

SEWING.—Sewing continues to be taught in a majority of the schools with rare success. The examiners who give so much of their valuable time and attention to the examination of this work speak in the highest terms of the great progress made by the children. The suggestive reports of the examiners will, I trust, meet with the approval of the Board. It would be well if the modification suggested by them with respect to the sewing syllabus could be carried out. In the sewing examinations thirty-three schools competed last year, from which 1,154 specimens were received at the Education Office. The number of specimens examined in each standard was—Standard VI., 30; Standard V., 104; Standard IV., 155; Standard III., 259; Standard II., 288; Standard I., 318. The schools where sewing is not taught are mostly small ones, and would each be in charge of a mistress instead of a master were the regulations dealing with the appointment of teachers carried out, and of course sewing would be taught in each. I can only express the opinion that Committees of the smaller schools who select a master for their school in preference to a mistress should be required to find some one capable of teaching sewing to the girls.

PUPIL-TEACHERS.—My special reports upon the examinations of the pupil-teachers and upon the work of the Fifth and Sixth Standards have already been received by the Board. On the whole the training of the pupil-teachers is carried on with care and success by the principal teachers, and their efficient preparation is beginning to have its full effect upon that portion of the school work which the pupil-teachers are mostly required to do. The “Standard Lesson-book,” that has to be kept by every pupil-teacher equally with every adult teacher, is a source of much good, and is the most important adjunct to systematic teaching which the Board has introduced into the schools.

TECHNICAL AND EVENING CLASSES.—For a number of years I have ventured in my reports to direct the attention of the Board to the desirability of establishing evening continuation schools for the benefit of those who desire to carry on their studies after leaving the ordinary day schools. I would again point out that the “coping stone” to our education system depends upon adapting the education to the special needs of districts, and to the establishment of similar evening classes, where all children who leave schools before completing their Sixth Standard course shall be required to attend, and where those who have finished their standards may attend to pursue the study of some technical subject. I desire to emphasize the need of something being done in the direction indicated here. I believe that a large portion of the work done in the schools is entirely lost to the vast majority of children within two years of their quitting school simply because of the too superficial character of the preparation. The children are hurried on much too rapidly through the standards, and the subjects are so numerous that thoroughness is impossible. As pointed out by me, in my report for 1885: “Within the school compass of a thousand hours, which constitute more than the average school year of a pupil, it is impossible to crowd the many subjects which are now required to be taught, without finding imperfections somewhere. But already other and more practical class subjects are pressing into notice; and, for my part, I can see no way how they can be taught except by an interchange with some of the present standard subjects, or by the establishment of evening advanced and technical classes. Certainly, if the instruction which is now given in the schools is to be of permanent value to the children, and to the social and industrial needs of the country, either evening classes, as suggested here, must soon form a part of a general school system, or a standard syllabus will be required, in which technical examinations and literary examinations will follow one another in alternate years.” After two more years’ experience in the work of the schools my opinion has grown stronger that evening continuation schools for useful and technical training are a necessity, and I venture to hope that the Board will endeavour to consider this important question during the coming year.

I have, &c.,
H. HILL, B.A., F.G.S.,
Inspector of Schools.

The Chairman, Board of Education, Napier.

SUMMARY OF RESULTS for the WHOLE DISTRICT.

Standard Classes.			Presented.	Absent.	Excepted.	Failed.	Passed.	Average Age of those that passed.	
									Yrs. mos.
S 7	...	...	17	...	...	...	...	...	...
S 6	...	...	102	7	...	20	92	14	3
S 5	...	...	283	22	10	76	175	13	2
S 4	...	...	438	11	41	116	270	12	6
S 3	...	...	705	17	114	154	420	11	6
S 2	...	...	842	20	109	129	584	10	4
S 1	...	...	963	32	115	163	653	8	9
P	...	...	1,871	...	...	...	...	...	...
Totals			5,221	109	389	658	2,194	*	

Mean of average age, 10 years 8 months.