

paratory classes will be able to give instruction in musical drill and elementary kindergarten, and at the same time be a skilful manipulator in cutting out shapes and objects with a pair of scissors. I propose, as soon as an opportunity offers itself, to submit a scheme of "cutting out," covering thirty lessons, for the guidance of teachers in the junior departments, as the training of children in "hand-work and eye-work" will be of material help to them in drawing as they proceed through the standard course. In the senior division of the schools, the three chief subjects of the syllabus do not make that progress one ought to expect, considering how important they are to children after leaving school. Reading, writing, and arithmetic are of much greater value to children than all the other subjects of the syllabus, and it is unfortunate that they are so often left in the hands of junior teachers to prepare. This would not be so bad in itself were the junior teachers capable of doing their work efficiently. During the recent examination of the pupil-teachers, I took occasion to inquire as to the amount of instruction in reading each one had received during the year, and three-fourths of those examined had had no instruction whatever. The reasons for teaching children to read or write according to certain principles are altogether disregarded, the younger teachers following the plans of the teachers under whom they themselves were taught, and so school management as an art gives place to a mechanical routine. One hardly wonders why reading in so many instances lacks expression, modulation, and proper emphasis; and I fear this must continue unless more attention is paid to reading by the principal teachers during the training and preparation of their assistants. In writing, progress continues in spite of the inattention that so often characterizes the teaching of this subject. In some schools the pupils are permitted to hold their pens in any way they please, and the seating-positions at the desks are often careless in the extreme. Fortunately, each pupil in the same standard uses the same kind and number of copybook, and the whole class at the same time write a similar copy. There is no special kind of book authorised, but Vere Foster's Palmerston series and Jackson's upright handwriting are mostly in use. Of the latter I wrote favourably a year ago, and, after further experience, it appears to me that where children are taught the vertical handwriting from the preparatory classes their progress is more rapid than under the older methods. Arithmetic is taught on the whole with intelligence, but in some schools text-books are not used, and this tends to the adoption of irregular methods of instruction unless great care and watchfulness are used. In schools where text-books like the "Star Arithmetic," the "Southern Cross," or Goyen's, are adopted, the children usually acquit themselves better in the examination, and I strongly recommend the use of an arithmetic in all schools and for each standard. Mental arithmetic in the upper standards is satisfactory, and its introduction into the syllabus is doing much to quicken the intelligence of the children, and strengthen the groundwork of ordinary arithmetic as now taught. Good average results were obtained in drawing, and I think that fewer failures were recorded than in any other pass-subject. I have not demanded the standard requirements in solid geometry from country schools, as teachers cannot afford to neglect the majority of their standard pupils in order to give special instruction to one or perhaps two pupils. At Hastings, Woodville, Waipawa, Gisborne, and Kaikora, the upper-standard children had made considerable progress in solid geometry, and perhaps other of the larger schools will follow their example now that grammar has been relegated to the list of class-subjects.

I have already alluded to the results gained in class and additional subjects. The three years' science course is not so systematically carried out as one could wish, but the teachers in the majority of schools have many difficulties to cope with, and so long as the pass-subjects are well prepared one is glad to be lenient as to quantity in the less important portion of the standard work if the quality be good. At Makotuku—a bush school—practical surveying is done by the senior boys, and this useful training has lately been extended to the measurement of timber in balk. The senior children in the adjoining school at Ormondville receive special instruction in meteorology and elementary geology, and each day a log is kept by a senior pupil wherein are entered the inside and outside temperature, direction of wind, kind of clouds, and whether rain has fallen since the last entry was made. This plan has been followed for two years or more, with much apparent benefit to the children. It is to be regretted that a rain-gauge cannot be provided for a school of this sort, as the practical training of children to interest themselves in the accumulation of physical facts is truly scientific as a method, and highly beneficial as a course of instruction. Sewing continues to be taught with much success. Under the present regulations either the School Committees or the masters who have charge of schools where the average attendance does not reach seventy-five are required to make their own provision for sewing, it being assumed that lady teachers have charge of schools below that average. The rule, however, was not retrospective, and there are still several schools where the instruction is left solely in the hands of a junior female pupil-teacher. Marks were given by me for sewing in thirty-seven schools, but thirty-two only sent in specimens to the synchronous examination which is held each year at the Education Office by three committees of lady examiners. The reports of the examiners have already been issued, but it may be well to point out in brief the recommendations made by them:—Standards III. and IV.: In Standard IV. "Button-holing is not carefully worked, and more attention should be paid to neatness. Darning and knitting need greater care, and the examiners express the wish 'to see more of this description of work taught.'" Standards II.-V.: In Standard V. "whipping in frill work" does not receive sufficient care, while knitting and darning are still much neglected. Standards I.-VI.: Commendation is given to teachers for having attended to last year's recommendations, but the examiners particularly urge that "whipping in frill work" should be insisted on in the Sixth Standard. Attention is also directed to the fact that no specimen of darning and knitting were sent in by Standard VI. These suggestions and recommendations will no doubt receive from the lady teachers the attention their importance demands; but it is proper to explain on behalf of the lady teachers that knitting is not needed to comply with the standard requirements, and perhaps this will account for so few specimens being sent in to the examination.