

Barnard Smith and Colenso are the authors that find most favour, and I do not hesitate to say that their mechanical methods have done more to retard the adoption of natural methods than anything else that could be named.

In a considerable number of schools formal grammar is now taught inductively, and with excellent educative effect. There are, however, still to be found many teachers who cling to the old ways, and strangely invert the order of nature by making their pupils first learn the definition and then consider the thing defined! Composition is well taught in about a third of the schools examined by me, fairly in a third, and more or less poorly in the rest.

Though book-knowledge of geography is on the whole good, map-knowledge is generally defective. The text-book receives too much attention, and the map too little, the information worked up from the former is not localized by a study of the latter, and, of course, the mind refuses to retain it.

In the Fourth, Fifth, and Sixth Standards the history prescribed is for the most part well got up from a text-book but in the Third Standard, where the teaching is oral, and in the main unskilful, intelligent answering is very uncommon. I am strongly of opinion that history should be removed from the curriculum of the Third Standard. The time now spent in the study of it might be much more profitably employed in the study of English, and in the long-run history would not suffer, for by assigning the present Third Standard work to the Fourth Standard, and equally dividing the whole field of English history, from 1066 to our own time, between the Fifth and Sixth Standards, children would leave school with a knowledge of the subject quite as useful as that gained under the present allocation of the work. I am of opinion, too, that the geography of Standards III. and IV. might be considerably cut down with great advantage to the pupils.

In a few schools the singing is excellent, but in the majority it is either poor or not taught. I should be glad to see more time devoted to this exercise in all infant-rooms. I am glad to be able to speak more favourably this year than last of the quality of the sewing. Very little of the work presented fell below fair, and much of it was highly creditable.

Before concluding this report I would like to record my dissent from the opinion occasionally expressed and often implied that the *morale* of public schools is deteriorating. Most of those who entertain this opinion are deservedly held in high esteem, and I am unwilling to believe that their aspersions upon the behaviour of public-school children are made from interested motives, but I am bound to say that their conclusions are unwarranted by the facts. An inspector of schools has exceptional opportunities for forming a sound judgment upon this question. He comes into contact with thousands of children during every year's inspection, observes their deportment in the school, in the playground, and in the roads and streets, and my own deliberate opinion is that, instead of deteriorating, the *morale* of our schools is improving, and I have no doubt, that if the conduct of boys and girls of twenty and thirty years ago were as keenly scrutinized as that of boys and girls of the present day, it would be found that the children of the last generation were no better than those of the present, and that there is no ground for the gloomy forebodings made respecting the moral degeneracy of the latter. I do not say that boys and girls invariably comport themselves as one could wish, but I deny both that they are deserving of the bad character ascribed to them, and that the tendency of our system of education is to lower the plane of moral excellence attained by the schools of our own youth. It does not need much keenness of observation to see that the weak spot in the management and training of our youth lies quite away from the schools altogether—in their own homes, where the laxity of parental control and supervision is such that nothing short of greatly improved methods of school management could have produced the excellent order, discipline, and tone by which most of our schools are characterized.

The Secretary, Education Board.

I have, &c.,

P. GOYEN, Inspector

4. MR. PETRIE'S REPORT ON DISTRICT HIGH SCHOOLS.

SIR,—

I have the honour to submit the following report on the district high schools for the year 1883.

The following tabulated statements show the extra branches taught at each of the district high schools, the number of pupils examined, and the quantity of work done under each subject.

Oamaru High School.

Subject.	Class.	Number examined.	Work done.
English Latin	I.	12	The Tempest (Shakespeare)
	I.	1	Principia Latina, Part II., Books I. and II. of the History, and Æneid, Book I., 200 lines.
	II.	3	Principia Latina, Part I., and the Fables, Anecdotes, and Mythology of Part II.
French	I.	6	De Jardin's French Class-Book.
	II.	8	De Jardin's French Class-Book, 90 exercises and translation of a few of the short tales.
Geometry	I.	4	Euclid, Books I., II., and III.
Algebra	I.	4	To fractional equations (simple)