

drawing itself, the freehand, which is nearly always examined by special tests done during the Inspector's visit, is distinctly good, and not rarely excellent. Of the other branches we cannot speak so favourably. The plane geometry and a certain amount of scale drawing are in most instances presented by the boys; the model drawing and projections are very commonly avoided.

Of the value of geography as an educational instrument we have a high opinion. There has been no lack of industry among teachers in dealing with the subject, and in general the work prescribed by the syllabus is well done, excepting only the feature of physical geography, which often shows much mental confusion. In Standard IV. it would be well to make the limits of the programme more definite, and in Standards V. and VI. something might be done to lessen the inducement to rely upon little tags of information committed to memory from text-books or notes. If the subject were wholly a class-subject an improvement in the programme and in the method of treatment could easily be made; in point of efficiency, under such conditions, we should probably be able to keep the subject on a reasonably good footing more readily than any other of the group.

Among additional subjects, in which the regulations are understood to permit to schools a certain option, poetry and comprehension of reading-lessons have been regarded as essential in all. In sewing all but the very smallest schools are provided for. The needlework is generally good, but where the number of girls is large the amount of "fixing" to be done has hitherto imposed a heavy burden on the shoulders of the female teachers. In drill, which, by the way, the Act makes compulsory for all boys, the town and suburban schools have been immensely benefited by the services of members of the Permanent Defence Force, kindly granted by the authorities, services that pupils and teachers keenly appreciate, with good reason. But this very improvement effected in the more favoured neighbourhood has probably tended to depress the interest taken in the matter in other places, where teachers unfamiliar with the newer drill have naturally felt discouraged from aiming at merit on obsolete lines.

Poetry is represented in 197 of the schools examined, drill in 123, singing in 148, sewing in 186, and comprehension of reading-lessons in 200.

In the preparatory departments of the schools there were 845 children over eight years of age on the date of examination. The reasons given for not presenting these children in the First Standard were generally approved. On the question of the classification in the different sections of the schools during a number of years the following table, here repeated with the necessary additions, is valuable and interesting, the steady persistence of certain tendencies being a very striking feature.

STATISTICS OF CLASSIFICATION.

—	Standard IV. and upwards.	Standards I., II., and III.	Preparatory Division.	Mean of Average Age, Standards I. to VI.
				Yrs. mos.
1888	19.3	45.9	34.7	11 8
1889	20.4	44.6	35.0	11 8
1890	22.4	44.8	32.3	11 8
1891	24.4	44.3	31.3	11 7
1892	26.1	43.9	30.0	11 6
1893	28.2	42.3	29.5	11 6
1894	30.1	41.2	28.7	11 5
1895	31.4	40.8	27.8	11 4
1896	32.3	40.1	27.6	11 4
1897	33.0	39.0	28.0	11 3

In the appendices to the report will be found the usual statistical details of examinations for all the schools of the district.

We have, &c.,

L. B. WOOD, M.A.,
W. J. ANDERSON, LL.D.,
THOS. RITCHIE, B.A., } Inspectors.

The Chairman, North Canterbury Board of Education.

APPENDIX.

I.—PASS-SUBJECTS: NUMBERS.

Classes.	Presented.	Examined in Standards.	Passed.	Schools presenting.	Average Age of those that passed.
					Yrs. mos.
Above Standard VI.	298	202	...	80	...
Standard VI.	1,435	1,391	1,167	169	13 9
" V.	2,202	2,096	1,568	182	12 11
" IV.	3,003	2,878	2,121	189	12 0
" III.	3,164	3,059	2,461	190	10 10
" II.	2,635	2,571	2,393	188	9 8
" I.	2,398	2,344	2,293	190	8 6
Preparatory	5,893	5,273	...	199	...
Totals for 1897	21,028	19,814	12,003	200	11 3*
Totals for 1896	21,318	19,957	12,212	190	11 4*

* Mean of average age.