

the 1885 Education Code (England) I observe that "two sets of reading books must be provided for Standards I. and II., and three, one of which should relate to English history, for each standard above the second." It is much to be regretted that a similar provision has not been made by the Minister of Education in our own colony.

*Spelling* continues to be successfully taught. The lower results in Standard II. are partly due to the words set being taken from other books than those read. This was done by me in many cases, and my object was to encourage greater regard to principles and the characteristic sounds of groups of letters in the treatment of the subject, which has hitherto been unnecessarily mechanical. Of course, nothing in any way beyond the standard was prescribed, and, indeed, with the large margin for error here allowed, the results should not have been seriously affected. Transcription was in most cases careful and accurate, and in many beautifully done. In the larger schools the teaching of spelling always appears to me to occupy too much time. What is there to prevent one half the class from writing out the words and sentences dictated by a pupil, while the other half is having practice in reading or other suitable teaching? This sort of thing is constantly done in the smaller schools without any impairment of the quality of the work. The time thus saved to the teachers would allow of more extended reading, a point which has been sufficiently insisted on above. Good order and management are presupposed, but on the average these can surely be counted on.

*Writing* in copy-books is, as a rule, satisfactory, and in many cases good. In a very considerable number of schools the exercise-books show careful and even beautiful writing and ciphering, but in fully half of the whole number the difference between the writing in the copy-books and that in the exercise-books is most pronounced and disappointing. In all such cases the teachers show a lamentable want of practical influence over their pupils.

In *Arithmetic* the percentage of passes, as shown in Table II., is 65, as against 71, 67, and 68 for 1884, 1883, and 1882 respectively. The falling-off is chiefly due to the imperfect grounding of the lower classes in notation. Because this had not been specially tested in Standard II. for some years, teachers appear to have ignored it, or taught it most superficially. This is one of numerous indications that passing in standards is far more thought of than educating boys and girls. In Standard II. a perfectly easy question in addition was in very many instances wrongly done, and in nine cases out of every ten the error lay in taking the numbers down incorrectly. In Standard III., from the same cause, an easy mechanical question in the simple or compound rules was wrongly done in about two cases out of every three. On the other hand, the little problems contained in the papers set to these two standards were very fairly answered in a good many schools, and helped to counterbalance the effects of the general weakness in notation. The Standard IV. results are much higher than they have been for several years, and they show that on the whole the teaching has been more thorough and intelligent. The percentage of passes is, however, much below what can be considered satisfactory. In connection with the inferior results in Standards V. and VI. it should be noted that for some years something like half the pupils promoted from Standard IV. have failed in this subject, and many of these must have been unable to enter advantageously on the study of the higher rules. There is no doubt that arithmetic is still the weakest subject in our schools. This is the more to be deplored as a most valuable training is to be derived from a proper treatment of it. The teaching of the elementary operations of adding, subtracting, multiplying, and dividing simple numbers needs to be more thorough. These operations should be drilled up until they are done without effort and almost unconsciously. Except in the very smallest schools, I see nothing to prevent such mastery of this work except precipitancy in hurrying pupils on, bad methods of teaching (especially disregard of due gradation in the upward steps), and the copying and finger or unit counting that are still tolerated in the upper infant classes of a number of schools. From Standard III. upwards the subject is in many cases taught with little intelligence or lucidity. One often sees pupils puzzling out the questions they are doing, and writing the operations down in a jumble of confusion. Teachers would be richly rewarded if they would make it a practice to elicit and set forth clearly the data and what is required in representative questions before setting pupils to work out sets of examples. They should also train the scholars to tell what the object of the different operations is, and what the result of each represents. If the knowledge of arithmetic in this district is to improve, better methods must be employed in the exposition of principles, and greater care bestowed on the analysis of questions and a clear setting out of the solutions. I am quite satisfied that most teachers have a competent knowledge of the subject, for they turn out some excellent arithmeticians, and the number of these would be greatly increased if skill in teaching the subject were in keeping with the teachers' knowledge of it. Mental arithmetic receives sufficient attention, and is on the average satisfactory, and in many cases well taught.

I have been, on the whole, very fairly pleased with the results of the teaching in grammar, composition, geography, and history, though the methods have been in many cases open to criticism. The practice of pointing out the "statements" contained in a sentence, and of eliciting their connection as a preliminary to parsing, is, I am glad to note, becoming more general, and its results are most satisfactory.

In *Geography* the lessons are still very bald, nothing beyond a knowledge of topography and of the scanty supplementary information of the text-books being desired by a great many. A teacher should have such a book as Keith Johnston's admirable School Geography constantly in his hands when looking up the lessons to be taught, and draw upon its stores to make them more interesting and attractive. This should be quite practicable in all the larger schools. Little map-drawing from memory is required, but it is seldom well done, more especially in the case of our own colony. As a rule, the two highest standards are not taught enough about New Zealand.

The science and object lessons were usually few in number, and but moderately known.

Sewing, singing, and drill receive a satisfactory amount of attention.