

himself to the children, winning their confidence by his interest in their activities, the sooner will he break down the traditional barriers of reserve that have made freedom of intercourse between teacher and children of the public schools so difficult in the past. In this connection lessons in nature-study, the out-of-doors treatment of geography, and the co-operation of the children in the keeping of the school gardens have been most helpful. The children are encouraged to talk and to ask questions, and are thus led on to fuller and freer oral expression, thereby giving the watchful teacher a splendid opening for enlarging their vocabulary and training them in the right use of the mother-tongue.

The secondary departments of the district high schools at Waimate, Temuka, and Pleasant Point have worthily maintained their reputation for efficiency during the past year. Their schemes of work for this year have been modified in such a way that, while the pupils who intend to sit for the Civil Service examinations and for Matriculation will still have a course suitable for their purpose, a special feature will be made of the teaching of agriculture. From many applicants for the position of agricultural instructor, the Board has selected Mr. John Brown, B.Sc., of the West of Scotland Agricultural College, whose training and high credentials lead us to expect that his services will be of special value in this district, and whose work will be critically watched by a community whose material progress is so largely dependent on the development of scientific methods of agriculture.

In conclusion, we have the greatest pleasure in expressing our conviction that the teachers as a body are faithful workers, all striving to do their best for the physical, intellectual, and moral welfare of the children intrusted to their care.

We have, &c.,

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

The Chairman, Education Board, South Canterbury.

### OTAGO.

SIR,—

Education Office, Dunedin, 4th April, 1910.

We have the honour to present our general report for the year 1909.

For some years we have had to report unfavourably of the classification of the senior standards of both town and country schools. We are glad to be able to say in this report that the inspections made in the course of 1909 revealed a marked improvement in this regard. In 1908 there was a serious breakdown in the examinations for the certificate of proficiency, more than half the candidates failing to gain the minimum mark that carries a pass, a result that was in the main attributable to the circumstance that many of the pupils had not mastered the work prescribed for Standard V when they were promoted to Standard VI. Of those who were presented for the certificate in 1909, 65 per cent. succeeded in winning it, a result that indicates decided improvement in the quality of the work done by the pupils in Standard VI. It was in arithmetic and grammar and composition that the unsuccessful candidates came to grief in 1908, and it was in these subjects that their papers were of higher value in 1909. We cannot say that we are satisfied even with last year's achievement; for it is, we think, certain that if the work prescribed for Standard V is adequately done, and Standard VI is efficiently taught, at least 80 per cent. of the latter class would succeed in winning the certificate of proficiency, a large percentage of them clearing the papers and the rest passing without "squeezing." Many parents and teachers seem not to realize that a child's pleasure in his work and his ultimate moral and mental equipment depend, not upon his passing through the classes, but upon his mastery of the work prescribed for each lower class before proceeding to that of a higher class. Nothing disheartens and disables a child more than the feeling that he is in the presence of a task that is too much for him; and this is the plight in which, through faulty classification, many children find themselves. The truly useful thing in work is mastery, and mastery is precisely the thing about which we are not sufficiently careful in the middle and senior classes of our schools. This we know both from our oral examination of the children after their promotion and from careful examination of the papers upon the value of which promotions were made. In too many cases the marking and the valuation of the papers disclosed low ideals in the teacher and great slackness of effort in the pupils.

#### SUMMARY OF RESULTS FOR THE WHOLE DISTRICT.

Classes.	Number on Roll.	Present at the Annual Examination.	Average Age of Pupils in each Class.
Standard VII	316	291	Yrs. mos. 15 1
" VI	1,242	1,172	13 11
" V	1,790	1,739	13 2
" IV	2,118	2,059	12 3
" III	2,200	2,156	11 3
" II	2,346	2,292	10 2
" I	2,429	2,361	9 2
Preparatory	7,441	7,036	6 11
Totals	19,882	19,106	11 6*

\* Mean of average age.