overcome it that the subject may no longer be a bugbear. No subject, we maintain, affords better evidence of good teaching as, for success, marked ability, thorough discipline, and conscientious, regular, and well-sustained effort are essential.

DRAWING.—Although the work done in this subject was on the whole satisfactory, very few schools have been able to overtake the full demands of the new syllabus. Meagre attempts were made at elementary design, though one or two schools showed a full appreciation of what was necessary under this head, and presented good and original work. The object-drawing was generally undertaken. Great care, however, is needed, especially in the lower classes, to see that the objects selected are not utterly beyond the ability of the children. The memory drawing required might run on parallel lines to this branch.

SINGING.—Singing now comes in as one of the compulsory subjects, and we note that whereas last year there were sixty-five schools in which singing was not taught, this year we record but twenty-

seven failing to take up this subject. Of course in a great many schools several standards are usually grouped for vocal music, and it behoves the teacher desiring a good result to see that the exercises taken are suitable as far as possible to the children's voices.

In some schools but little attention is paid to the selection of the songs presented. Many teachers, well able to get excellent singing from a class, are quite content to keep to the same list of songs from one year's end to another. We think it is now necessary that a fresh programme should be drafted each year. We would again point out the need for regular and systematic practice.

Geography.—Although due allowance must be made for the extensive changes in the geography requirements, we must consider this as one of the weakest subjects of the year. The questions set for examination dealt in a direct manner with the chief points in the required work, nevertheless exactly two-thirds of the schools examined were below "satisfactory." Certainly some of the larger schools made commendable efforts to deal with the subject in a practical way. In some we found ingeniously devised apparatus for finding the altitude of the sun, while in one school the headmaster complained of having to turn out at all hours at night to obtain information for his boys about various heavenly bodies that were being observed. On the other hand, we found in a number of the smaller schools, the teachers waiting to be directed on every new point, or waiting the production of new text-books on the subject. We have already fully recognised the difficulty, especially in the smaller schools, of the want of suitable text-books, but we are of opinion that in the geography, as now arranged for the various standards, there is scope for such originality of practical treatment on the part of the teacher as would produce far better results than if he confined his methods to those that can be presented in any ordinary text-book.

With the removal of many of the difficulties that are naturally incidental to the introduction of a change, we confidently look for a considerable improvement in the subject during the coming year.

Drill.—Great improvement is shown, both in the number to whom some form of physical training is given and in the quality of the instruction. In only eight schools had the subject been entirely neglected, and fully three-fourths of the whole now do very satisfactory work. Strangely enough the neglect of breathing exercises and the evident failure to co-ordinate the instruction with lessons on health were the most common faults.

Moral Instruction.—We find some difficulty in estimating the amount and quality of the instruction given under this head. We are fully satisfied that our teachers generally appreciate the value of such instruction, and do not neglect to impart it. The truest test of its efficiency will be found in the after-life and conduct of the child. The different heads under which suggested courses of instruction may be grouped are each and all important and worthy of the attention of every parent, and if the teacher, without the co-operation of the parents, succeeds in instilling in the minds of his pupils good ideas upon a tithe of them he will do well. Suffice to say that we, so far as we have been able in the short time at our disposal to gauge the conduct of the children, are well satisfied with the result. Before us the children have been simple, natural, honest, and intent, instances of even petty dishonesty or attempting to obtain undue advantage being almost unknown.

History.—Little difference is to be noted in the treatment of history (which has been entirely oral), except that this year selections were made from the lists of subjects specified in the syllabus. In many cases geography B has been substituted for it as an alternative course. There is much need for improvement in the arrangement and setting-out of schemes of work, and we shall, as already notified, expect to find submitted to us for approval at coming inspection-visits, definite and systematic programmes as prescribed in the regulations.

Nature-study and Science.—Nature-study has been begun by several schools, but in only a few cases on correct lines. There seemed to be some doubt in the minds of many teachers as to the manner of treatment of this subject. Local conditions must, of course, to a great extent govern the syllabus of work undertaken, but in all cases it is necessary for the purpose aimed at—viz., the training of the faculty of observation—that the study of the objects and phenomena should be made by the children themselves. During the coming year we look to see this subject more fully taken up, for we feel sure that the advantages derived from the necessary training would be evident in many other branches of the school work.

Handwork.—Thirty-two schools (double the number reported last year) have taken up some form of handwork with very satisfactory results. The chief branches undertaken have been plasticine-modelling, brushwork, and ambulance, while in some preparatory classes bricklaying and paper-folding are carried on.

At some of the larger schools school classes have been conducted in cookery, woodwork, and dressmaking; also technical classes in dressmaking and continuation classes in shorthand.

Further, classes for the instruction of teachers have been held in ambulance and brushwork, drawing (brushwork, free-arm, blackboard, and model), and woodwork.

In nineteen schools managed by male sole teachers needlework has been taught as a branch of technical instruction.

Since our last report the Reefton Technical School has been built, equipped, and largely employed throughout the year, and we are pleased to state that the grant has at length been made for the Technical School in Nelson.

Needlework.—Though fewer schools, thirty, have gained high commendation in needlework, the number classed as satisfactory is rather better than last year. The reports from local examiners were not so numerous as heretofore, the judgment of the quality of the work for the most part being solely determined by the Inspector.

The Pupil Teachers' Entrance Examination was held as usual in June, when twenty-three candidates presented themselves, of whom eleven passed, the papers set being on the new-syllabus lines.

The need of a summer or winter school for the benefit and instruction of teachers has long been felt in this district, and more keenly since the new conditions of work have been introduced. Difficulties of communication and the consequent loss of time entailed in getting teachers to a common centre on the one hand, while on the other the dispersion of energy in arranging and conducting two or three detached groups, have hitherto prevented the idea from being carried out. We notice that in the summer holidays, teachers coming home to headquarters from the more distant parts of the district spent five days *en route*, travelling by what is usually the quickest method—steamer. It is hoped, however, that it will be possible to carry out the idea this year.

The work of the secondary classes of our three district high schools has been carried out with regularity and evenness, the average numbers on the rolls for the year being ninety-seven.

We are pleased to find that candidates entered again this year for the Queen's Scholarships, the examinations for which are now held conjointly with the Junior National Scholarships, the same papers doing duty for both.

The results of these examinations have just been made known, and it is gratifying to find the very creditable position taken by pupils of this district in the competitions, one of the six Queen's Scholarships being allotted to a candidate from Westport School.

The need for a liberal scheme of superannuation for teachers becomes more and more apparent as time goes on, and their interests, the attractiveness of the service, and consequently, what is more important, its efficiency, are suffering from the delay.

The middle of the year witnessed a change in the Inspectorial staff. Mr. Strachan, on receiving appointment to the Inspectorship of Marlborough, resigned the position that had been held by him for the previous two years of Junior Inspector in this district, Mr. A. Crawford being appointed in his stead. Mr. Strachan had willingly devoted all his energy to his duties and had displayed marked ability, tact, and endurance. His capacity for methodical arrangement, which included almost a passion for tabulating, proved invaluable also in the office. Whilst regretting the loss of his every-ready assistance and co-operation we heartily congratulate him upon his well-deserved promotion.

In conclusion, in spite of the special difficulties of the year, and the many others consequent upon a venture into the unknown without a guide, we can congratulate the majority of our teachers upon the enterprise shown and the successes gained in new methods and lines of thought; and we firmly believe that generally such good progress has been made that the initial doubts and misunderstandings should vanish, and the experience gained lead to more perfect working-conditions that should produce the best and most lasting educational results.

We have, &c.,
G. A. HARKNESS, M.A.
A. CRAWFORD, B.A.

The Chairman, Nelson Education Board.

GREY.

SIR,— Education Office, Greymouth, 31st March, 1905.

I have the honour to present the following report on the schools of the Grey Education District for the year 1904.

The primary schools numbering thirty-three, three Catholic schools, the secondary class of the Greymouth District High School, candidates for scholarships and pupil-teachers were all examined. Each of the thirty-six schools was visited at least once for the purpose of inspection; but owing to the time at my disposal being limited, I was not able to give as much attention to the work of inspection as I would have liked. This year I hope to be able to spend a much longer time in each school. The following table gives the general results of the public schools:—

Classes.	Number on Roll.	Present at Inspector's Annual Visit.	Average Age of Pupils in each Class.
			Yrs. mos.
Secondary Class, Greymouth District High School ...	36	24	15 0
Standard VII.	17	16	14 7
" VI.	118	115	14 0
" V.	152	148	13 0
" IV.	179	171	12 2
" III.	203	195	11 1
" II.	181	179	9 11
" I.	184	177	8 10
Preparatory	601	552	7 0
Totals	1,671	1,577	11 4*

* Mean of average age.

The number present on the day of the Inspector's annual visit again shows that teachers and pupils are deeply interested in their work. In standard classes 985 were present out of a roll-number of 1,017, and when it is remembered what a number of wet days we had last spring the attendance is all the more praiseworthy. In sixteen schools every child was present. Throughout the year, however, the attend-

ance at many of the schools was not good. The fact that the average attendance is highest during the December quarter shows that parents pay attention to the regularity of their children's attendance just previous to the annual visit. Information crammed for a purpose forms no part of true education. If the work is not carried on regularly throughout the year weakness will soon make its appearance. Teachers have the remedy in their own hands. Promotion from class to class should be gained only by showing good work at each of the periodical examinations. While on this subject of periodical examinations I should like to point out "that the written questions used, and the pupils answers thereto, must be kept in the school for reference till the next annual visit." It is not too much to ask that, for the purpose of reference, these be neatly arranged. Often I have been unable to obtain the questions set at one of these examinations, or a boy's answers have been lost. The tabulation of these results is too often conspicuous by absence.

From the above table it will be seen that the average age of the children in the various standards is very close to the average age for the colony.

The following list shows the efficiency marks in the various subjects: Satisfactory—reading, spelling, writing, needlework; fair—arithmetic, composition, drawing, drill, singing, recitation; moderate—geography, grammar, history, science. Classification of schools—4 good, 10 satisfactory, 10 fair, 9 weak.

It affords me great pleasure to be able to report that the work in many of the schools shows a decided improvement. The teachers have entered into their work with a will, and there have been fewer breaks in attendance throughout the year. Probably the lengthening of the midsummer holidays from four to five weeks has had its effect; there is not the feverish desire to close the school on each and every occasion. Owing to the date of the annual visit being somewhat earlier than in the previous year the number of half-days on which the schools have been opened does not in all cases show above 400. Unless the school has been closed through sickness during the year the number should be 420, and, where it has not reached near that number, I have in all cases demanded an explanation.

Reading has shown most improvement during the year, and, with increased reading-matter to be used during the coming year, I shall look for still further improvement. The comprehension of the reading-matter still leaves much to be desired. Although at my inspection visits I urged teachers not to be content with the meaning of a word as given by a pupil, but to ask for its use in a sentence, great weakness was shown when the use of simple words was asked for at the annual visit. This is a point I should like teachers to specially note. A pupil does not thoroughly understand a word unless he can use it in a sentence. This use of words must be given by the juniors as well as by the seniors.

Previous complaints about the teaching of writing appear to have roused some of the teachers to their responsibilities. Not that the subject is by any means well taught in many of our schools, but in several there is a big improvement. Incorrect posture and improper holding of the pen are to me signs of weak discipline. Teachers know what is required; if they do not insist upon its being done, they are to blame. In the teaching of writing in the lower standards there is often no system. Children that have been at school but a very short time are found writing words that contain some of the most difficult elements. Plenty of practice in the various elements is what is required, and occasionally the seniors might be given practice in the various formations. The papers done during the examination are usually very neat: at only a few schools have I had occasion to find fault on account of untidiness.

The most disappointing subject is arithmetic, and I hope that with a somewhat lightened syllabus in the subject, teachers will this year make a big effort to improve it. By the simple mental tests used at the last examination I think I have convinced teachers that one of the weaknesses lies in this direction. These exercises will be continued and extended. In a previous report I pointed out that tables should be more extensively used for all classes. It is annoying to find a Sixth Standard pupil using his slate to find the value of 0·625 of £1. These simple decimals should be as well known to him as is the multiplication table to his younger brother. There is far to much slate-work; much too little mental work. Parents complain that even the elder pupils are unable to reckon the cost of a few articles, or to tell whether a bill is correct, without the use of pen or pencil. Let teachers then attend to the mental work. Again, let there be plenty of blackboard demonstration, the why and the wherefore of each step thoroughly explained: let the pupil work on the blackboard, and explain to the others the reason of each step. Above all, let us have the arithmetic intelligently set out; let the pupils write opposite to each line what that line means. Then we shall not have a jumble of meaningless figures as the result of an hour and a half's work at a simple test card.

Owing to the fact that many of our teachers had had little or no training in drawing the full syllabus in all cases has not been demanded. Last year, however, classes in drawing were conducted for upwards of six months, and teachers must understand that they have now no excuse for not attempting all the work.

Teachers have complained that the work in geography under the old syllabus was more than they could reasonably do: certainly it was seldom well done. Under the new syllabus they have quite a new field to work in, and it remains for them to show that they are equal to the task. To those who still think the work too heavy, my advice is, do as much as you can; but remember that whatever is done must be intelligently done. A great amount of it is observation-work. Text-books may be a guide, but that is all. If the children have not observed and inferred the result will not be satisfactory.

While on the subject of the new syllabus I should like to point out that the teacher's work is what it has always been. The greater part of his time will be devoted to the teaching of English and arithmetic, and he who leads his pupils to do good work in these important subjects will have done a fair amount of what is required.

I have, &c.,

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

WESTLAND.

SIR,— Education Office, Hokitika, 14th February, 1905.

I have the honour to present a general report on the working of the schools of the district for the year 1904. The tables accompanying the report relate to the examination of thirty-two public schools and five Catholic schools. The former omits three schools that were in operation during the year, but were closed at the time when the examination was due. With the exception of eleven schools of South Westland all the public schools received special inspection visits and in a few schools this was necessary on several occasions.

The following table presents information relating to the numbers connected with the annual examination :—

Classes.	Number on Roll.	Percentage of Total Roll.	Present at Inspector's Annual Visit.	Average Age of Pupils in each Class.
				Yrs. mos.
Secondary Class	32	3·2	31	...
Standard VII.	28	2·7	26	14 11
" VI.	81	7·8	80	13 9
" V.	104	10·0	101	13 3
" IV.	117	11·3	109	12 7
" III.	105	10·1	104	11 0
" II.	101	9·8	99	10 7
" I.	113	11·0	111	8 5
Preparatory	352	34·1	345	7 2
Totals	1,033	...	1,006	11 5*

* Mean of average age.

Of the number on the roll at the time of the annual examinations twenty-six were presented in a different class in arithmetic, twenty-two being in a lower standard and four in a higher. The number over eight years of age presented in the preparatory class was eighty-two, a considerable increase on that for the previous year.

The pupils in the Seventh Standard, numbering twenty-eight, were all represented in the Sixth Standard for the purpose of obtaining proficiency certificates. In this the twenty-six candidates present were successful. In addition, fifteen prepared work prescribed for Standard VII. in the extent at least of a useful course of book-keeping. In future pupils that have previously obtained a proficiency certificate will be expected to attempt the course of instruction prescribed by the regulations, which require that where possible the secondary class of a district high school shall be utilised. In general it will be found advisable to present again in Standard VI. those that at the previous examination obtained only a competency certificate for that standard.

Of the number presented in the Sixth Standard thirty-nine qualified for proficiency certificates and thirty obtained competency certificates. The percentages are : proficiency certificates, 48 ; competency certificates, 37 ; failed, 15. The large number of competency certificates is accounted for partly by the inclusion of pupils that were presented in a lower class of arithmetic and partly by the advance in the relative importance of geography and drawing, these subjects being allotted one-fourth of the total marks. The percentage of proficiency certificates will increase, as the Sixth Standard will in future include those who have previously obtained competency certificates and who may be expected to complete their record for the standard.

The classification of the pupils of standards below the sixth is carried out in most cases with commendable care and with due sense of responsibility. Very seldom in schools under experienced teachers is it necessary to criticize adversely the system of promotion. In the schools of the lower grades, however, untrained teachers require assistance very frequently. A few teachers in all grades of schools are remiss in keeping throughout the year the records required by Regulation 5. Any neglect in the preservation of the necessary statements and results of the teacher's periodical examinations must be regarded as evidence of some degree of weakness in the management of the school and of want of interest in its progress. Where the classification is carried out by the teacher these records furnish indispensable information regarding the conduct of the school, and where promotion has for any reason to be alloted by the Inspector, they form a valuable check on the results of the annual examination. For these reasons the requirements of the regulation referred to should receive regular and careful attention.

In efficiency the schools of the district have during the past year maintained a good standard. Very few reports record general weakness and in a number of instances distinct progress has been recorded. The course of instruction followed has to a large extent been that of the new syllabus. In the English subjects this has been the case without exception. Considerable advance has been made in the teaching of oral composition and increased attention has been given to phrases and clauses in the study of the sentence. In arithmetic, owing to the undue reliance on the text-books in use, the course adopted did not always coincide with the new requirements, and it was frequently necessary to adapt the test partly to the new and partly to the old syllabus. In all schools no change was made in the course in geography and little in drawing. The full requirements of the new syllabus will be undertaken during the present year. The following subjects were adopted as stated in the thirty-two

schools examined :—Singing, 12 schools (737 pupils) ; physical instruction, 17 schools (830 pupils) ; needlework, 31 schools (367 pupils) ; handwork, junior classes of 22 schools (504 pupils). The omission of singing and physical instruction occurs almost wholly in the smallest schools and is due practically in every case to the lack of experience of the teachers. The number of such instances is being gradually reduced, and physical training especially will be required to enter more widely into the curriculum of the schools.

A pleasing feature of the year's work is the readiness and even enthusiasm with which the majority of the teachers in all grades of schools have met the change in the requirements in nature-study. Even in the small schools, where a special course in this subject is not required, a syllabus was uniformly presented and in many instances the instruction has been very satisfactory. The substitution, for the formal object-lessons following a rigid plan taken from a text-book, of lessons based on observation and aiming at the cultivation of powers of expression is proving welcome to many teachers and scholars. There is a danger that later some teachers who have thus departed from one groove will develop another —that courses of observation lessons will become fixed quantities and will lose their vitality ; but at present the breaking of new ground is bringing into existence a spontaneity that is refreshing. The net result will inevitably be beneficial and the use of the concrete in the training of the pupils will effect very largely the methods employed in all subjects. It is not to be expected, however, that all teachers will at once perceive and follow the true aim of nature-study. The selection of the course from the text-book by the teacher and the learning by rote of statements about the objects of study have not yet disappeared from the methods of some inexperienced teachers, and it will take time to direct their energies towards the development of intelligent interest in nature itself and towards training in habits of observation and power of expression.

While it is possible to carry correlation of nature-study with other subjects to an absurd extreme, the connection with composition cannot be too frequently emphasized. In fact, in a district such as Westland the pupils are already possessed of a great deal of first-hand knowledge of nature, seeing that none are without ready access to mountain, stream, and sea, and to all that can be studied in the native bush. Therefore the important task is to train the pupils in the mental processes and in the powers of expression that shall enable them to observe and describe what they see. The material is already provided, all that is required is the completion of the structure. Oral description, explanation, and recounting of studies must enter intimately into the process of all lessons on nature-study, and the written exercises should embody the same original expression of the results of the pupils' mental effort. It is frequently the case that if two consecutive standards are given the same exercise in composition the lower class will write more fully and with greater zest than the higher. The reason for this is that each succeeding standard has more rules of composition under study and the pupils are devoting a greater proportion of attention to punctuation, concord, and collocation, and less to the free expression of the subject-matter. This can be avoided to a considerable extent by the judicious apportionment of criticism. More marks should be allotted for fullness of the story and appreciation of its main points than for mere verbal accuracy. The latter must be considered, but should take a more subordinate place. Otherwise the children reach a stage of mental habit in which they cannot " see the wood for trees." They avoid the " blue pencil," but miss the true object of their endeavour. The same misdirection of energy appears in the study of the prose and verse of the lessons studied as exercises in reading and recitation. The thought should hold first place, and the words, phrases, and sentences should be valued only so far as they serve as a vehicle for expression. For this reason it is unwise to use too freely, in the primary school at least, the masterpieces of our best authors for analytical study of function and classification of the elements of sentences. The exercise for these should in the first place be selected from sentences similar to those used in conversation and school exercises by the pupils themselves. In lessons in reading and recitation the reference to words and phrases should be incidental, and the main attention should be given to the ideas and their adequate expression.

It is inevitable that in the small schools that form so large a proportion in this district the teachers, whose experience is in most cases very limited, should rely very largely on text-books. During the past year great difficulty has been experienced owing to the difference in scope of the books in use and the requirements of the new syllabus. When the issue of publications adapted to the new course has been completed the temporary disarrangement will disappear and the work of the schools will proceed more smoothly. It is therefore too early to estimate fully the effect of the new regulations and any attempt to do so must be deferred. There is a tendency among teachers to view with less apprehension certain aspects of the altered conditions, and to discover that on more intimate acquaintance the demands on their time and energy are not so formidable as they at first appeared.

I have, &c.,

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

NORTH CANTERBURY.

Sir,— Christchurch, 31st January, 1905.

We have the honour to present our report on the schools of the North Canterbury District for the year 1904.

During the year the duties of inspection and examination were carried out without any material departure from the lines of former years. Under the prevailing conditions it was not thought advisable to introduce any substantial modifications in the methods pursued. In the information furnished, however, as the result of examination a change is to be noted, embodying an approximate observance of the provisions of the amended regulations and representing in part the altered attitude of the Inspectors' visits towards the school-economy. At three stages only of the pupils' course (in the Second,

Fourth, and Sixth Standards) the earlier practice has been followed of giving the status of the individual as determined by teacher or Inspector. The compromise was adopted as a temporary expedient, partly to avoid too wide a departure from use and wont and partly because a detailed inquiry of the earlier type was still expected by teachers, pupils, and parents. In nearly all cases the examination was conducted entirely on the basis of the expiring syllabus, on the understanding that immediately after the annual visit the teachers should proceed with the new programme.

By a resolution of the Board, reversing the policy previously pursued, the examination of any private schools whose managers desired the services of an Inspector was added to our duties during the year. Application for examination in terms of the resolution were duly received on behalf of thirteen schools, but of this group time permitted us to deal with only a limited number, four in Christchurch, one at Kaikoura, and one at Lyttelton, representing a total of 781 pupils.

In the public schools examined the class lists presented contained the names of 19,560 children. Of these, 18,335 children were present, distributed as shown in the following table :—

Classes.	Number on Roll.	Present at Inspector's Annual Visit.	Average Age of Pupils in each Class.
			Yrs. mos.
Standard VII.	367	294	15 1
" VI.	1,463	1,418	13 9
" V.	2,066	1,993	12 11
" IV.	2,417	2,302	12 1
" III.	2,498	2,391	11 0
" II.	2,349	2,278	9 10
" I.	2,273	2,209	8 9
Preparatory	6,127	5,450	6 11
Totals	19,560	18,335	11 3*

* Mean of average age.

The number in point of enrolment is somewhat lower than in the previous year, but in point of attendance appreciably higher, forty-seven appearing as the difference in the one case and 574 in the other. In this connection it will be remembered that the previous year was specially remarkable for the prevalence of childish ailments, which materially affected the attendance.

The following further comparison may prove of interest—the numbers respectively enrolled and present were : Standard VII., 367 and 294 ; Standards VI.–I., 13,066 and 12,591 ; and P. 6,127 and 5,450. For 1903 the figures were : Standard VII., 309 and 219 ; Standards VI.–I., 13,094 and 12,261, and P. 6,204 and 5,281.

On the results of examination, certificates of proficiency were granted to 868 Sixth Standard pupils, and 347 of the same standard certificates of competency. The cases in which application was mad under section 18 of the regulations for examination with a view to obtain certificates in the lower grades have been extremely few, perhaps not half a dozen in all, if we except two small groups of pupils at the Boys' and Girls' High Schools, Christchurch, who were specially examined to secure recognition as qualified pupils. The number is pretty sure to increase ; but so far requests for certificates at various stages have in the past not usually been made till long after the examination. We have many times been obliged to go back over the records for quite a number of years (mainly, however, for Sixth Standard certificates) to comply with a request of the kind. As in time to come practically no information as to the status of the individual not specially examined with a view to a certificate of competency below Standard VI. will be in the possession of Inspectors, it behoves the teachers to exercise special care in keeping their own records in a permanent and accessible form for future reference. In this matter we are afraid many have not yet awakened to a due sense of the responsibilities now imposed upon them under section 5 of the regulations.

As elementary education in New Zealand now enters on a new era of its existence under widely different conditions from those hitherto prevailing, it will be useful to devote some space to a consideration of the present position, taking stock, as it were, of the progress already made in some of the leading features and indicating incidentally the lines of future development. At the outset we may as well say that the last few years have not witnessed an improvement. Our teachers are, practically without exception, as conscientious and industrious as ever, but their efforts have been less effective, for the simple reason that, conditions of promotion among pupils being easier, the higher classes of the schools have more and more tended to include children whose previous preparation and mental equipment are insufficient to enable them to make the best use of their opportunities. Promotion under easy conditions is pleasant enough to all concerned for the time being, but it has its Nemesis. Teachers in strong positions have commonly foreseen and taken steps to avoid the danger ; their less fortunately situated brethren have looked less to the future, and in not a few cases have left themselves or their successors the task of attempting the impossible. Of the permission to promote on the basis of separate subjects, now enjoyed for some time, little or no use, we may note, has anywhere been made, and except that in the case of a very few individual pupils the classification for English and arithmetic differs, the standard still remains, and, as far as we can see, is likely to remain, the general basis of organization. Of the modification made possible by greater facilities of class-grouping under suitable circumstances more advantage is likely to be taken.

ENGLISH. — In English, under which are included reading and recitation, spelling, writing, and composition, the reading is commonly quite satisfactory, differences in schools lying more in the varying evidences of intelligent treatment than in qualities of fluency or enunciation. In recitation a sufficient number of pieces is nearly always prepared and duly rendered, with a distinction in schools similar to that observed in reading; but the exercise is oftener than we could wish one to which the kindred term "repetition" is more appropriate, and if the teachers went further afield in making selections from the best poetry available, the tedium of the examination-room would be relieved and the minds and tastes of the pupils benefited.

To spelling quite as much attention is generally given as the exercise warrants, and dictation is usually well done. At the earlier stages, word-building methods are followed with more or less practice in irregularly formed words in common use, as illustrated by the reading-books; in the later stages, only a few teachers at the time of the annual visit had so far anticipated events by attempting any systematic treatment of word-formation. In this feature we hope in time to get away in a large measure from the trammels of the reader, establishing the exercise on a better footing with an independent basis.

With the writing of our schools we are not quite satisfied, though probably in a majority of them the writing is good. Copybooks are in general use, and these seldom invite much criticism, but with a fair imitation of the copy too many teachers appear to be content. Too little attention is paid to the sitting position, to the way in which the pen is held and the resulting quality of stroke, and generally too little of the old ambition of making "penmanship" a feature of the school is to be observed. On writing, the practice in drawing has had, we believe, rather an injurious influence than otherwise through essential differences in the instrument employed in each case. In future much more use is to be made of "transcription" in the teaching of writing, and the change is probably an improvement.

On the teaching of composition (apart from grammar) it is difficult to express a general judgment. The practice is regularly and faithfully conducted with varying results. As a rule, much promise is found at the stages represented by Standard III. and Standard IV., where the conditions are simple; in the classes above, the result (apart from the question of technical details—agreement, punctuation, &c.) depends not so much on the actual teaching received in the subject itself as on the general intelligence of the pupil, on his home surroundings, and more particularly on the habit of reading acquired. In the lower classes greater attention is now given to oral composition, and pleasing exercises on slates have not unfrequently been received from Second Standard children on a familiar animal or other topic. Oral composition from the earliest stages, we may repeat, is in our view an exercise of great importance, capable of exercising an immense amount of good in giving pupils facility and confidence in the use of language, and if taken in a preliminary way in later exercises, of much assistance in promoting the orderly arrangement of written efforts.

From the programme of our schools, grammar as a separate subject now disappears, and if it is commonly understood that grammar in its bearing on composition still holds a no less important position than it ever did, we can bear the loss with equanimity. For several years past a small amount of "full parsing" has been retained in our examination tests, but this has been solely out of deference to the requirements of the syllabus and in the interests of any teachers who might have given much attention to the practice. The simple function of the word, the phrase, the clause, and other features bearing on sentence-structure are, however, on a different footing, and we look to teachers to give us something better under these heads than they have recently been in the habit of doing. Some of the less experienced, interpreting the absence of grammar from the list of subjects as an absence from the scheme of study, have already practically dropped it, and with many the treatment has long been perfunctory. Year by year the grammar of our schools, even in its narrowest aspect—in its bearing on composition—has been getting worse and worse, as children with an increasingly imperfect appreciation of the distinctions involved have gone up in the schools, and we fear much that the newer conditions are not such as to favour a revival in a better form. At the same time we think it right to put in a plea for the much maligned element of English education. For the future it is not our intention to call the composition satisfactory in a school which does not disclose a fairly efficient treatment of that branch which has hitherto gone under a separate name. Any reasonable scheme, however, adapted to the requirements of a class, or class group (made up of two or more standards according to circumstances), we are prepared to accept.

ARITHMETIC.—Like other subjects of the school programme, arithmetic demands in the newer education more realistic treatment than has usually been deemed necessary. Realistic methods are, it may be said, sufficiently general at the earliest stages in our infant departments, where for a long series of years the teaching has followed the method of the analysis of progressively higher numbers on the present approved lines, and it remains only for teachers to apply similar methods to the extended analysis now required of the lower standard classes. Here, however, the practical difficulty immediately presents itself that the method demands a greater share of the teacher's direct attention than can be given in the small school. In the higher classes, particularly in Standard V., the arithmetic done during the past year in working the tests furnished by the Education Department has given us a good deal of trouble. Failure to work the tests satisfactorily in the standard mentioned has been the rule rather than the exception. The cause lies partly in the fact that a new departure has been taken in the stress laid upon particular types of questions, some of them in previous practice reserved for the next-standard work, and partly in the absence of realistic treatment in the teaching, particularly in connection with the metric system. The children of our higher classes have been given no opportunities of acquiring facility in the use of the actual weights and measures; they have had no training in practical conversion exercises and none in the making of paper or cardboard models to illustrate notions of surface and volume. They have in consequence had no real knowledge of the litre, metre, and kilogram, and when a question involving the size and weight of anything in metrical units has been given, it has failed to

awaken any distinct conception of what is meant. The fault lies more in the equipment of schools than in the teachers, for no sets of weights and measures have been supplied, and indeed we may say generally that the absence of proper apparatus, for which money does not appear to have been available, has proved, and still proves, in many ways obtructive of reform.

GEOGRAPHY.—With the progress that is now being made with the new geography in our schools we have as yet had little or no opportunity of becoming acquainted. One thing is certain that until adequate means of instruction are provided in the school-equipment, the teachers' efforts in the desired direction must be greatly hampered. We have confidence, however, that in many cases they have ingenuity enough to find a way round. Some of them, we have reason to believe, are already taking a great interest in the subject, and when the merits of the scheme are better understood the interest is bound to increase. But in the minds of the majority so far there has existed a good deal of bewilderment arising out of the indefinite (perhaps designedly and rightly indefinite) character of the programme set down for their guidance. For our own part we shall find a very practical difficulty in dealing with the subject in the Sixth Standard in examining for certificates of proficiency; at present we are very doubtful of the possibility of interpreting a programme of observational geography, of which the essential feature is the method rather than the substance, the how of the teaching rather than the what, in terms of a percentage of marks in the case of individual pupils.

In comparing the older geography with the new no one can fail to be struck with the immense step in advance that has been made in the conceptions embodied. The older geography, which may be regarded as the relic of a discarded "pass" system, had many grave defects; it made little or no attempt at correlation, reduced lessons in many cases to the names and positions of places with little tags of text-book information attached, minimised the relation of cause and effect, and failed to put the study on any reasonable scientific basis. In method of treatment it was anything from excellent to bad, though never bad enough to deserve the strictures of the critic who sets up an Aunt Sally, consisting of strings of names unintelligently memorised, for the purpose of shying a cocoanut at the dummy of his creation. In the new scheme, which follows to a great extent the lines of instruction long recognised on the Continent of Europe, and more recently adopted in England, the development adheres to the true psychological order, and is truly scientific in the observational and experimental foundation of the knowledge to be acquired. On the lines laid down there appears, however, grave reason for apprehension that so much time will be taken up with the proper treatment of fundamental notions, with the laying of the foundation, that little of the superstructure will appear in many a child's school career, and valuable information on the political side necessary for the intelligent comprehension of everyday facts of human intercourse will be missed.

For geography in its humanistic, but non-political, aspect (political geography finding practically no place in the scheme) the use of a reader is contemplated, though the reader is optional. On this point we may be permitted to express a doubt whether the best plan is thus taken in allowing so important a part of the subject as that outlined in Course B to be dealt with as a reading lesson merely. We have little faith in school reading as a means of acquiring information on any subject, and if the declared intentions of the course are carried out there must be, besides a great deal more of the difficult relation of caus and effect, more of a demand on the reasoning-powers than may fairly be intrusted to a reading lesson. Much of the matter contained in the course seems to us to demand rather the services of definite and skilful teaching to give it any value. If a geographical reader is used at all, we should prefer to assign to it the subsidiary function of stimulating interest and assisting the imagination by picturesque descriptions of life, or accounts of travel, in various lands, the British Empire receiving special attention with a view to the cultivation of a healthy spirit of Imperial patriotism.

HISTORY AND CIVIC INSTRUCTION.—In favour of the use of historical readers there is more to be said, for the history of the elementary school (consisting as it might well do, in a large measure, of well-told stories) may be made more akin to literature. Here again, however, in the domain of civics, with which the history is associated, we trust our teachers will seldom rest satisfied with allowing their children merely to read about matters having a vital bearing on their future as citizens. In civic instruction realistic teaching appears to us as much an essential of proper method as in any other field of effort, and the value is surely great enough to justify the necessary trouble.

DRAWING.—The drawing of our schools, as the scope of the subject has hitherto been understood, is efficiently treated in a very large majority—at all events as far as freehand exercises are concerned. The development is largely on what has been described as the synthetic plan, beginning with exercises on squared paper or slates, followed by simple straight-lined figures with and without ruler, and thence proceeding through practice in curves of increasing difficulty mainly of the type of symmetrical ornament. This is the plan of the older syllabus; it is also to some extent the plan of the new; but several fresh conceptions are introduced which now find general acceptance in the educational world. Our teachers would do well to give close attention to those portions of the new programme which refer to free-arm or blackboard exercises, to design, and to drawing from actual objects (nature-drawing). Many of them are already working on the lines of the last of these three branches, and drawing from geometrical models is now receiving more attention, though here physical conditions must always create a difficulty; but in the direction of design—in making drawings creative as well as imitative—they will find a new and fruitful field for the exercise of their talents. Free-arm drawing is also so far a stranger to our schools, and no means of carrying it out are yet provided. Of the value of the exercise in making drawing an instrument of expression there can be no question, and we hope to see early arrangements made for its introduction. On this topic, the remarks made by a recent able writer on educational principles may be quoted with profit, "Broadly contrasted with the method which, beginning with drill in the elements of form, works at once for rigid accuracy, is that which begins with whole objects familiar to the children, is content at first with performances that are often unsightly and amusing, and works gradually for accuracy. . . . We may safely say that up to the eighth or ninth year drawing should be in the main the free expression of the child's ideas of objects and events. . . . The treatment

should be free and bold, and to this end chalk and blackboard are preferable at first to paper and pencil. At the same time such advantages as are thought to accrue from the Froebelian exercises on chequered slates, and from the subsequent drill in lines and angles, drawn from the free-hand and with the ruler, need not be entirely sacrificed."

MANUAL TRAINING.—Manual occupations occupy much the same position in the schools as in the previous year. In woodwork little tendency towards extension has been shown. Another small centre was opened during the year, and steps are now being taken to make suitable provision for one more. In practical domestic economy the interest awakened has been sustained, but there is yet room for much expansion, and probably further provision in the chief centre of population will soon be, if it is not already, necessary. At the Christchurch School of Domestic Instruction, classes of girls numbering in all approximately four hundred pupils from eight or nine city and suburban schools, continue to receive a training in plain cooking. The instruction is popular, and though it is to be regretted that the accommodation available forbids the use of cottage stoves or ranges, which are indispensable to a proper degree of efficiency, we have reason to believe that much good is done. Three other centres are established. In woodwork, at present there are four centres.

In the lower classes, paper-folding, brushwork, and plasticine-modelling hold the chief place. Of the educational value of brushwork we think highly, but only on the condition that the exercise is pursued far enough up in the school to make it applicable to design and to the expression of flower and plant forms as an adjunct of nature-study. Of the plasticine-modelling, to which we assign the premier position, we have great hopes. It is the form of occupation that seems to us to afford the best promise of fruitful development, and in connection with geography may be expected to receive a considerable impulse in the immediate future.

DISTRICT HIGH SCHOOLS.—The district high schools, of which ten have been in operation during the year, have added appreciably to the work of the Inspectors, already kept sufficiently busy with their ordinary duties, and when the full tale of private schools comes to be added to the list, they will require to exercise much economy of time, if their period of leisure and recuperation—less than one-third in all of that enjoyed by teachers—is not to be curtailed.

Of the bearing of the district high-school-movement it is yet too early to speak; that in some cases the movement has been premature is shown by the closing during the year of two small departments at Oxford and Kaikoura. In larger centres success is assured. In Christchurch, the last quarter of the year witnessed the conversion of the West Christchurch School into a district high school, with such remarkable and immediate success as amply to justify the opinion we have more than once expressed of the need locally of a "higher grade" school to bridge over the interval between the conclusion of the ordinary primary course and some industrial employment. The new department closed its first quarter with a roll-number of 175 pupils.

In the nine district high schools in operation at the time of the annual visit (a limitation which excludes West Christchurch) there were enrolled in the higher departments a total of 242 pupils of the average age of fifteen years. These were duly examined in a programme of work proportional to the time during which the schools had been opened for secondary work.

ORDER, DISCIPLINE, AND MORAL INSTRUCTION.—Of the general behaviour of the children in our schools we have reason to think highly. The discipline is mild, the relations between instructor and instructed are commonly of a very kindly nature, and the steady industry, upright life, and becoming demeanour of the vast majority of the teachers give a good guarantee that their moral influence is an effective instrument in the formation of character.

PHYSICAL TRAINING.—To the question of physical training considerable attention continues to be given. Club, wand, and dumb-bell exercises, with more or less appreciation of their hygienic influences, are commonly found, but to be of much use require short daily instead of longer weekly practice, and in a number of cases breathing exercises form a regular part of the routine. In the larger schools the cadet movement maintains its interest, with a most beneficial effect on discipline. On the whole we are of opinion that, without giving more prominence to physical education than seems necessary in a young and sport-loving country, nearly as much is being done in the required direction as may reasonably be expected under conditions that preclude the special adaptation of exercises to the personal needs of the individual pupil.

In conclusion, we have to put on record our keen sense of regret at the loss sustained during the year through the retirement of our senior colleague Mr. L. B. Wood, who so long and so ably filled the position in cordial relations of comradeship with his brother Inspectors.

We have, &c.,

W. J. ANDERSON, LL.D.,
THOS. RITCHIE, B.A.,
T. S. FOSTER, M.A.,
} Inspectors.

The Chairman, North Canterbury Education Board.

SOUTH CANTERBURY.

SIR,— Timaru, 6th March, 1905.

We have the honour to present our annual report on the schools of the South Canterbury District for the year 1904

The number of schools in operation at the end of the year was seventy-four. Three new schools were opened in the second quarter of the year.

With the exception of one small school, all the schools were examined, the examinations beginning in July and ending in December. Visits were also paid to the schools in the earlier part of the year.

The Roman Catholic schools were examined in the middle of the year. The forms of report required under the new regulations were not then to hand, and the examination results are therefore stated as in previous years. The five schools have a roll-number of 605 pupils; of these 552 were present at our annual visit, and 330 passed in one or other of the standards, being a percentage of 84 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. We are pleased to report that the schools are generally in a very fair state of efficiency, and that the managers and teachers show a laudable desire to maintain their schools in a condition to meet all the requirements as laid down for the public schools of the colony.

The examination of pupil-teachers was held in July, and of candidates for scholarships in December. Reports on these examinations were submitted in due course. An examination of young persons wishing to enter the service as pupil-teachers was also held in December. It was the intention to select pupil-teachers from those that passed this examination, preference to be given to those that stood highest in order of merit, provided suitable candidates who had passed the University Matriculation Examination were not forthcoming. For recent appointments the Board has been fortunate in receiving applications from scholars of the high schools and of the district high schools who had obtained the higher qualification; and there is some probability that the ranks of the pupil-teachers will be entirely recruited from those that have passed the Matriculation Examination. So long as the pupil-teacher system is the recognised gateway to the profession, it is well that those who enter should do so at an age when they are almost, if not quite, full grown, and when they have made such progress in their studies as will fit them after a brief apprenticeship to take full advantage of the benefits now offering to those admitted to classes at the normal schools and university colleges.

The higher work of the district high schools was examined at the time of our annual visit to these schools, and special reports on the work were submitted to the Board. With the sanction of the Minister of Education, the Board has converted the Pleasant Point School into a district high school, and a successful beginning has been made with the higher work, over twenty pupils who have passed the Sixth Standard being enrolled in the secondary department.

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

Classes.	Number on Roll.	Present at Inspector's Annual Visit.	Average Age of Pupils in each Class.
			Yrs. mos.
Standard VII.	158	137	15 1
„ VI.	440	430	13 8
„ V.	572	546	12 9
„ IV.	603	595	11 10
„ III.	579	560	10 9
„ II.	609	594	9 10
„ I.	571	558	8 9
Preparatory	1,541	1,389	6 11
Totals	5,073	4,809	11 2*

* Mean of average age.

Comparing this return with that of last year we note an increase of seventy-eight in the roll-number, and of 288 in the number present at the Inspectors' annual visit. The average age remains the same in the preparatory class, and in Standards III., IV., V., and VI.; it has risen one month in Standards II. and VII., and has fallen one month in Standard I. The familiar column recording the number of passes in each standard now disappears from the summary in consequence of one of the most important changes brought about by the new regulations, namely, the abolition of the individual standard pass, except in Standard VI., and in a few cases in which certificates of lower standards are required. The classification of a school is left to the discretion of the head teacher, the promotions from class to class being made by him in accordance with the results of periodical examinations, full records of these promotions and examinations being retained for the information of the Inspector. It is intended that the Inspector, being relieved from the task of testing the progress of the individual pupil, will satisfy himself of the general efficiency of the instruction by devoting the greater part of his time at the annual visit to "an investigation of the character of the teaching, and of the degree to which the intelligence of the pupils has been developed." Whether we have generally succeeded or not by our method of examining in arriving at a just estimate of the efficiency of a school, it has always been our purpose to get behind the answers and mental attitude of the pupils to the teacher and his methods; and more by example than by precept we have endeavoured to direct the teaching along lines laid down by recognised leaders of reform in educational methods.

Individual examination by the Inspector is still retained in Standard VI., and certificates of a lower and a higher grade are awarded according to the requirements of the candidates. The lower-grade certificate is the "certificate of competency"; the higher is the "certificate of proficiency," those that obtain the latter being eligible for free education in the secondary department of a district high school, and with a restriction as to age being also eligible for free places, tenable for two years, at those high schools that have accepted the conditions as set forth in the regulations under the Secondary Schools Act. It is further provided that at the end of two years the holder of a free place, by passing

the Civil Service Junior Examination, may continue as a free scholar, and thus a boy or girl may go from the primary school with no fees to pay right to the threshold of the university. There were 440 pupils on the roll in Standard VI., of whom 430 were present at our annual visit, and were examined by us; of these 307 obtained "certificates of proficiency," and forty-eight obtained "certificates of competency."

In our brief statement of the efficiency of each school, we have classed them as follows: good, 23 schools; satisfactory, 27; fair, 15; moderate to inferior, 8. The schools that are classed "good" and "satisfactory" have 4,313 pupils on the roll; in the schools marked "fair," there are 574 pupils; while in the schools that fall below this mark, and are therefore to be considered "weak," there are 186 pupils It is fair to state that in six of the eight schools in the last group much loss of time and dislocation of work was occasioned through the changing of teachers. It is gratifying to find that all the large schools are in the first group, and still more so that a few of the schools conducted by one teacher also secure a place there. In the group of schools that are classed as "satisfactory," a large amount of good work was done.

Handwork of various kinds formed part of the regular course of instruction in twenty-two schools. For the most part such work was confined to the lower divisions of the schools, but in a few the higher classes also participated in the instruction. In the Waimate District High School and in the Timaru Main School the girls of the upper standards did very good work in the cookery classes, while the boys took up woodwork with all the enthusiasm of a new game. In three or four schools the boys were fortunate in having the privilege of belonging to a swimming class. For years past children's gardens have been a pleasing feature of the surroundings of several schools, each child or group of children having a plot to attend to. So far these gardens have been kept for the recreation of the pupils during their hours of play, and for the beautifying of the playground; but with the introduction of nature-study to the course of instruction much more may be made of the gardens than formerly; and in a future report we may be able to record that school gardens are as common as they are now rare. If the lessons in nature-study are in all cases to have immediate reference to the local surroundings, surely in an agricultural district like ours the school garden will come to be regarded as indispensable.

During the winter months Saturday classes for the training of teachers were held in Timaru and Waimate. In Timaru botany, drawing, needlework, and woodwork were taken; and in Waimate botany, physiology, and drawing. Except in woodwork, the attendance in the Timaru classes was by no means satisfactorily maintained; at Waimate the attendance was very good. The progress made in woodwork was particularly noticeable, and the instructor has now a class of sixteen teachers who are being prepared for examination with the view of obtaining the certificate of the City and Guilds of London Institute.

In order to clear away some of the misconceptions that had arisen as to the aim and scope of the new syllabus and the difficulties that presented themselves to teachers in their reading of the regulations, we were present at a special meeting of the local branch of the Educational Institute and answered questions that had been submitted to us for consideration a few days before the date of meeting. Notes of our answers were circulated among the teachers of the district, and we trust the notes may have saved some of the teachers a little worry. But in order to grasp the requirements of the syllabus and to catch its spirit teachers must be willing to give much time to its study. The syllabus is not merely an outline of the requirements in the several subjects; in many cases it presents a full statement of the matter that may be taught, the selection of suitable portions of the matter being left in a large degree to the teachers themselves. Further, it is an exposition of the methods to be followed by those into whose hands is committed the mental and moral training of the boys and girls who will be the men and women of the colony a few years hence. In their endeavours to work in accordance with the syllabus teachers will find many problems cropping up; and it will be our duty, as these are presented to us, to aid in their solution.

We have, &c.,

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

The Chairman, South Canterbury Education Board

OTAGO.

SIR,— Education Office, Dunedin, 8th March, 1905.

We have the honour to present our general report for the year 1904.

SUMMARY OF RESULTS FOR THE WHOLE DISTRICT.

Classes.	Number on Roll.	Present at Inspector's Annual Visit.	Average Age of Pupils in each Class.
			Yrs. mos.
Standard VII.	396	358	15 5
" VI.	1,468	1,446	13 9
" V.	2,062	2,002	12 10
" IV.	2,369	2,309	12 0
" III.	2,441	2,383	10 11
" II.	2,303	2,264	9 11
" I.	2,285	2,246	8 11
Preparatory	6,314	5,799	6 10
Totals	19,638	18,807	11 3*

* Mean of average age.

The average attendance per cent. for 1904 was 88·6, for 1903 it was 86·8. The average attendance per cent. at the Inspector's annual visit during 1904—*i.e.*, on examination day—was 95·7 of the number on the roll. The attendance at the Inspector's annual visit is, almost without exception, one of the best attendances of the year. Comparison of the above table with the corresponding table for 1903 shows a decrease of fifty-two in the number present at the Inspector's annual visit, but this decrease is more than accounted for by the exodus of pupils from Standard VII. to the free places opened for them in the high schools, and by the omission of the number of pupils belonging to a school which at the time of the annual visit was closed on account of sickness. In class P there were in attendance seventeen pupils fewer than in 1903; but in Standard I. there was an increase of ninety-nine, probably at the cost of Class P, and in Standards II. and III. an aggregate increase of fifty-five. For years we have had to report a decrease in the attendance; the figures we have quoted may perhaps indicate that a change for the better has set in.

Some head teachers took advantage of the inauguration of the new *régime* to reclassify their schools, promoting only those pupils who satisfied them that they were fit to engage profitably and without undue pressure in the advanced work of a higher class; but, unfortunately for their pupils, many of them apparently not realising the disastrous effects of too hasty promotion, advanced some of their pupils without due regard to thorough equipment for entrance upon the more difficult work of a higher class. It goes without saying that pupils who are backward owing to irregular attendance or physical or mental weakness should be detained in the lower class until they have made good the foundation-work for the higher. Three, six, or twelve months' detention there would prove a wholesome discipline to the irregular attenders, and another year's growth would, even more than teaching, fit the others for profitable promotion. On the other hand, pupils of exceptional capacity and attainment should not be kept marking time during the latter six months' of the year, but should receive tentative promotion. To a gifted pupil, escape from six months' comparative stagnation may prove of inestimable value, and the stimulus of exceptional promotion will go far to guarantee the teacher against failure in his experiment.

While abolishing the old syllabus and system of annual standard examinations, passes, and certificates, the Education Department has enjoined the teacher to draw up, under the guidance of the new syllabus for each term or quarter, schemes of work for all the classes of his school, to hold thereon not fewer than three periodical examinations of the classes, and to place on record the nature and results of these examinations and the changes from class to class made in consequence of them. The schemes of work must, of course, for some time be regarded as tentative and provisional. They are intended to give due co-ordination to the various portions of the work and to set out the aim to be achieved during the term for which they are drawn. All changes made in them during the term should be recorded, and week by week should be entered over against each of them details of the work actually achieved These details are necessary for purposes of examination by the Inspector. We suggest that the Board should instruct all relieving-teachers to work by the schemes found in the schools and to send to the Secretary, when they leave the schools, a detailed account of the work done by them.

The fitness of pupils for promotion to a higher class is now determined by the periodical examinations held by the head teacher. Under exceptional circumstances pupils may be promoted at any time during the school year, but as a rule they are promoted after the Inspector's annual visit. The Inspector at his annual visit satisfies himself of the general efficiency of the instruction given in the school, and examines candidates for certificates of competency and certificates of proficiency. A certificate of competency implies that the holder has, except possibly in one subject, fulfilled the requirements of the standard of education prescribed in the regulations and named in the certificate. During 1904, twelve candidates obtained certificates of competency in Standard V., and thereby became eligible to enter a secondary school or entitled to certificates exempting them from attendance at school. Certificates of competency in Standard VI. were obtained by 159 candidates, who thereby became eligible for employment in certain branches of the public service. Of the 1,446 Standard VI. pupils present at the Inspector's annual visit, 1,109 obtained certificates of proficiency, and thereby became eligible to enter Standard VII. in district high schools, or, under certain conditions of age, to obtain free places in secondary schools. The certificate of proficiency implies that the holder has obtained in Standard VI. examination at least 30 per cent. of the possible marks in each of the subjects, English and arithmetic; has obtained at least 50 per cent. of the possible aggregate marks in the following compulsory subjects—viz., English, arithmetic, geography, drawing—and has satisfied the Inspector with regard to instruction in the other compulsory subjects and the additional subjects. English includes reading, competition, spelling, writing, and recitation of poetry. The standard set in English and arithmetic is, in our judgment, much too low. We cannot bring ourselves to think that pupils who can win only 30 or 40 per cent. of the aggregate marks assigned to the subjects grouped under English are fit to enter upon secondary work. We gladly recognise the liberal provision made by the Education Department for free secondary education, but we consider that a free place in the secondary school should be accorded to every pupil who can prove his fitness to profit by it. We would abolish the age-limit and greatly raise the standard of the entrance-test in English. This change would certainly not add to the expense of the free places.

The requirements for the certificate of proficiency define the standard for admission to secondary schools; they define, too, the standard for what is practically a leaving-certificate and the standard of efficiency set as the aim of our schools. In estimating the value of the work done by a class, we have hitherto regarded a 30-per-cent. mark a serious failure, and a 50-per-cent. mark as on the border line between fair and weak. For a pupil, a 50-per-cent. mark has been regarded as justifying a pass only when English or arithmetic was good. Under the new system, in which reading and composition are grouped with spelling, writing, and recitation of poetry, it is possible for an indifferent reader who is an absolute failure in composition, to pass from our schools with a certificate of proficiency, and that

at an age considerably below the age-limit of compulsory attendance. In this connection we say nothing of the 30-per-cent. pass in arithmetic, for this result is not, in Standard VI., incompatible with a fair knowledge of the arithmetic of the ordinary affairs of life; but the 30-per-cent. pass in English may and often does indicate serious weakness in reading, or in composition, or in both.

It is evident that the old leaven of the pass percentages has not yet been cast out from our schools, and there is a tendency to judge and compare schools by the percentage of Sixth Standard passes gained. We have previously said that, "under a system in which teachers are responsible for the classification of their pupils, schools must in a large measure be judged by the efficiency of the highest class, the class that represents the finished product of the school life of the pupils." In a well-classified school, with schemes of work judiciously graduated and correlated, every Sixth Standard pupil should, under favourable conditions of health and attendance, earn his proficiency certificate without difficulty; but, while that certificate represents from 50 to 100 per cent. of the possible marks, it should not be taken as the chief factor determining the efficiency of either class or the school.

We group the schools according to efficiency as follows: Good to very good, 42 per cent.; satisfactory, 42 per cent.; fair, 13 per cent.; weak to very weak, 3 per cent.

The efficiency marks in subjects were as follows: 1. Compulsory subjects—reading, satisfactory; composition, fair; spelling, good; writing, satisfactory; recitation, satisfactory; mean of English, satisfactory; arithmetic, satisfactory; drawing, satisfactory; singing, fair; physical instruction, good; geography, satisfactory; history, fair; mean of compulsory subjects, satisfactory. 2. Additional subjects—Elementary science, fair; handwork, satisfactory; needlework, very good; mean of additional subjects, satisfactory.

These efficiency marks are almost identical with those of 1903, and the schools appear to have simply maintained their position. In reality, however, the majority of them have advanced, many of the "good" approaching "very good," and many of the "satisfactory" approaching "good." On the other hand, too, many have made little or no progress. In our report for 1903 we attributed some of the unsatisfactory results to the severity of the winter and the prevalence of sickness, and also to a large increase in the number of inexperienced and unclassified teachers. So far as weather and general health are concerned, the work of 1904 was done under normal conditions; but again and again the Board was without qualified applicants for fairly good appointments, and young people, poorly educated and wholly inexperienced, had to be temporarily appointed to vacant schools. A few of these have shown such enthusiasm and such aptitude for teaching that we hope they will pursue their studies and take advantage of the training-facilities provided by the Board. Others have proved failures. Paucity of qualified teachers has induced the Board to sanction removals after but short periods of office. It is natural that young teachers should, even at the cost of reduction of salary, seek employment near their homes, or where they can improve their professional qualification; but the frequent removals made during the last two years have proved highly detrimental, especially to the country schools. The teacher's profession is an honourable one. In this country his social status is good, and to every efficient teacher tenure of office is secure; but to the prudent young man, conscious of his powers, honour and position are not proving sufficient inducement to enter the profession. Medicine and law, commerce and manufactures, are competing all too successfully for our capable young men. There is no profession of higher importance to the State than that of public-school teacher; there is no investment of the working-man's share of taxation safer or more profitable than the amount expended on his children's education; but, when the parent sees the place of the capable, successful teacher taken by one without a certificate of even the lowest grade, he naturally questions whether his rulers are alive to the value of education, and are giving him a fair equivalent for his share of taxation. It is true that the State is now making provision for the education and training of teachers, but it is evident that more than this is necessary to induce the requisite number of capable young men to enter and remain in the profession. Among the much-needed inducements we place better working-conditions, higher remuneration, and a superannuation scheme that will bring appreciably nearer to the aspiring teacher the few prizes of the service as well as provide for retirement in his old age.

Separate reports have been furnished on the work of Standard VII. in the nine district high schools. This class had been taught in seventy-eight other schools, but the pupils of thirteen of these were absent when the schools were examined. The efficiency of the remaining schools is thus indicated: Excellent, 2; very good, 2; good, 21; satisfactory, 28; fair, 9; weak, 3.

These results represent work of a character highly creditable to the teachers, and the greater part of it is done with pupils who can attend neither high schools nor district high schools. It is in most cases a labour of love, but teachers would love it none the less, and labour none the less zealously, were the benefits they confer on the children of outlying settlers acknowledged by the State with some slight honorarium. This would induce teachers to apply for outlying schools, and to hold their appointments for longer periods than they do now. For years back we have pleaded for adequate acknowledgment of this extra work of country teachers, and we hope that, at the next revision of the scale of teachers' salaries, it will be favourably considered, and that thus, in sparsely settled districts, the children desirous of pursuing their studies beyond the Sixth Standard will be placed to some extent on a footing similar to that of children in populous centres.

When reporting on applications for schools in newly settled districts, we have on several occasions advised the conveyance of the children to a convenient central school rather than the establishment of a weak and inefficient school, or a school which might be required for only a few years. We are prepared to go even farther, and advise the closing of small schools in more than one district, and the conveyance of the children to convenient centres; for the larger staff of the central school, the greater efficiency of the teachers consequent on the higher remuneration, their comparative permanence in office, and even the new and varied environment are all greatly to the advantage of the children of the sparsely peopled district. It seems useless, however, to recommend the conveyance system, for, owing

to the circumstance that the departmental allowance is insufficient to induce residents to incur the initial expense, the Board has been and is unable to adopt our recommendation.

The examinations of 1904 were conducted according to the methods of the Regulations for the Inspection and Examination of Schools, 1904, but the scope of the examinations was that of the old syllabus, under which the pupils had worked during the preceding twelve months. The new regulations are now fully in force. We have refrained from detailed comment on the work presented during the recent examinations, and we refrain from any expression of opinion with regard to the scope and conditions of the new work, except to say that we consider them highly favourable to the activity of the individual pupil, to the cultivation of a self-reliant spirit, and to mental development.

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, 20th March, 1905.

We have the honour to present our report for the year ended the 31st December, 1904.

One hundred and fifty-three public and eight Catholic schools were examined, but owing to numerous demands on our time unconnected with what may be properly described as school-work, such as the paying of special visits and the preparation of special reports, we found it impossible in the time at our disposal to inspect as many of the schools as we have been hitherto able to do.

Comparative deductions from the statistics here submitted cannot very well be made, owing to the fact that while the course of instruction was the same as in previous years, in assessing the work and recording results, we were compelled by Departmental regulations to adopt methods which strictly speaking are applicable to the requirements of the new syllabus. By glancing through the summaries of results for each school, however, the Board will be able to infer that the teachers have maintained the efficiency of the schools, for the notes descriptive of the work done in the compulsory and additional subjects are uniformly favourable, while the discipline and tone have been such as to evoke commendation.

The year was an eventful one in the educational history of the colony. Its earlier part witnessed the birth of a new syllabus, its latter part found the young prodigy forcing its way into the schools. By this description we mean no disrespect to the syllabus, which, in the hands of capable teachers, will, we believe, prove greatly superior to that which it has displaced. Some reservations we do make, but these refer to its form, not its substance. Complexity is its chief fault. So complex and yet so coherent is it, that it might possibly be recommended to law students as a study in interpretation. It may be said of most of our teachers, however, that having wrestled with text and context, clause and subclause, regulation and exception, they will emerge from the struggle not merely imbued with the spirit of the syllabus, but bringing with them an accurate and vivid impression of the aim and scope of modern primary education.

The function of a syllabus in the economy of a school is sometimes much misunderstood. Regulations are necessary, but within the regulations there is abundant room for the exercise of choice. If there is one thing our present syllabus does not require, it is a slavish adherence to the letter. It may with perfect fairness be regarded as a guide pointing out a choice of ways, leaving the teacher free to choose the course that best suits the aims he has in view. Rigid procedure, haste, and spread-eagle methods are the last things it contemplates.

There is at least one respect in which the regulations imposed in the syllabus might with advantage to all concerned be more honoured by some of our teachers. We refer to the conditions determining the fitnes of pupils for promotion to higher standards. Contrary to plainly expressed intentions, pupils are hurried forward as if promotion were one and the same thing with progress. Teachers looking for new appointments are the greatest sinners in this respect. They do not reflect that by making premature promotions they are bequeathing to their successors nothing short of a *damnosa hereditas*. One might indeed judge the efficiency of a school by its standard of promotion. Where pupils are advanced on the score of merit, the presumption, almost amounting to proof, is that the instruction and tone are good, but where, for motives more or less questionable, the teacher blinks the fact of a pupil's unpreparedness, there, we may be sure, the reins of government are but loosely held. We take leave of the syllabus by commending to the teachers the following workaday precepts: Master the syllabus thoroughly. Take the principal lessons, arithmetic, reading, composition, and spelling, as far as possible, in the forenoon. In the afternoon deal with the other subjects, taking every possible advantage of the injunction to group and to co-ordinate. Make sure of your ground. Neither hurry nor worry, but being at work, throw your whole soul into it.

The statistical portion of this report refers, strictly speaking, to the year 1904, but the rest, while based on work done during that year, has, in respect of time, a more extended application. Taking the subjects of instruction in the order of their importance we shall treat first of the compulsory group, and of these the subjects aggregated under the heading of "English."

READING.—Absence of tone and absence of vivacity: these are the great defects of our pupils in this subject. Breathing exercises and instruction in the management of the breath would do much to

remedy the first, while as a cure for the second we may well take a hint from America. There, conversation between teacher and pupil is unconstrained, questions being asked by the one as often as by the other. In this way pupils gain confidence and read as they speak. If some such plan as this were adopted in our own schools, it would be found, not only that intelligent comprehension leads to expressive reading, but—a fact often overlooked—that expressive reading leads to intelligent comprehension.

COMPOSITION.—Much has been said by teachers regarding the elimination of formal grammar from the curriculum. We see no cause for regret. Grammar ceased long since to be an instrument of mental discipline in our schools. The apologists for grammar demand to know to what standard they are to appeal in cases of breach of grammatical law. We answer, correct usage as discovered inductively by the pupils themselves from the pages of their readers. It does not carry a pupil very far to cite against him the authority of a grammar; for, if the matter rests there, he is simply confounded by an appeal to what, so far as he is concerned, is a realm of myth and mystery. The rational method is surely for the pupil to discover from lessons by reputable authors what correct usage is, and for the teacher to state that such and such expressions are not good English, referring their pupils, for verification, to their readers. Instruction in composition might with advantage be given in two parallel series of lessons, the composition lesson proper or that which deals with thought and its expression, and the language lesson or that which has to do with mere form, such as analysis, synthesis, order of words, equivalent expressions, and so forth. The concrete studies now happily prevalent in our schools afford a capital groundwork for the teaching of composition. The great difficulty with pupils hitherto has been to command a sufficient number of ideas to write consecutively about anything. Now their minds will be well stored with images and their vocabularies should be correspondingly enriched.

WRITING.—In very few schools may handwriting be described as positively vicious, while in many it may be described as distinctly good. The best results in this subject will not be achieved until a uniform system is adopted throughout the colony, an arrangement that parents and business men would welcome. There is no time nowadays to carry excellence in writing to the point of a fine art, and it should be quite possible to fix on one style suitable in every respect to modern requirements. During the year the Board supplied to each school in the district a chart admirably illustrative of an approved method of pen-holding. In most schools this proves a valuable aid in initiating young people into the mysteries of penmanship. It is a little disconcerting, however, to find, as we sometimes do, pupils sprawling over their books with their hands in every possible position, all the while the chart being directly in front of them. This seems incredible, but it is nevertheless true.

SPELLING.—Each standard class is now supposed to approach this subject through the medium of a systematic course of word-building. The effect of this will be twofold: pupils will find spelling a less distasteful exercise than formerly and they will be taught to spell more rapidly. Teachers are occasionally satisfied with a very low standard of proficiency in this subject. If a child spells very badly, incapacity is too often suggested to him, and he is not slow to subscribe to the comfortable doctrine. Were a satisfactory standard of accuracy insisted on from the beginning, there would be little difficulty in maintaining it throughout the entire school course.

Taking leave of the English subjects we pass to—

ARITHMETIC.—The new programme in this subject is on the whole acceptable to teachers. The objects which the programme appears to aim at are well expressed by the following neat statement of the essence of arithmetic: "All arithmetic is place-value, proportion, and common-sense, and the greatest of these is common-sense." We wish particularly to emphasize the first essential, place-value, which lies at the root of progress. The syllabus, rightly recognising that the development of the young arithmetician is intimately bound up with this phase of the subject, emphatically recommends the application of concrete methods as a means of elucidation. Speaking of the quality and amount of work done in arithmetic during the year, we must confess to some disappointment. Cognisance should, however, be taken of the fact that teachers whose classes did poorly expressed no little dissatisfaction with some of the Department's tests for the upper classes. It was considered that, in view of the extensive introduction of handwork into the school programme, the tests might well be somewhat less severe. It has long been a puzzle to us why just five sums should be set year after year with a conservatism worthy of the Chinese. We believe the method to be at once unfair and unreasonable. Surely it would be better to put a larger number of questions, including several every-day calculations, a question in principles and one or two problems to test the strength of the best pupils of the class.

GEOGRAPHY.—Hitherto, owing no doubt to the intrinsic charm of the subject for the young mind, geography has been a favourite study in school. The new programme, which differs considerably from the old, is viewed by some teachers with feelings akin to dismay. There is nothing very fearsome in it, except perhaps its bulk. It comprises three courses, A, observational geography; B, descriptive geography; and an optional course which corresponds pretty closely with what we have hitherto known as geography. The outstanding advantages of the new programme are three—it brings pupils face to face with natural phenomena, it does not demand any exercise of the memory, and it may be largely co-ordinated with the other subjects of instruction. How far teachers will be able to carry out the programme, doing at the same time justice to the other subjects of instruction, remains to be seen.

DRAWING.—There can be no question as to the excellence of the new programme in drawing. In it the organic connection between the study and other parts of the school course are explicitly set forth; originality is encouraged and practical applications of acquired facility are made from the earliest stages. The great difficulty is to convert the precepts of the programme into vital factors of school-work. The difficulty is being overcome to some extent by the establishment of special classes for those teachers who have not made themselves sufficiently familiar with the art. There exists a great need—which we hope to see met—for special classes in illustrative blackboard drawing. We may add, in reference to the work done during the year, that much of the model-drawing, even in some of the more important schools, was very far from satisfactory. We would accordingly advise those teachers who

may not be sure of their ground in this department of the subject to take up with their pupils the study of solid geometry, which, though less of an art and more of a science, will probably prove more serviceable to them.

SINGING.—The treatment of this subject is perhaps less uniform than the treatment of any other school subject whatever. In some classes and schools an excellent standard of proficiency is attained, but in the majority really good singing is sad to seek. It is every child's birthright to be taught to sing. Notwithstanding this, even teachers with sufficient vocal capacity show a lamentable lack of interest in the singing lesson. By hook or by crook they get their pupils to sing a song and there is the end of it. Little attention is paid to the words, less to the music. In singing as in every other subject it is intelligence that tells, and if teachers were to devote a few minutes during every singing lesson to an analysis of the words and music, so as to show how thought may be fitly expressed in song, a transformation would be brought about in this important part of school study. The aim of the teacher should ever be to choose good words set to good music and to treat both in such a way that they will be dear to memory for the lifetime of the pupils.

So much for the compulsory subjects. Let us turn to the additional group, and first to nature-study. This subject has long held an important part in British, American, and Continental schools. Its purpose is to lead children to read and interpret the Book of Nature. Some of our teachers responded with alacrity to the new demand made upon them, for no sooner was the syllabus issued than their pupils were at work reading the barometer and thermometer, taking the direction of the wind, and keeping weather-calendars. The readings are recorded in graphic form and the mean is calculated at the end of each week. These exercises are invaluable, for they introduce pupils to the elements of scientific method—viz., observation, experiment, and the study of cause and effect.

To the barometer and thermometer there will be presently added at several schools a weather-vane and a rain-guage, so that a complete study of meterological conditions will be possible. Other teachers again prefer to deal with what is popularly known as animate nature—with beetles and weeds, bees and cultivated plants. This is a very essential form of nature-study, for in rural districts everybody is interested in animals and plants to the degree in which they are useful or noxious. The school may thus co-operate with the settlers in cherishing useful forms of life, as well as in comprehending the life-history of the "little tyrant of the fields," and finding out how to withstand him. One other phase of nature-study we may refer to. It is the phase that appeals to the æsthetic perceptions of the pupils which it were a thousand pities to overlook. This side of the study, together with poetry and singing, will form an offset to the utilitarian spirit of present-day education, for by associating whatever is beautiful in nature with pleasurable emotions, we shall instil into the minds of children a love of country life and lead them to a conviction that man does not live by bread alone.

ELEMENTARY SCIENCE.—In connection with this subject we shall content ourselves with a brief reference to the pressing question of apparatus. Two of the district high schools, and several of the other larger schools, are more or less completely equipped in this direction. But in the great majority of schools apparatus has no place. In view of the objective methods of study enjoined by the syllabus, this is a very serious drawback. It is, in the circumstances, simply impossible for teachers to respond to the demands made upon them, and if a considerable part of the syllabus is not to remain a dead-letter, material and apparatus for the teaching of elementary science must be provided somehow. Now we have no desire to see the sum total of juvenile happiness diminished, but we would strongly urge upon Committees the expediency of abandoning the system of prize-giving and devoting the money raised at present for the purchase of prizes to the purchase of material, apparatus, and useful books for the school library. If this course were adopted considerable advance in the work of education would be made in the district. Only a select few of the pupils can win prizes; all can participate in the benefits flowing from a well-stocked library and a well-equipped school. So strongly do we feel in this matter that we would recommend the Board to offer to Committees making an annual contribution to the objects indicated three grades of well prepared certificates, first, second, and third class, for distribution to deserving pupils at the end of each year. We believe that such certificates would be as keenly competed for as ever were prizes, and that they would subserve the purposes of reward equally well.

HANDWORK.—Particulars of the amount done in this department will be supplied by the Director of Technical Instruction. The quality continues to improve, and at some schools is exceptionally good. The whole scheme may be said to be still at the experimental stage, for it is yet to be shown that the results are commensurate with the time and money spent in securing them. In the light of our experience, we venture the opinion that primary education would be distinctly poorer if handwork were withdrawn from the curriculum. All of our teachers are willing, some of them eager, to give the scheme a fair trial. We hope before the beginning of next year to be in a position to recommend a course of handwork suitable for every grade of school in the district.

Special classes for the instruction of teachers were again carried on during the year, and the effect of the work done is already manifesting itself in the schools. We may be permitted to question the public utility of at least two of the classes, those in woodwork and cookery. To the students themselves the classes are no doubt valuable, but, as there is neither woodwork-room or cookery-room attached to any school within the confines of the district, it cannot be said that the classes are furthering any practical end in our system of education. There is no escape from the conclusion that it would be cheaper and more effective to employ experts to do the work than to continue to train teachers for work there is but a remote prospect of their being ever called on to do.

PHYSICAL EXERCISES AND DRILL.—Military drill is well taught in nearly all the larger schools and in no case is the provision of clause 31 of the syllabus regulations overlooked. The cadet movement continues to spread, and it will presently be exceptional to find a school of any importance without its cadet corps. A satisfactory amount of attention continues to be paid to physical exercises, though

teachers in remote districts might with no great effort make much more of these. We may here suggest that some of the aspects of the subject of health might be very conveniently co-ordinated with such exercises.

We now proceed to discuss briefly several matters that do not come directly within the purview of the syllabus, taking first the health of the children.

But for local outbreaks of scarlet fever and diphtheria the health of the children during the year was good. On the occasion of an outbreak of fever in some of our schools some few years ago, we recommended the Board to suggest to the Department of Health that the schools should be subjected to periodical medical inspection. The suggestion was favourably received, but nothing has been done in the direction of carrying it into practice. As the health of the children is no less a matter of public interest than their education, and as medical inspection of children attending public schools must come sooner or later, we do not see why the reform should be delayed.

There is urgent need for the reconsideration of the whole question of holiday-giving. Children and teachers enjoy certain holidays in common with other members of the community, and, in addition, others necessary for the well-being of both. But now and again comes the wretched incidental holiday, too often given it is to be feared, on grounds little short of frivolous. Then, again, in some parts of the district, harvest holidays continue to be given. Coming as they do at the very finest season of the year, and therefore at a time when the utmost regularity of attendance would be possible, these holidays interfere very seriously with school-work. That harvest holidays are not absolutely necessary is shown by the fact that schools situated in the heart of agricultural districts do not, and have not for some years, observed them. The new provision of the syllabus whereby headmasters are required to examine their schools periodically paves the way for the introduction of some sort of system into this branch of school-management. The examinations are supposed to take place as nearly as possible quarterly. If then, as in the case of the secondary schools, the schools were closed for a day or two after each examination to allow the children to recuperate and the teachers to correct the examination-papers and prepare for the work of the next quarter, the incidental holiday might very well be dispensed with. The suggestion is at any rate worth consideration.

The question of questions in the Southland Education District is, of course, the training of teachers and the efficient staffing of schools. The shortage of teaching-power is not peculiar to Southland nor to the other districts of New Zealand. It exists in an acute form in England. The result is that vacancies are being filled by teachers inferior in training and efficiency to certificated teachers. We need not concern ourselves with causes, it is the remedy that is the pressing question. We venture to say that if the public conscience were awake the remedy would be found. It will be said, of course, that there is a training-college in Dunedin. There is, but of what use is it to us? If any of our pupil-teachers go to the training-college we have no guarantee that they will come back. It is in every way much more probable that they will be snapped up by Otago and the other larger districts. Our present need is a small model school through the instrumentality of which we could provide for the exigencies of the moment. Such a school could be worked in conjunction with the local high schools, the Technical School, and the primary schools. The Department's certificates could be gained by students who would also receive instruction in the theory and practice of teaching. Uncertificated teachers could make occasional or extended visits to the school and so gain the insight necessary for the conduct of their own schools. As soon as ever the training-colleges turn out certificated teachers in such numbers as to staff our schools the model school might be closed, but inestimable benefits would be conferred on the district in the interval.

Last winter we endeavoured, in conjunction with Mr. McCaw, to establish a winter school for the benefit of the teachers in the outlying parts of the districts. Unavoidable obstacles rendered the execution of the project impossible. We hope, however, to see the school established this winter. An endeavour will also be made to have an exhibition of handwork at the same time.

We will close with a short reference to the connection between the school and the business of life. We recognise that in the work of teaching the character of the teacher transcends in influence both his subjects and his methods, and it is a matter of profound satisfaction to us to be able to say that the Board has in its employment a body of teachers of whom any community might well be proud. But times change, and it is daily becoming more imperative that teachers should be more in touch with the world and less with themselves. In our report of 1900 we suggested that the schools might well take hints from the counting-house, the factory, and the workshop. In the report of the Mosely Education Commission to America, published last year, a report read and canvassed in every English-speaking country, immense importance is attached to the fact that in the States the school is closely in touch with the aims and ambitions of the community it serves. It is indeed nowadays the part of every intelligent citizen to see that our education system does not get out of hand, either by failing to respond to the practical needs of the time or by fostering subjects and methods unsuited to these needs. We believe that on the whole our schools are rightly getting into touch with practical affairs at the right points, though he would be a bold man who would affirm that the co-ordination is complete. Meanwhile, it behoves us to reflect that education is being more and more adapted to practical ends the world over.

The appended table gives the results for the district.

We are, &c.,

JAMES HENDRY

GEO. D. BRAIK

The Secretary, Education Board, Invercargill.

SUMMARY OF RESULTS FOR THE WHOLE DISTRICT.

Classes.	Number on Roll.	Present at Inspector's Annual Visit.	Average Age of Pupils in each Class.
			Yrs. mos.
Standard VII.	203	184	14 7·5
" VI.	738	725	13 7·5
" V.	963	940	12 9·2
" IV.	1,143	1,121	11 10·8
" III.	1,131	1,111	10 11·2
" II.	1,142	1,113	9 9·7
" I.	1,181	1,157	8 10·5
Preparatory	3,099	2,908	7 0·4
Totals	9,600	9,259	11 2·35*

* Mean of average age.

Approximate Cost of Paper.—Preparation, not given; printing (3,550 copies) £46 5s.

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