

It should also be pointed out that some principal teachers think they have done their duty if they have taught the higher standards well, and they excuse bad work in a lower class because "the assistant (or pupil-teacher) is responsible." A teacher of this kind is unmindful of the fact that every class is his, and that it is as necessary for him to give his assistants opportunities of teaching the higher standards as it is for himself to personally teach the lower; to say nothing of it being his duty to try to improve, when possible, the methods of all teachers under him. When assistants, either from incapacity or from indifference, are found doing bad work, principal teachers should not hesitate to report them to the Board; for the training of some hundreds of children is of more importance than the reduction of a teacher in the service. The duty is an unpleasant one; but, unfortunately, any one who accepts a responsible position must make up his mind to have many unpleasant duties to perform. Responsibility and duties disagreeable, but nevertheless duties, are generally concomitant.

One more matter we would point out. At some schools there does not appear to be any definite plan for the proper distribution over a given time of the teaching of the various subjects. At a school recently inspected seven months after the last annual examination, no geometry had yet been taught in Standard IV., and no drawing in books in Standard I. Teachers should know exactly what they are going to teach each week and for several weeks at a time, and for this purpose they should make out written programmes showing the work contemplated to be taught. This was pointed out in the report for 1889, from which we beg leave to quote the following: "In New South Wales teachers are required to keep programmes of the work to be done, and statements of lessons given. We think the practice has several advantages. The necessity for arranging the course of instruction for three or six months beforehand prevents too much time being spent over part of the work, and compels the teacher to weigh the importance of the different portions to be dealt with, so as to assign to each its proper number of lessons. The lesson-books enable the master to judge to some extent of the character of the work done by assistants and pupil-teachers, help the Inspector in forming his judgment on the school, and, where there is a change of teachers, show the new-comer exactly what his class or the several classes have been taught. In many schools in this district, when a change of teachers takes place, the incoming teacher has little or nothing to tell him what the various classes have been taught; whereas, if some such book as the one mentioned were kept, he would easily know where to take up the thread of the teaching."

Examinations by teachers should be held periodically, but these should be only in the work already treated. Inspectors' examination-cards should not be used, as is often done, until the whole ground has been covered. Teachers themselves should frequently make out examination-cards, which should be suitable tests for the work done up to date.

REDUCTION AND PROMOTION OF TEACHERS.—It seems to us a matter of regret that some teachers who are found inefficient in certain schools cannot readily be reduced in the service by giving them a smaller school, in preference to inflicting the severe punishment of dismissal; and also that others, who have shown exceptional merit, cannot with more surety be promoted. A teacher who is unfitted for a large town school might conduct a smaller one in the country in an efficient manner; but, should it be necessary to remove him from the former school, dismissal is practically all that is in the power of the Board. Again, a young, zealous teacher may be almost thrown away at a very small school, yet it is often very difficult for him to secure promotion owing to the present regulations for the appointment of teachers.

THE NEW SYLLABUS.—A new syllabus has been issued, which came into force on the 31st of last December. The most noticeable changes are: that grammar has been made a "class"-subject in all standards in which it is required except Standard IV.; that composition and grammar now count two "pass"-subjects in Standard IV. (formerly grouped as one), while composition without grammar is a "pass"-subject in Standard III., Standard V., and Standard VI.; that drawing and geography have been more clearly defined; that the requirements in drawing have been increased, especially in Standard I. and Standard IV.; that a considerable amount of mathematical geography is now required in Standard IV.; that history has been materially lightened; that more latitude has been given to teachers in the direction of allowing them to classify their pupils for instruction and to group different standards in certain subjects.

We are rather disappointed that nothing has been done in the way of allowing sole teachers of small schools, in which all or nearly all the standards are represented, to omit the class-subject history, as has so often been recommended by Inspectors and others. It seems to us a mistake to require that all the subjects of the syllabus shall be taught at all schools whether small or large, whether in cities or in the heart of the bush. When one teacher has, unaided, to teach all the standards, we think that the time now given to history could be far more profitably employed in teaching reading. If history must be included in the syllabus, we should like to have found merely an historical reader specified for very small schools. Also, the wisdom of increasing the work in some subjects in Standard IV. appears to us rather doubtful. We make these remarks, however, with all diffidence, for the syllabus is yet untried.

We are glad to see that the requirements under the heading "Elements of Agricultural Knowledge" are so clearly defined. As, presumably, so many of the boys attending our public schools will in time to come be engaged in farming pursuits, the proper treatment in the schools of this branch of science should bear good fruit in the near future.

We desire to draw the attention of teachers to the following regulations and requirements especially. With reference to reading it is laid down that the Inspectors "are not to be satisfied with any reading that does not convey to their minds the assurance that the pupil does understand the passage read. Mere utterance of the printed words will not suffice; there must be such intonation and emphasis as are required to express the meaning and spirit of the passage: this must be insisted on, even in the First Standard." Under the subject "Drawing" it is enacted that the pupils in Standard I. must be able to use set-squares and flat rulers, and draw figures with sides of prescribed