

in the subject itself. Almost all the history required for the Third Standard may be taught by giving the scholars simple historical sketches to reproduce, thus making them exercises in composition as well as history, but in very few instances were the children in this standard able to express themselves on any subject whatever. If, instead of the general cram from text-books, the pupils are taught to work up their lessons from notes taken while the instruction is given, they will soon learn to express themselves freely on simple subjects.

GEOGRAPHY.—In Standards VI. and V. geography was very creditably presented, especially so at the Wai-iti, Timaru, and Waimate schools, but in the other standards it was too weak. I have advised the teachers to depend more on outline maps drawn on the black-board before the class than on text-books. If they are unable to draw the maps readily, they can have them prepared beforehand on large sheets of paper. This is done at the Waimate School, and is worthy of imitation. With a little practice, however, the teacher will soon be able to place a very fair map on the board as the lesson is going on, and this *doing* of the work before the pupils is, I believe, the most impressive. As a rule the pupils know more of the geography of Europe than of New Zealand. Like charity, geography should begin at home, but not end there.

HISTORY.—This subject is creditably taught in all standards but the Third. In my remarks on composition I have shown how the weakness may be taken away.

NEEDLEWORK.—In a great number of the schools sewing is in a very unsatisfactory state, in fact the syllabus has been entirely set aside, and any work whatever looked upon as sufficient. The excuse generally given was that the work is now done by the machine, or that the materials could not be obtained. The first is no reason why the demands of the State should be ignored the second is easily overcome. I have shown to the teachers specimens, the materials for which will not cost more than threepence, embracing nearly all the varieties of work required. Patching and darning were seldom presented. I do not think that any portion of the sewing syllabus should be neglected. It is as important for girls to be skilful in the use of the needle as to write, read, or cypher well. I hope the importance of needlework will in future be fully recognized throughout the district. One school, Gapes Valley, gave me great satisfaction, and the schools at Timaru, Geraldine Flat, Woodbury, Waituna Creek, and Pleasant Valley were very satisfactory as far as the quality of the work presented is concerned.

SINGING AND DRAWING.—In some of the classes in Timaru (Main) School the singing was excellent, but there was a want of precision in the action songs of the lower classes. Drawing, too, was well presented, and many of the specimens were highly creditable, especially those from the boys in the upper standards. The action songs of the infant classes at Geraldine were very well rendered. Several other schools have done fairly, but in the majority of schools there is little worthy of note to report.

SCIENCE AND OBJECT-LESSONS.—These subjects are not treated effectively in most of our schools. Although a syllabus of the year's work was handed to me, very little information could be drawn from the pupils. In the struggle for high percentages many teachers seem to neglect the extra standard work. This will be the case until the whole State syllabus is enforced, or while School Committees are guided more by pass results than by the Inspector's general remarks on the state of the school. In my opinion it is more creditable to a teacher to make a fair percentage, with a good report on the special subjects, than to take a high percentage without one.

PUPIL-TEACHERS.—In addition to the standard examinations, I examined the pupil-teachers' papers in history, geography, dictation, grammar, and composition. Thirty-seven teachers had presented themselves, and I am pleased to state that thirty-two of them made over 50 per cent. in each subject. Of those below that percentage only one proved very weak. The candidates appear to be well read in the several subjects, but injudiciously give very lengthy answers, introducing a great deal of information not required by the question. This gives them much unnecessary work, and leads to the opinion that more dependence is placed on book matter than on intelligence. All extraneous matter detracts from the merit of the answer, and should also lessen the mark value.

CONCLUDING REMARKS.—The behaviour and discipline in most of the schools are excellent. Order may be greatly improved. If order and discipline go together, success is sure to follow. I have found teachers very anxious to improve their methods, but they want the model. This might be supplied if one of the small schools near Timaru were made into a model school. The buildings are well cared for, but the interior of the rooms should be made more tidy and cheerful. The Gapes Valley School sets a good example in this respect, and its influence is already seen on the pupils. For the detailed condition of each school I refer you to Appendix A to this report, and for examination questions to Appendix B.

The Chairman, Education Board.

I have, &c.,

JOHN GURR, Inspector.

WESTLAND.

SIR,—

30th December, 1883.

I have the honour to submit my ninth annual report on the state of elementary education in the District of Westland.

1. The number of schools under the control of the Board during the past year has fallen from thirty-eight to thirty-six, owing to the closing of the two small schools at Callaghan's and Clonmore. All these have been visited once for the annual examination, and all but the five remote southern schools have also received at least one visit for general inspection during the past year. This year the examination commenced at Gillespie's Beach on the 29th August, and terminated, so far as the schools were concerned, on Monday, the 12th November, at Kynnersley. The results were forwarded to the several Committees in nearly all cases before the commencement of the Christmas vacation. Some unavoidable delay in the completion of this work arose in consequence of my