

better than in several of the country schools. It could hardly be expected that small schools situated in bush and outlying districts would be able to present pupils for examination in Standards V and VI. but this has been successfully accomplished at Takapau, where the master, though uncertificated, does work which would be creditable to many a school of much higher pretensions. As high as the Fourth Standard, the examination results at Ashley-Clinton, Makatoku, Waipukurau, Puketapu, Takapau, Patangata, and Makaretu are quite equal to the average results obtained in the largest of the district schools. At Makaretu the standard reached is comparatively low, the settlement being made up mostly of Scandinavians, and the school has been opened little more than two years but the master in charge is doing some good work. I was much pleased, at my visit of inspection to this school, to find that all the pupils presented for examination were able to draw a plan of the settlement, marking in the position of every house, road, and important creek, and could likewise tell me what direction to take in order to reach any of the townships or places within twenty miles of the settlement. I should like to see this plan of teaching geography more generally adopted in the schools of this district, for the results would certainly be of more permanent value than I fear they too often are.

TEACHERS DEFICIENT IN METHOD.—Speaking generally the class results in reading and writing have improved during the year, and arithmetic is admirably taught in several schools. Geography and grammar are attempted with fair success in the larger schools, but history, except perhaps in Standard VI., appears to receive little earnest attention from teachers, and is shunned by most children in the country districts. But, in many instances, the results of the standard examination are much below what they would be if something like sequence were adopted by the teachers in the preparation and training of their pupils. It is not easy to understand why teachers, who, above all others, require to be methodical in their work, so seldom give evidence of their possessing this needful qualification. Few of those in charge of schools are really incapable of doing at least a fair quality of work, but too many of them fail to bring their schools to a high state of efficiency, simply because they persist in teaching the standard subjects in an erratic manner. The spasmodic, unmethodical worker, who neglects one of the first principles in school-teaching, viz., iteration and sequence, and who gives a lesson on the rivers of Europe to-day and the towns of New Zealand to-morrow who talks of Alfred the Great in one lesson and of the Wars of the Roses in another, or who pretends to teach writing by giving his pupils a No. 1 copy-book, to be followed by a No. 4 or 6, cannot possibly expect his pupils to shine in any examination, nor can he himself claim to be called an educator or trainer of children. It should be remembered that the difference between a good and a bad school does not depend so much upon the attainments of teachers, or on their ability to give a fair lesson on a set subject, as upon their power of beginning the preparation of each standard subject *at the beginning*, and continuing steadily and without deviation through a regular sequence of lessons until the work has been mastered. And yet the irregular plan of teaching, as described above, is deemed to be the easier in preparing children for examination, and the consequence is that much of the standard work in the schools is prepared on a kind of examination-probability basis, regardless of all true educational principles, and to the great and lasting injury of both teachers and children. Amongst the large schools, Gisborne, Napier, Port Ahuriri, Havelock, and Waipawa have maintained their positions during the year, but Clive, Taradale, and Ormond have fallen off somewhat in efficiency from what they were a short time ago. I have already referred to the quality of the work done in the best of the country schools. At Matawhero, Meanee, Kaikora, and Hampden, changes had taken place in the teaching staff just before the date fixed for the annual examination, and, although the results were comparatively low it is pleasing to observe that each school is now in charge of earnest and capable teachers.

EXTRA SUBJECTS.—The extra subjects usually selected under Regulation 9 were singing, recitation, and drawing. At Napier, botany was chosen in addition to the foregoing, and the results of the examination in this subject were very fair. Gisborne, Napier, and Ormond are the only schools where singing by note has been taught with real success, although the children at Frasertown, Hastings, Hampden, Norsewood, Meanee, and Woodville had been taught to sing very nicely by ear. It is to be regretted that a subject like singing is so often neglected by teachers. Besides being a great aid to discipline, and a pleasant enjoyment and relaxation to children from their more serious studies, it seems to me that singing, if properly taught, acts as a great moral force in school, by cultivating the higher and better feelings of children and I think that an effort should be made to have the subject more generally taught in the schools than it is at present. Nine of the schools took recitation as an extra subject, and in most instances the children acquitted themselves much better than in former years. Several pupils at the Takapau, Napier, Woodville, and Makatoku schools recited the selection taken by them in an admirable manner. Freehand and map drawing continues to be well taught at Gisborne, and model and geometrical drawing at Napier. Very fair specimens of map-drawing were also shown at Ormondville, Petane, Matawhero, Takapau, and Waipawa.

SEWING WELL TAUGHT.—Sewing continues to be taught with marked success in most of the Board schools. The annual examination of the sewing specimens prepared by all the standard girls attending the schools throughout the district is doing great good in the way of promoting instruction in this subject. The reports issued by the three committees of lady examiners, giving the results of the examination which took place on the 9th and 10th November, show that a high standard of efficiency has been reached in several of the schools. The suggestions and recommendations of the lady examiners will be found appended.

SCHOOL LIBRARIES.—During the year satisfactory progress has been made in the formation of school libraries. In twelve of the districts—viz., Gisborne, Meanee, Napier, Norsewood, Ormondville, Patangata, Patutahi, Petane, Porangahau, Taradale, Takapau, and Wairoa—school libraries, containing altogether 2,242 books, have been established exclusively for the use of the children attending school. There are also five districts where pupils passing Standard IV receive free