

The exercises in drawing exhibit a decided advance upon those of last year, but “in freehand and model drawing candidates do not make sufficient use of centre and other guiding lines, which in every case ought to be drawn first, the details being filled in afterwards;” and there is a want of method and neatness about most of the work in practical geometry and perspective, “a few candidates being satisfied with a freehand sketch, where the greatest accuracy is necessary.”

The arithmetic for Class D this year “is better than in former years, and, indeed, is not far from being entirely satisfactory;” and the same may be said of the optional mathematics for Class D—Euclid and algebra. The work done in chemistry as an optional subject for that class is reported of as showing “on the whole a marked improvement over past years,” and not one failure. The examiner in elementary science, and in domestic economy, says, “Although some of the papers indicate an absolute want of study or capacity to appreciate a scientific idea, yet the large majority of the papers are very fairly answered. Many of the elementary science papers show a scientific capacity on the part of the candidate which it would be very desirable to develop further, as teaching in science by such minds, if fully instructed, would be of incalculable value in directing aright the constructive and inventive powers of the children.”

The most unsatisfactory reports are those which relate to the arithmetic and the grammar of Class E, and to the geography and school-management papers of both classes. After speaking very favourably of the arithmetic of candidates for Class D, the examiner goes on to say, “The candidates for Class E, on the other hand, who have always done very poorly in arithmetic, seem to me this year to be worse than ever. More than three-fourths of them are quite unfit to teach arithmetic, even to very young children. I do not know if these candidates are equally weak in other branches, but, if so, the question is suggested whether there is not some defect in the system adopted for the instruction of pupil-teachers.” As qualifying this suggestion, it should be remembered that many of the candidates have not been pupil-teachers.

Another report says, “The geography shows little if any improvement on last year. The questions which require intelligence rather than memory are badly done. A large proportion of the candidates (amounting in the case of the Auckland candidates to more than a half) were unable to draw the maps asked for, and the geography of New Zealand is but very inaccurately known.”

The reports on the English grammar for Class E, and on school management, contain some important criticisms, which, as they are too long to quote, I submit as extracts appended to this report. I enclose a set of the examination papers for Class D, and another for Class E.

The expenses of the examination, amounting to £411 15s. 7d., are a few shillings in excess of the fees that have been received.

I have, &c.,

The Hon. the Minister for Education.

WM. JAS. HABENS.

EXTRACT from Report on Grammar, Class E.

AFTER having perused the candidates' papers, and seen how the various questions were generally answered, I feel quite satisfied in my own mind that the paper I had set was a very fair one, and that no one should be regarded as entitled to a certificate who has not gained at least one-half the attainable marks. And yet a very large number—some 46 per cent. of the candidates—have failed to do this. The failures are most conspicuous in the extreme ends of the colony. In the extreme South one-half, and in the extreme North two-thirds of those who presented themselves, fell short of the required number of marks. In the intermediate districts a considerable proportion of the candidates succeeded in securing very fair percentages.

As the detailed results show at a glance, the subject in which the majority broke down was formal grammar. This subject, of course, is one that can be thoroughly mastered only under able and judicious instruction, and by thoughtful study. It is very evident that a large number of the candidates have never been properly grounded in the very first principles of the science.

The dictation exercise, intended more as a test of their knowledge of punctuation than of their orthography, was simplicity itself, and, as a matter of course, was fairly done by the generality of the candidates. Hence the closeness of the marks which appear under this heading. For in regard to composition, which was combined with dictation, comparatively a small number attempted the essay at all. Indeed, it was very noticeable that those alone did so who were either very proficient or else very deficient in their knowledge of formal grammar. The former, having disposed without much difficulty of the questions on that subject, found some time to devote to the composition exercise; while the latter, after grappling for a time, but in vain, with the grammatical portion of the paper, abandoned