

that more spirit be introduced into the teaching. Many were exceedingly lazy over their papers. At a few schools very good work was done within an hour, but repeatedly the time taken was beyond all reasonable allowance. In future this paper will require to be timed.

*Grammar.*—No two opinions exist about the work of the Third Standard. The teaching has been confined to the four parts of speech with considerable success. At four schools only did I meet with an approach to last year's bungling. Inflection in the Fourth is slowly improving; meanwhile the awkward attempts to teach case by position survive. At the Central, Waitara East, Egmont Village, and the Inglewood Girls' Schools the inflection of the verb was known; in all other schools, however, where presentations in the Fifth were made, the instruction must have been very imperfect to give such worthless results. Analysis seems to be beyond the powers of many who are intrusted with the education of the youth in the district. The work of the Sixth was a great deal better; in a few instances a weakness in derivation was seen. The exercises in composition were on the whole fair, with good promise. The prevalent method of attempting letter-writing as an introduction to composition has given way to the more sensible plan of building up easy sentences first.

*Geography.*—To be rightly treated the instruction ought to have a good foundation in the Second Standard. In order to assist teachers the Board enabled me to provide a good elementary geographical chart to each school, by the intelligent use of which I had hoped to secure better returns. Occasionally my tests were promptly answered and illustrated on the chart; but too frequently I had to take meaningless definitions, over which so much time is foolishly wasted. A few excellent papers were done by the Fifth and Sixth; while at Waitara East and the Central Schools the answers in physical geography were exceedingly creditable. Map-drawing was occasionally well done, comparing favourably with last year's productions. It should be constantly practised, with the intention of giving ready facility to draw from memory. No attempt to overcrowd maps should be allowed; the work should be limited to the geographical features that may be fairly expected.

*History.*—The examination in the Third Standard was limited to a selection by the teachers from a list of events selected and grouped by myself. By so doing the teaching was distributed over all the periods, with more hope of better results. I am glad to say that they exceeded my expectations. Very seldom did any appearance of "cram" show itself, and once only was the intention misinterpreted into a mere repetition of the list. Where the higher standards were examined, the papers and oral questions gave proof of the work being covered, in a fair proportion, with intelligent instruction.

*Sewing.*—Much satisfaction was expressed by the lady examiners with the improved quality of the work of the specimens, which to a large extent fairly represented the different stages of the syllabus instruction.

*Extra Subjects.*—I cannot report any material increase or advancement on any of the extra subjects. Singing and drawing are very rarely taught: a few teachers give instruction in the latter, specimens of which seen bore evidence of teaching ability. Very little towards the introduction of elementary science has been done, but object-lessons are receiving some attention, with more or less success, in the development of the children's observing and thinking powers. I hope to be able to afford more assistance and advice in the direction of a judicious use of these lessons than I have done. A supply of good pictorial illustrations and a collection of useful objects are much needed. Repetition of poetry has generally been attended to; I cannot, however, speak well of it, for, as a rule, it was taken at a hurried rate, and without any attempt at expression.

*Discipline.*—The discipline and tone are good, though the latter is influenced very much by the want, in many instances, of good manners, which it will be to the advantage of teachers to remedy before next inspection.

*School-buildings.*—Regarding the condition of the school-buildings and residences, it is very desirable that the old ones be repainted. The action of the weather is causing the timber to give way about the window-framings: if the painting is longer delayed a serious outlay will be incurred. The few residences in the district have evidently been erected at the least possible expense. Most of them are mere shells, with a room generally boarded, and the others either lined with scrim, or with no covering but the bare boarding. The majority of the schools have no residences, and in some localities it is a difficult matter to obtain lodgings for the teachers. The Board's attention must be given to supply a better class of residences and to improve those already erected. When the Bell Block, Stratford, and Frankley Road District Schools are attended to there should be no difficulty in undertaking this needful reform.

Whether next year's results will show still more improvement is a question that frequently occupies my mind. I have grave doubts about the matter. In a number of your schools I do not hesitate to say they will be exceeded; but about the others I cannot dismiss the fact that many of the passes are the outcome of a preparation extending over two years. Certain I am of some, and doubtful of a few, that they will not even attain to the percentages of the present year. Time and patience, along with hard work, may do a great deal, aided by the advantages of the new regulations; still, I fear the question of expecting passes in the higher standards, at any rate, from a number of the present staff will have to be considered as the passes of efficient schools are year by year brought out in comparison with others. Your uncertificated teachers are now alive to the necessity of obtaining their certificates; but, at the same time, there is little encouragement held out to those who do so and desire to remain employed. This condition the Board should endeavour to rectify by an increased salary or a higher scale of payments.

I have to acknowledge the courtesy and the energetic co-operation which teachers have given me in the general interest and desire to forward the educational work of the district.

I have, &c.,

WILLIAM MURRAY,  
Inspector of Schools.

The Chairman, Taranaki Education Board.