

lessons, if adopted by teachers in giving instruction in reading, would prove of great help to the children; and I am glad to find that something of this kind has been duly recognised in the new Standard Regulations, where additional marks are authorised to be given for "knowledge of the subject-matter" of the reading lesson. But what is really wanted to aid in making good readers is the establishment of proper school libraries for every school. Writing is making commendable progress in this district, and in several schools it has reached a high standard of excellence. Wherever careful and systematic teaching is carried on the results are satisfactory. In arithmetic the standard results are somewhat low, but of late a great improvement has taken place in the neatness and general style of setting down the work. Mental arithmetic and tables are not as well taught as they might be, and where these are neglected the arithmetic results are always poor. I am inclined to put a high value upon mental arithmetic for young children. In the Gisborne Infants' School, where it is taught to perfection, the little children can add, subtract, multiply, and divide mentally any number not higher than fifty as fast as I can myself, and the results of this kind of teaching are to be seen in the remarkable efficiency of the little ones in arithmetic of a degree not higher than Standard II. Geography and history continue to be taught with fair success in the higher standards; but I am unable to report favourably upon them below Standard V. For my part, I should prefer to see both subjects taught by means of Geographical and Historical Readers, as is the case in England. It would certainly be preferable to the present system, where in too many instances a mere smattering of the names of capes, mountains, and peninsulas in geography, and of the headings of leading events in English history is made to do duty for geography and history.

*Singing.*—Singing is taught in twenty-four schools, and is quite a favourite subject with the pupils. The teaching is generally carried on by the tonic sol-fa method, which has a number of able and enthusiastic adherents among the teachers. The schools where singing is best taught are Napier, Waipawa, Gisborne, Ormond, Hastings, Makatoku, Taradale, Woodville, and Matawhero.

*Drawing.*—This subject receives comparatively little attention in the large majority of schools, and unless some special classes are provided where teachers themselves can first receive instruction in the elements of the subject, I very much doubt whether it will be much better taught under the new regulations than it has been hitherto. The only schools where the subject is well and intelligently taught are Gisborne, Petane, and Ormondville. Mapping, however, is capably taught at Matawhero, Makaretu, Frasertown, and Napier.

*Sewing.*—Sewing continues to be taught with excellent results in twenty-four of the schools. At the Industrial Exhibition held in Wellington last year five schools sent specimens of sewing, and not less than twenty-four prizes were awarded to them—viz., eleven firsts, nine seconds, and four thirds, together with five honourable mentions. For Captain Russell's sewing prizes there has never before been such competition, and the lady examiners were occupied two days in examining into the merits of the many specimens sent. Throughout the standards this subject is so well taught that I consider it should be placed among the pass and class subjects as an alternative with drawing for girls; otherwise I fear that sewing—a subject of vast importance—is doomed to occupy a very subordinate place in the school course of the future.

*Penny-banks.*—There are no penny-banks established in any of the schools, and I doubt whether there will be any for some time to come. I find that teachers, except perhaps one or two who possess more individuality than the rest, do not care to introduce anything into their schools which does not minister directly to high percentages in the standard subjects; and really no one can blame them for so doing, for it is by means of percentages that their efficiency is now gauged by School Committees, by the public at large, and even by the Education Department. That some kind of practical training should be introduced into the school course for the purpose of inculcating habits of thrift is, so I think, very desirable; but would not such habits be better taught by making children realise that honest industry begets means, and that judicious and careful expenditure begets savings available for future needs? What is badly needed just now is the establishment of classes for the training of our girls in "practical cookery," and in that branch of domestic economy which relates to the economical purchase and use of breadstuffs, to the qualities of calicoes, woollens, and other articles of dress, and to the relative values of each for household and personal use, whether as food or clothing. Practical instruction in such matters, I venture to suggest, would be more likely to foster habits of thrift even among men and boys than would the establishment of penny-banks, however well they might be managed.

*Pupil-teachers' Examination.*—The examinations of the pupil-teachers which took place in July, and of candidates for scholarships which took place in November, have already been reported upon by me. The alteration of the date of the pupil-teachers' examination to December, under the new syllabus for pupil-teachers, will prove a great convenience to me personally, and I feel sure that it will add largely to the pleasures of the pupil-teachers themselves, as they will now be able to enjoy to the full the midsummer vacation, knowing that there are no further examinations to anticipate for another year. It is pleasant to find that the ex-pupil-teachers who are attending as pupils at the Wellington and Christchurch Training Colleges for teachers have received excellent reports from the principals of those colleges, and in the examinations they have done credit to the district.

*Technical and Evening Classes.*—There are no evening classes yet established in this district under section 86 of the Education Act. Two efforts have been made by the assistant masters at the Napier and Port Ahuriri schools to form such classes, but hitherto without success, the fees not being sufficient to recoup the teachers for the time and trouble they gave to the work. This is to be regretted, for I think that one of the most urgent wants in the education system of to-day is the establishment of classes into which youths can be drawn to receive that practical instruction and training which cannot possibly be given in the day schools under present conditions. Last year I drew attention to this question, and I am convinced that it is one which will soon require careful consideration at the instance of the Board. Within the short compass of a thousand hours each year, equal to about six weeks of time, it is impossible to crowd into the school course even the