

applicable this year. The work of the upper standards is generally good and sometimes excellent. The lessons on chemistry at Stafford are illustrated by experiments, some of which, at my request, were successfully performed by boys in the Sixth and Seventh Classes. With one exception, all the schools having three or more teachers (including pupil-teachers) have done fairly well in elementary science as far as the Fifth and Sixth Standards are concerned, the mean percentages being reduced by the results obtained in Standard IV., which, as usual, are far from satisfactory; but for this I do not consider that the teachers are to be blamed. Object-lessons are given, after a fashion, at nearly all the schools, and a considerable amount of useful information appears to be retained by the recipients; but at only two or three schools are these lessons given in a manner calculated to serve their true purpose. The misspelling of easy words in the object-lessons of Standard III., referred to in my last report, is not quite so conspicuous this year, but there is still much room for improvement in this respect, failing which there is a danger of this exercise becoming absolutely detrimental.

The order and discipline of the schools and the behaviour of the scholars outside the school (so far as I have had opportunities of observing it) are on the whole fairly satisfactory. I have been obliged this year to make a less favourable "remark" under this head at one school on account of the constant chattering that I had to complain of during the examination. At another school the wall at one end of the building is disfigured by a profusion of ink-splashings. Here also the day's proceedings were varied by the descent of a stone upon the iron roof while the examination of a part of the scholars was in progress. This, however, was no new experience at the school referred to, and is, perhaps, an indication of the "excellent moral tone" with which the Committee are so satisfied.

INSPECTION.—On looking through the notes made at the various schools during my visits of inspection, I find the following defects and peculiarities referred to: Classes P. and S1.—Writing with short stumps of slate pencil (very common). One teacher defended this practice on the ground that the long pencils produced a disagreeable sound. Same classes.—Slates not properly and uniformly ruled (common). Children in Standard I. and Standard II. counting strokes made on their slates instead of *adding* the numbers together (common). Children engaged in exactly the same work in arithmetic, grammar exercises, &c., sitting close to one another, although there was ample unoccupied space—a condition highly favourable to the encouragement of copying (occasional). Ventilation not properly attended to (a few cases). Classes at desks repeating lessons aloud while the teacher was giving a reading lesson to another class (one instance). Reading.—Boys sitting and leaning their chests against the desks. Not sufficient attention to expression and intonation. In some schools no pattern reading. Writing.—Pens not held properly (very general). Awkward position of scholars while writing. Bad specimens of writing on blackboard (sometimes actual mistakes) by teacher. Pupil-teacher at the back of his class showing *one* scholar how to work a question in arithmetic. Exercise Books.—Errors not properly corrected (occasional). Some books without names of owners or of their classes. Some exercise books very dirty and untidy (too common). Daily Attendance Registers.—Certain columns not filled up; morning (or afternoon) attendance not added up; totals not entered up at the end of the week. Admission registers not kept properly posted up to date (common). Time tables require amendment (a few). In some of the more important cases the remarks called for by what fell under my observation during the inspection were communicated to the head teachers in writing; in the others the defects were pointed out to the teacher after school hours.

In very few schools is the blackboard so well utilised as it might be in the teaching of subjects other than arithmetic. Scarcely anything shows the quality of a teacher more than his manner of using, or his habitual neglect of, the blackboard. If, as it has been said, the consumption of soap in proportion to the population is a measure of the civilisation of a country, it is at least equally true that the consumption of chalk may be taken as one indication of the efficiency of a school. I beg to recommend that every school be furnished with a file, or portfolio, and that teachers be instructed to file, and *keep in the school*, all circulars addressed to them by the Board. It frequently happens that a new teacher is not aware of the contents of some circular issued a few months before his appointment, and it is by no means a rare occurrence for teachers to plead ignorance of some instruction conveyed to them a year before in the same manner.

Before leaving this portion of my report I cannot refrain from referring to the serious loss the district has sustained during the past year. "The great teacher, Death," has removed one of our staff—the late Mr. James Woodward, who, after years of faithful and most effective service, at length succumbed to the complaint to which he had been long subject, his end having been hastened by his absolute and untiring devotion to his duties. His indomitable will kept him at his post long after most men would have been compelled to seek relief in repose, and his friends, the Committee, and the Board remained in ignorance of the full extent of his weakness until too late; otherwise they would no doubt have insisted upon his taking the rest he so much needed. His loss will long be felt by many, more especially by those who, either as scholars or as members of his staff, have received the benefits of his teaching and example. For some months prior to his death Mr. Woodward was more or less unfit to fulfil his duties in his accustomed vigorous and searching manner, and, as a natural consequence, Kumara occupies a lower position this year amongst the Westland schools than it has held for many years.

PUPIL-TEACHERS.—Eighteen pupil-teachers were examined for promotion during the first week of the Christmas vacation—viz., eight for admission to the first class, four for the second class, four for the third class, and two for the fourth. All of these passed, and eight of them succeeded in passing "with credit"—*i.e.*, gaining upwards of 75 per cent. of the attainable marks. One pupil-teacher narrowly escaped failure in Class 4, through serious weakness in two subjects. One of the Board's regulations provides for the preservation of all exercise books used by the pupil-teachers during the year, and for their production at the examination. This enables me to devote some little time to a careful scrutiny of their contents, which afford a tolerably fair indication of the