

NELSON.

BOARD (11th February, 1890).—Where grammar and composition appears as a “pass subject” make it a “class subject,” and substitute for it as a “pass subject” a knowledge of common things or elementary science. Define more strictly the requirements in elementary science. Where geography is a “pass subject” make it a “class subject.” Leave the Inspector more discretion as to what work shall be reckoned as First Standard work and Second Standard work. Make needlework more prominent. Allow part of the work of inspection to be done by certificated teachers employed by the Board, under the Inspector, as assistants.

Mr. HODGSON, Inspector (2nd November, 1889).—In Standard I. leave the Inspector to decide what quantity and quality of reading and spelling shall be exacted: the demands of the present First Standard are too low in reading and spelling and in writing and arithmetic. Pupils in Standard I. should write in copybooks and be able to answer easy questions in the first four rules. Suggestions follow for making the standards rather harder than at present. The suggestions are based on the assumption that Standard II. is for children above ten, and so on. The system of examining for individual passes is vicious in the extreme, and productive of disastrous results. It sets up a paradise of dunces, on whom is now bestowed—with little profit—the inordinate attention formerly paid to the cleverer children. It has created a most undesirable breed of teachers, who may be termed “pass-hunters.” An extension of the method of class-examination to the whole syllabus is nearly all the change required. The present rule of “exception” is objectionable.

NORTH CANTERBURY.

BOARD (31st May, 1890).—Forwarding a report of a select committee. Committee recommends, “for schools with only a single teacher, reading (to include subject-matter and history), spelling and dictation, writing, arithmetic, geography, grammar and composition, needlework; with singing and drill optional, or more or less a matter of arrangement between the Inspector and the teacher.” Committee refers with approval to a memorandum prepared by Mr. Colborne-Veel, the Secretary to the Board, and Principal of the Normal School. Mr. Veel holds that intelligent teaching secures better results at examination than does the mechanical teaching which aims only at such results; that the character of the instruction depends in a far greater degree on the Inspectors than on the syllabus; and that in considering any reports made by the Inspectors the Board ought to consider also the strength of the staff of the school reported on, and not expect as much from a small school as from a large one.

Dr. ANDERSON, Inspector (14th March, 1890).—In grammar for Standard IV. omit inflections and substitute analysis of easy simple sentence, and alter syllabus for Standard V. and Standard VI. to agree with this change and to make analysis prominent. Divide English history into three periods for Standard IV., Standard V., Standard VI., and take these periods in rotation. In this way the three classes can be taught together. In the same way these classes may be taught together in geography if a preliminary course is taken by Standard III., and the whole subject divided into three sections for the higher classes. The “pass subjects” should be reading, dictation, writing, arithmetic, grammar and composition, and perhaps geography. Extend the principle of class estimates to all subjects, and exclude all percentages of passes from reports on individual schools. Modify the rule for determining passes and failures, so that failure in one subject shall be overlooked unless it is bad enough to embarrass the teaching in the class above. In a school with only one teacher omit history, science, and object lessons.

Mr. WOOD, Inspector (6th March, 1890).—Let the “pass subjects” be the three Rs, with spelling, grammar, and composition. Let the following be compulsory subjects, but not “pass subjects:” poetry, drill, singing, needlework, subject-matter of reading lessons (including history lessons). Let geography, drawing, and science be optional, depending on the number and quality of the staff and the attainments and capacity of the children. The writer thinks that where individual pass is not required the teacher is more free and vivacious in his teaching of the subject, addresses himself more to the best of his pupils, is less hampered by the desire to insure some benefit for the dull children, who nevertheless do receive some benefit. Use a good text-book of history as a reading-book: the ordinary teaching of history without book gives evidence of slovenly preparation—the facts selected with little judgment, clearness and accuracy of expression seldom aimed at, an utter want of apt illustration.

SOUTH CANTERBURY.

Mr. GOW, Inspector (16th November, 1889).—Make drawing a “class subject” instead of a “pass subject.” Begin geometrical drawing and drawing to scale in Standard V. instead of in Standard IV. Make geography a “class subject” for all standards in which it is now required for “pass.” Omit history of Standard III., and let history of Standard VI. begin with 1603 instead of with 1485. Make grammar a “class subject” instead of a “pass subject,” but let composition remain as a “pass subject.” Let “practice” for Standard IV. be “simple practice,” and “proportion” for Standard V. be “simple proportion.” Make some “class subjects” optional where there is only one teacher.

OTAGO.

Mr. GOYEN, Inspector (18th November, 1889).—Make geography a “class subject” where it is now required for “pass.” In history remove the work of Standard III. to Standard IV., and let Standard V. and Standard VI. read together where there is only one teacher. Make drawing a “class subject” instead of a “pass subject,” and exclude geometrical drawing from Standard IV. Let composition remain a “pass subject,” and grammar become a “class subject.” Prescribe a text-book of elementary science (say, Paul Bert’s “First Year of Scientific Knowledge”) for Standard IV., Standard V., and Standard VI.