

afforded much ground for satisfaction, the work at many schools being very fine. Some teachers should pay more attention to the position of pupils in desks, and to the manner in which the pen is held. Even in the very lowest classes the pupils should be trained to hold their pencils properly.

*Arithmetic.*—Of the seven pass-subjects arithmetic stands sixth in order of passes, with a percentage for all standards of 76·2. Comparing the percentages of the past two years we find an increase in Standard I. and in Standard II., and a decrease—varying from 5·5 in Standard III. to 17·6 in Standard VI.—in each of the remaining standards. Such a great falling-off tends to bear out the opinion that the highest standards in the smaller schools do really well only every second year. In Standard III. failure was generally due to inaccuracy, and such inaccuracy was as often as not found in simple tables in division sums, or in subtraction. Standard IV. shows the lowest percentage of passes—58·2—and here there was a great deal of inaccuracy in bills of parcels and in practice. In the latter rule, the common habit of putting down an aliquot part as part of another which was not in the pupil's working is a very silly one. But in this class reduction was perhaps the worst-taught rule, linear measure and square measure again being confused, and multiplication used for division, or *vice versa*. In this rule the names of denominations always should be written to the right of the lines. At inspection visits it was sometimes found that pupils who had been working square measure for some time did not know what is meant by the term a square foot, and could not show that there are nine square feet in a square yard. In Standard V. the percentage is 10·6 higher than that in Standard IV. Interest was the best known rule (methods of working often poor), and fractions the worst, though some improvement was found in the latter. In proportion pupils should be taught, after stating the sums, to arrange the terms in fractional form. In Standard VI. the percentage is the second lowest—59·6—and the work often was most disappointing. In practical sums in mensuration, fencing, and the like, the manner in which linear measure and square measure were confused pointed to great thoughtlessness and unsoundness—*e.g.*, multiplying the length of a field by the breadth to find the distance round. The arithmetic in Standard VI. at Hawera was very good.

Having now pointed out the most noticeable faults and shortcomings, we desire to say that at several schools the arithmetic throughout was very fine; and that at several others, while some of the pupils in most classes showed good methods and arrangement, many broke down, this pointing to lack of thoroughness in teaching. At a few schools, some of them large ones, the teachers year after year fail to secure good arithmetic. This, we think, is mainly due to an insufficiency of blackboard teaching—or to faulty questioning when the blackboard is used—and to the misuse of examination-cards and books. With regard to the former, we are afraid that some teachers seldom use a blackboard at all to introduce a new rule, while at some of our inspection visits we noticed other teachers spending as much as half an hour in educating some point that should have been self-evident to well-trained and attentive pupils, or that should have been known months previously. With regard to the latter, pupils too often are given examination-cards to work before they really know all the rules represented on the cards, or they are asked to work through an example at the end of a chapter in an arithmetic in which many of the sums are beyond them. As before pointed out, teachers would find examination-cards with six or eight sums in one rule very useful. The time taken over the arithmetic varied very much at different schools, being three times longer in some schools than in others. In future, pupils will be strictly limited in this respect.

*Grammar, with Composition*, showed, for all standards taken together, the lowest percentage of passes of the seven pass-subjects—*viz.*, 64·5—Standard VI. being at the bottom with 58·6. There is little or nothing fresh to add to what has been written in former years with regard to this subject. We should like to see the pupils of Standard III. and Standard IV. trained in a more systematic manner to determine what part of speech a word is from the particular function of such word—naming, telling, describing, connecting, &c. In Standard V., parsing often was badly done, inflections of the verb especially being seldom well known. In the highest standards, at very few schools indeed could the pupils give any sensibly-expressed reasons for their corrections of false grammar. Questions requiring explanations of phrases or sentences taken from the reading-books, such explanation to be written in sentences of the pupil's own making, were either badly answered or not attempted.

In composition, as has been already mentioned in this report, many essays were rendered utterly valueless by bad spelling. More attention should be paid to punctuation and to the fundamental rules of syntax. In Standard III., the indiscriminate use of the personal pronouns often spoiled the work. Written composition would be better if pupils were really taught to talk—to express in oral work their ideas in clear statements, not in disconnected words. Readiness of speech is a fitting prelude to fluent composition; monosyllabic answers, so often heard at our schools, are not to be reckoned speech at all.

In *Geography*, Standard V. showed the lowest percentage of passes, Standard III. the highest. For the three standards taken together in which geography is a "pass"-subject the percentage was 78·7. In the highest standards nothing varied so much as mapping, which at some schools was excellent, at others very bad. Important ports were not well known with regard to the countries to which they belong and the rivers or seas upon which they are situated, while descriptions of trade routes often showed strange confusion of ideas with regard to the map of the world. We should like to have found the elder pupils more familiar with the fauna and flora of countries, and with the principal articles of commerce and manufactures of the more important—of Great Britain and her colonies at all events. New Zealand appears to have little honour amongst her own children, for it was generally omitted from the list of wool-producing and gold-producing countries. Now that New Zealand exports so much frozen meat, La Plata should be noticed in the same connection. The questions in physical geography, though particularly simple, were very often badly answered. Year after year it is very strange what hazy ideas pupils have about evaporation and condensation, about latitude and longitude, about climate, and the distribution of plants in this connection.