

management of the school, one going so far as to assert that in most cases irregularity of attendance is the effect of weak or faulty government. Without endorsing this to the full extent, it may yet be permitted me to recommend any teachers who have much trouble in this direction to review their methods of control, discipline, and general management with a view to the diminishing, if not completely removing this cause of weakness and failure. I believe that all of our teachers are anxious and willing to do anything in reason to bring about an improvement in this respect, and that some have been successful in reducing irregularity to a minimum.

The results of the examination in pass subjects at the twenty-one Board schools are on the whole fairly satisfactory. Seven cases I consider very good, seven have done well, and the remaining seven may be classed as "fair to poor." Of these last schools, several were closed for some time on account of sickness, and two others have now passed into other hands. The aided schools have done as a whole remarkably well. At only one of the aided schools were the results entirely bad, and this has now changed hands.

There has been a slight improvement in the subjects of reading and writing; a slight falling off in drawing and composition; and a considerable improvement in spelling, arithmetic, and geography. Arithmetic, however, continues to show the least satisfactory results of all the pass subjects, and it is a perennial puzzle to account for this apparent weakness, in view of the very large amount of time generally devoted to the subject, and of the fact that some schools under teachers of undoubted ability, and having a long record of successful work, are among the lowest in this respect. Only four of the Board's schools have scored well in arithmetic. The arithmetic cards set for the same standard no doubt differ considerably as regards difficulty from a schoolboy's point of view, and some schools seem to be particularly unfortunate in the lottery; but in the most difficult cards that I have seen there are generally three questions at least that are well within the power of any fairly taught scholar. The papers in Standard V. for this subject seem to have given most trouble this year. In eight Board schools, including all the largest, out of 126 examined in Standard V., as many as forty-five failed to answer a single sum correctly. In the smaller Board schools, and in most of the aided schools, the results in arithmetic were relatively much better, nor is this otherwise than might be expected, since the scholars receive more individual attention than is possible in the larger schools. Neither is the difference to be accounted for by supposing that easier cards are reserved for the smaller schools. My tour of examination is mapped out long before the cards are received, and the sets are used seriatim, irrespective of the size or other conditions of the schools to be examined. It is almost impossible to believe that imperfect teaching is responsible for the majority of these failures, since such well-known, old, and experienced teachers as are at the head of the Havelock, Picton, and Renwick schools are as unfortunate in this respect as any of the others. I am inclined to think that insufficient solitary practice, together with the prevalence of a system of copying from one another during the year, may contribute towards this undesirable result. I seldom find at my inspection visits an arithmetic class at work upon different sets of sums, though they are seated close together, and the dull ones have every temptation and inducement to copy, or obtain help from their cleverer class-mates. If this is the case generally there can be little surprise at numerous failures when the facilities for obtaining assistance are more limited. In order to assist teachers to give more separate exercises in this subject, I am about to distribute amongst the Board schools all the arithmetic cards that have been used in this district during the last four years, and when these are exhausted, by exchanging with one another, the teachers can obtain still further variety. The slight falling off in composition, noted above, was to a great extent due to the very poor attempts in Standard V. to convert a passage of poetry taken from the reading-book into prose. The other pass subjects call for no special remark.

Class and Additional Subjects.—The following table shows generally the amount of success that has attended the treatment of these subjects throughout the district:—

—	Number of Schools examined.	Poor.	Poor to Fair.	Fair to Good.	Good to Very Good.	Very Good to Excellent.
Class subjects—						
Grammar	48	9	19	19	1	...
History	47	9	16	19	3	...
Science and object lessons ...	50	16	20	14	...	...
Mental arithmetic	51	9	27	8	7	...
Geography (Standard II. only) ...	40	2	5	11	16	6
Additional subjects—						
Recitation	52	1	22	22	7	...
Drill	8	2	1	3	2	...
Singing	9	1	2	4	2	...
Needlework	34	1	3	20	10	...
Comprehension	52	1	13	23	15	...

Grammar continues to be the most disappointing of these groups of subjects, and the very careless manner in which the work is done by the majority of scholars is, I believe, mainly due to their knowing that it is not necessary for a "pass." In most cases there is a sprinkling of good papers in each class, showing that the subject has not been neglected by the teacher, but the average marks of the class are greatly reduced by the inferior work of the careless scholars. The following specimens, taken from the grammar papers of one of the largest schools, will give some idea of the manner in which the subject is too generally treated. The errors, however, were few compared with the omissions, many scholars giving nothing but the "parts of speech," or fourth-