

Mr. PETRIE, Inspector (January, 1890).—Omit history of Standard III. For history use reading-books, and have no special examinations in the subject. Leave out part of the highest work in arithmetic, and rearrange the rest. Give more freedom in grouping consecutive classes in grammar, geography, and history. Prescribe “two, or perhaps three, alternative courses” in science. Confine the study of history within the limits of the last hundred years or so, after a very brief outline of the earlier parts. The wording of the syllabus appears to justify teachers who reduce geography to a mere knowledge of names. The spelling for Standard I. and Standard II. is too easy. Degrees of proficiency in reading should be more strictly defined: the great simplification of reading-books for successive standards of late years tends to make Standard IV. a very low standard of proficiency in reading and “comprehension.” Abolish the entire system of passing in standards, and establish a system of passing in subjects. If the present system continues, abolish “exceptions,” let “absence,” except from illness, count as “failure.”

Mr. TAYLOR, Inspector (15th January, 1890).—Let the “pass subjects” be reading (with explanation), spelling, writing, arithmetic, grammar and composition. Confine history to Standard V. and Standard VI., and treat it merely as a reading lesson. Omit geography of Standard II., and reduce the requirements for the other classes. Have a text-book of elementary science. Allow considerable latitude and liberty in the matter of grouping of classes for instruction.

SOUTHLAND.

BOARD (7th July, 1890).—Any change “should be in the direction of securing greater simplicity in the work of the various standards, and by the introduction of a uniform set of text-books for all public schools throughout the colony.”

Mr. BRAIK, Inspector (13th December, 1889).—Make drawing a “class subject” instead of a “pass subject.” Teach history in Standard V. and Standard VI. only. Reduce the quantity of the arithmetic generally. Favour the substitution of analysis for parsing. Pay more attention to the infant section of any small school. Give more prominence to elementary science. The writer thinks that if the geography syllabus were recast and his other suggestions adopted great freedom in the grouping of classes would result, with much advantage.

Mr. HENDRY, Inspector (7th March, 1890).—Agrees with Mr. Braik, except that Mr. Hendry would not go so far in curtailing the programme for arithmetic.

27th August, 1890.

W. J. HABENS.

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