

to the words of the text-book, and a want of understanding. When questions were put in words different from those the pupils were used to, failure to answer generally followed. No opportunity should be omitted of explaining and illustrating the subject by familiar examples within the children's reach.

HISTORY.—Hearing a history lesson lately given in one of our schools, which consisted in the class reading from the text-book in use, the master then asking questions about what had been read, it appeared to me that something more was required to render the lesson complete. The questions were good, and even necessary to the right understanding of the lesson, but at the same time they were the means of breaking it up into detached fragments, which required to be again joined together. The pupils should be asked to give orally, in their own words, and in a connected form, the substance of the lesson gone over, or a part of it. Such an exercise would, I am sure, prove to be a profitable one. It would not only add considerable interest and effect to the history lesson itself, but would afford practice in oral composition and in the art of speaking, which might be of immense service to the pupils in after life. This exercise of oral reproduction is well worth a trial, and should not be confined to history merely, but should be made use of in connection with reading and other lessons.

SINGING.—Singing receives more or less attention in a considerable number of schools. In most it consists in giving, in fair time and tune, a number of school songs. In some of the larger schools excellent part-singing is to be heard, but the instances in which the theory as well as the practice of music is taught are few. I should like to find more frequently ability to sing scales, and intervals from the modulator, and simple pieces at sight. I was much pleased by what I saw of teaching in this direction in a school in the northern district, where an assistant had charge of the music classes. She had an extensive knowledge of the subject herself, and could teach it with excellent effect to the pupils of the school, whom she had divided into suitable graduated classes for the purpose. She had also succeeded in training the pupil-teachers to act as valuable assistants.

NERVOUSNESS.—This failing in children is made to cover a multitude of sins. More or less of it perhaps is inseparable from any examination, but I believe it affects children to a much less extent than it gets credit for. When they are in a fit state of preparation for examination (and they are conscious when this is the case) such a feeling interferes very little with their work. If it exists at all, the greater share of it is attributable to the nature of their every day training and instruction. When children have been so taught and trained as to have confidence in themselves and in their teacher, they will not regard with much dread the visits of Inspectors. It is only when these have been held up as *bêtes noires* for a certain purpose that they will inspire fear. Proofs are not wanting to show that the same children who failed to do their work one year in consequence of what was called nervousness, but which deserved another name, succeeded admirably the next, the only difference in their circumstances being a change of teacher.

In conclusion, I have to report that the schools examined by me were generally in a satisfactory state of order and instruction, and were creditable to the ability and diligence of the teachers. In too many of them, especially those in agricultural districts, irregularity of attendance interfered seriously with the efficiency, and rendered satisfactory progress an impossibility. Notwithstanding the conscientious discharge of their duties, often under trying circumstances, I venture to say that not a few teachers, by perseveringly thinking out and searching out and putting in practice the best methods, and by giving attention to the preparation of lessons, so as to discover the most effective and economical plan of presenting them to their pupils, could produce results even more beneficial and satisfactory than are now attained.

I have, &c.,

The Secretary, Education Board.

WILLIAM TAYLOR, Inspector.

3. MR. GOYEN'S REPORT.

SIR,—

Dunedin, 11th February, 1883.

I have the honour to forward my general report for the portion of the year 1882, during which I was engaged in this education district. I entered upon my duties on the 3rd of July. Between that date and the end of the year my time was spent in making forty-two visits without notice; in examining fifty-seven schools, and a part of the higher work of the four district high schools; and in discharging the many other duties connected with the work of inspection.

The material condition of the schools visited by me is for the most part good. The buildings are generally substantial, roomy, and well ventilated; but many of them were found not to be swept and scrubbed with sufficient frequency. The out-offices, too, were often found in a very unsatisfactory condition. It is, however, due to most of the Committees to say that as soon as their attention was directed to these matters steps were taken to remedy them. The schools are generally well furnished (but the furniture is not always kept clean), and well supplied with maps and other apparatus; but those appliances are not in all schools so well taken care of as they would be were they the teachers' own property. In a large number of schools the children's reading-books were in a very dirty and dilapidated state; and very scant heed had been given to No. 7 of the Board's Instructions to Teachers. A study of the tables given in Mr. Petrie's report will show, so far as this can be shown by statistics, with what degree of success the Board's schools have been conducted during the year. Table I. shows the percentage of children that passed the standards in accordance with Regulation 8. To this result I am not disposed to attach nearly so much importance as the general public appear to attach to it. The statement given in the table simply means that out of every 100 children examined 73 succeeded in giving satisfactory answers in all the subjects in which they were examined, or in all except one; but takes no account whatever of the large number that answered satisfactorily in two or fewer subjects out of four in the First Standard, in three or fewer subjects out of five in the Second Standard, and in five or fewer subjects out of seven in the Third and higher standards. The regulation directs the Inspector to regard serious failure in any two subjects as a failure for the standards; hence a school may, and often does, do a large proportion of the work satisfactorily, and yet, so far as passing the standards is concerned, achieve a very poor result indeed. A much juster estimate of the