

faults which it may be worth while to specify. In the first place, in the co-ordination of subjects it was soon felt that reading had been pitched somewhat too low in Classes I., II., and III., and it was deemed necessary to authorize the Inspectors to use the Sequels to the Royal Readers in these classes as the tests for reading, in place of the original books. A much more serious fault, in my judgment, is its tendency to necessitate the keeping up of a large number of classes—an evil that is very keenly felt in small schools, where one teacher has to conduct five or more classes. To meet this serious fault, I would suggest the substitution of five standards for the usual six, the modification to be brought about by raising the level of each, from the first upwards, so that the fifth or highest may be about half-way between the present fifth and sixth. The effect of this change would be greatly to facilitate inspection, and to make much more of the highest work done in schools come under the scrutiny of the Inspectors, for at present so few pupils who have passed the fifth standard reach the level of the sixth, that much of the most advanced work never comes under the Inspector's notice at all. I may mention that in New South Wales there are no more than five standards. Another fault lies in the practice it involves of examining grammar and geography in Standard II. In reality, the knowledge of these subjects that can be gained at this early stage is so slight as to make examination in it simply waste of time. It may even be doubted whether the teaching of grammar and geography should be begun so early, except in the most favourable circumstances. Certainly, in all schools in which one teacher has to take several classes, their early introduction involves a multiplication of lessons that is in a high degree productive of harm. In schools where there is a large staff probably these subjects should be taught in the 2nd class, but in no circumstances should an Inspector's time be wasted in examining individually in them. In other respects, doubtless, improvements could be suggested, but these are the faults that have forced themselves most prominently on my attention. I now pass to the procedure in examining schools in the standards.

In Standard I., reading and spelling are examined orally, and writing and arithmetic on slates. In writing, the pupils are desired to write the small and the capital forms of (*e.g.*) "all the letters from 'g' to 'm.'" For arithmetic they are desired to place their slates against the breast, and to have their pencils in their right hand by the side. Eight or ten questions in mental addition and subtraction and in notation are then given, and the answers are written in a column one below the other, as follows: So soon after the question is given as the Examiner thinks fit, he gives the order "Write the answer," when all the slates are brought forward, and the answer if known is written down, otherwise a short line is drawn in its place; when sufficient time has been allowed for writing down the two figures of the answer, the order "Slates back" puts things into position for a second question. At first sight this may seem a somewhat complicated arrangement, but if practised occasionally by teachers it will be found very easy. It has the great advantages, with proper management, of compelling prompt answering and practically preventing copying.

In Standard II., reading, poetry, and spelling are taken orally, but I purpose in future to supplement the oral spelling by a little dictation. In the past this has been done wherever the class has been used to the exercise. Writing is examined usually on slates, and also by seeing the copy-books. Arithmetic is tested by two sums in addition (one to be written from dictation) and one in subtraction, together with a few questions on the multiplication table, and in adding or subtracting mentally columns of figures dictated with moderate haste (for specimen of examination see below). Grammar is examined by a short slate exercise, and geography by a round or two of oral questions.

For Standard III. and the higher ones, I always bring to a school a set of previously prepared questions in arithmetic and grammar. These are answered on slates or on paper, as is also the dictation. In all these standards, reading, poetry, and geography are tested orally, except that advanced classes that have had practice in drawing maps are set to draw the coast-line of a map hung some distance in front of them, and are directed subsequently, when the map has been rolled up, to mark in any coast features, or surface features, or towns, that may be required by the Examiner. Throughout these standards, comprehension of meaning is carefully examined along with or immediately after the reading, and after the recitation of poetry. This part of the examination I find it very hard to get through in reasonable time, and to expedite matters I have occasionally, in the upper classes of the larger schools, tested the comprehension by explanations required in writing. I purpose to use this method more extensively, as, in addition to testing comprehension, it enables an Examiner to form a good opinion of the pupil's ability to express his meaning clearly and grammatically. For writing, the copy-books and exercise-books are looked at, and, where circumstances and time permit of it, a few minutes' practice in writing is watched. Sewing is examined by looking with some care at the work being done by each girl. I am of opinion that the individual examination of pupils should be confined to reading, spelling, writing, arithmetic, and composition (in the higher classes), and that grammar, geography, history, and science should be treated as class subjects, and tested by a few rounds of questions on each. It has been my practice to examine individually in grammar instead of composition, but I am inclined to think that this has been a mistake. In treating of this subject I have not referred so much to the "principles upon which the schools are inspected," as to the mechanism and procedure of inspection in the sense of "examination of classes in standards." I now append a specimen of the examinations, set from Standard II. upwards, in spelling, arithmetic, and grammar, those being the only subjects in which the pupils were examined individually in writing, either on slates or on paper.

Specimen Examination in Standard II.

Spelling.—Words of one or two syllables, oral.

Arithmetic.—(1.) Add 1835, 6297, 3984, 3015, 816, 3908. (2.) Add 1358, 4296, 7384, 2969, 8538, 3634. (3.) From 1301295 subtract 814368. (4.) Write in a column the answers to 8×7 , 9×6 , 7×12 , 6×7 , $39 + 7 + 5 + 8 + 6$, $31 - 5 + 6 - 3 + 8$, $91 - 9 - 5 - 3 + 7$, $18 + 6 + 5 + 7 + 4 + 8$. (Question 1 had to be written from dictation; in 2 and 3 the figures were read; 4 was given out orally when the slates were ready to be examined, and the answers were written down after the method used in Standard I.)