

*Class-subjects.*—Object and natural-history lessons are given in most of the schools, but with poor success in the lower standards, except where experienced teachers are employed. I certainly have not come across a boy like the Durham pitman's son, who mistook the picture of a rhinoceros for that of a "coodie;" but I did examine a First Standard in which half the pupils made random guesses at what the flesh of a cow was called, and none could tell the difference between the hoof of the cow and the hoof of the horse. The mistake in giving these lessons appears to be that children are merely told a list of attributes in long, difficult words, and, being expected to repeat these words after the teacher, they become listless and dull. In a well-managed object-lesson in which the children's interest is aroused, the difficulty is, not to keep the class attentive, but to moderate the excitement. In several of the larger and in a few of the smaller schools elementary lessons in physiology and physics have been given with success to the higher three standards. By the new Standards Regulations science must be taught as a class-subject in these standards. This is a step in the right direction, for there can be no doubt that science in some of its departments is of fundamental importance, since it most nearly concerns the business of life. And this is especially true in a new country like ours. And yet, as Herbert Spencer points out, this vital knowledge—that by which we have grown as a nation to what we are, and which now underlies our whole existence—men begin to acquire as they best may when their education is said to be finished. That science should have been neglected so long is merely the result of the general tendency to place what is ornamental before what is useful; to consider what knowledge will be most imposing and conduce to social advantage—not what will be of most intrinsic value. It would be interesting to know how many premature deaths occur annually and how many lives are shortened through want of acquaintance with the principles of physiology, or how many undertakings fail through ignorance of rudimentary scientific knowledge.

Singing is taught in most schools with a female assistant, and at a few in charge of male teachers only. The tonic sol-fa method is most in favour.

Needlework is more or less satisfactorily taught at all schools where female assistants are employed; and these teachers are, I regret to say, often allowed to provide at their own expense material for the children of careless parents.

The recitation at a few schools was excellent, but at the majority verses were merely gabbled off in a manner that must do a great deal of injury to the reading, and the passages were not understood. Sometimes punctuation was carefully noticed, but the spirit of the piece received no attention.

*Order.*—Drill is taught in the playgrounds at several schools, but its effects are often wanting when pupils are entering and leaving class-rooms. I should be glad to see better discipline at change of lessons. Every child should know exactly what he has to do; books and slates should be taken out and put away noiselessly; pens and pencils should be passed as methodically as buckets at a fire; and lounging, fidgeting, and slovenly ways of standing should never be permitted. To insure good discipline the teacher should always be able to see every pupil in his class. He should therefore take up a well-chosen position, from which he can control all by voice and *eye*; and when he has occasion to look at books or slates during a lesson, he should do so, as far as possible, from the front, back, and sides of the class, and not by going amongst the desks. Some teachers walk up and down like caged lions before their classes, and so turn their backs on children. I am often puzzled to know whether teachers are aware that their pupils are in disorder, or think that copying, prompting, talking, and lounging are the necessary concomitants of work. At some schools the manners of the pupils are very pleasing; at others much is to be desired. Examination-day appears in general to be looked forward to with pleasure.

*Infants' Schools.*—The infants' schools at Wanganui and Hawera, in charge of experienced married teachers, are doing excellent work. Waverley and Normanby I expect to come to the front this year. Palmerston, Halcombe, Sanson, and Foxton have very unsuitable class-rooms. Several of the infants' classes at the large schools are in charge of young girls, who have but little sympathy with children.

In conclusion, I may say that many teachers have worked earnestly and well. Some failed through their own shortcomings, and through their efforts being badly directed; others were unsuccessful through persistent disregard of instructions and of directions written at the cost of many late hours. During my visits of inspection I spent from half a day to three days in nearly every school, consulting with and advising teachers both while the work was going on and after school was dismissed. This conferring between teacher and inspector is undoubtedly one of the most important parts of the latter's duty, if he is to be other than a fault-finder. I regret that such a conference is not always possible after examination. That it cannot be so will be readily understood when it is remembered that examination is going on every consecutive day for months, and is seldom over till six o'clock, when the inspector has probably several miles to ride and work till midnight. However, whenever opportunity offered I showed the papers worked to the teachers, and pointed out common errors. I also explained, using the blackboard, the arithmetic and grammar cards to the children in the presence of their teachers. These conferences and explanations were appreciated by the principal teachers, but too often the desire of the juniors seemed merely to be to go home as soon as the examination of their own classes was completed. Some schools found backward on my first examination have come amongst the very foremost rank this year, so that no teachers need be discouraged. I would ask those who were unsuccessful to read their examination reports carefully, and set about remedying the defects pointed out therein, giving over the habit of laying the blame of their failure on the examination, or on anybody's shoulders but their own. They should remember that all the cards used were cleared at some schools, that the better a school does the pleasanter it is for the inspector, and that failures would be far more frequent if he did not take a lenient view of the regulations—more especially that one with regard to reading. Moreover, I would ask every teacher to endeavour to make his work as practical as possible. When boys, though able to work division and multiplication of money, cannot calculate the price of a horse, the