

branch of the standard curriculum had hitherto been almost at zero. The shortcoming may be accounted for, in a large measure, by the fact that grammar is the only subject in which rote work is of no avail. The teaching of arithmetic may be conducted in such a way as to involve only mechanical processes, but the laws and rules of grammar will not admit of being mechanically applied. Even the apparently mechanical exercise of selecting from a passage the verbs, and the pronouns used as adjectives, demands thought on the part of the Third Standard child. To parse a simple sentence correctly in the upper standards, the children must think. Grammar in short is the exercise of "awakened intelligence," and when skilfully and progressively taught is a powerful instrument of mental development.

GEOGRAPHY.—The impressing firmly on the memory by drawing of a thorough knowledge of the map is the fundamental idea in teaching geography. Map-drawing from memory should be more constantly practised, and a less portion of the children's time, both in school and at home, taken up by drawing elaborate copies of maps from the atlas. At the same time, it is necessary that attention should be given to topographical detail. When, *e.g.*, one is told that "Turakina, Foxton, Nelson, and Napier" are the four largest towns on the west coast of New Zealand, it is evident that there has been defect somewhere in the teaching imparted. I am glad to say that this subject, though liable at times to run into mere "list-learning," is in general better known than at the date of my last report, and, in consequence, the results have improved.

HISTORY.—The principal facts of the periods embraced in the several standards are now receiving more attention from the teachers, and, in consequence, are more intelligently reproduced by the children when under examination than formerly. Details should be relegated to their proper place, and kept in abeyance. The teachers might vivify the lessons delivered by consulting some larger work, and supplementing the fragmentary and often unconnected events recorded in the text-books in general use in our schools.

SEWING.—Needlework is taught with increasing skill in nearly all the schools where there is a competent schoolmistress. The marks assigned for proficiency in this have in many instances raised girls to a successful standard pass, who would otherwise have failed to rise. The sewed work submitted to me on the days of examination has to be vouched for by the teacher as having been done in school. No value is given to work that is executed at home. The standard passes in one or two schools would have been enhanced had the needlework shown to me been worked in the teacher's presence.

STANDARDS.—*Standard I.*: In this the chief shortcomings are too early presentation, and imperfectly-prepared arithmetic.—*Standard II.*: Notation and numeration are generally weak points in this standard. The most remarkable break-down however is in geography. With the exception of the definitions, as a rule it is not well got up. The natural method of teaching geography, or that of proceeding from the known to the unknown, appears to have been disregarded. Under such circumstances, when examining the children, I invariably showed how the subject should be handled.—*Standard III.*: For this a more accurate knowledge of arithmetical notation, and methods of process, is still a serious desideratum. As in Standard II., geography is a stumbling-block. Natural methods of teaching it seem to be ignored. The simplest question will sometimes puzzle a whole class, if it be put out of the groove to which the children have been accustomed. The presence of failure is felt most in Standards II. and III. In future, passes on the border-line of success or failure will not be granted in them, because success in the upper standards must be conserved.—*Standards IV., V., VI.*: A much larger proportion of presentation was made than in the previous year. The work in the schools, however, is liable to be unduly depreciated because of the comparative fewness of the pupils who reach the Fifth and Sixth Standards. But it should be clearly borne in mind that pupils who have passed well in Standards III. and IV. will have learned what will be most useful to them in their life work; and that it is not better teaching that will raise the numbers in those standards, but better and longer attendance. The arithmetic papers of Standard IV. were not, as a rule, well worked. Those of Standards V. and VI. were on a general level of excellence. The papers, pure and simple, on grammar were not answered correctly enough in Standard IV. The parsing and analysis were uniformly well done in Standards V. and VI. The analysis was generally better done than the parsing. On the whole, I found that a steady progress had been made in this subject, and that a firmer grip had been taken of it. In geography the maps were not by any means so good as they should have been. Quantities of irrelevant matter were too frequently given in answer to book-work questions. With the general results in history I had very little fault to find; but those questions that bore upon facts were not so accurately or adequately answered as they should have been. The Sixth Standard subjects are sufficiently elastic to allow of wide scope in them beyond what is needed for a pass. I would suggest that scholars who pass in this standard, and then attend for another year, might again be examined in it, proportionate advance being expected. Were it only to swell the presentation, they should be scheduled. It seems to me only reasonable that the teachers should be credited with their further advancement, for they are often the best proof of the teacher's ability.

DISCIPLINE.—I notice a gratifying improvement in this all-important subject. Impulsive discipline, though happily of rare occurrence, has not yet entirely vanished. Quiet submission to authority and prompt obedience to orders are dominant in most of the schools. Changes of lesson and dismissal are effected with less noise and less waste of time than prevailed a year ago. The more steady and obedient the scholars are in their behaviour, the less fatiguing in proportion is my task as examiner. The children, as a rule, behave better while under examination, and do not try to copy from one another, or to get or give surreptitious aid. The inculcation of self-respect is the foundation of all honour. Tidiness and politeness are not only characteristic of the schools in the centres of population, but are being successfully fostered in the rural schools as well. I have to acknowledge the unvarying courtesy with which I have been received by the School Committees, and by the teachers of every class.

The Chairman of the Board of Education.

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Inspector.