

prehension of the meaning of the expression "the approximately stable direction of the earth's axis," is manifested either by scholars or pupil-teachers. All who answered the question at all confined themselves to the inclination of the earth's axis to the plane of its orbit, and know (or say) nothing about the equally or more important fact of its constant parallelism.

Class and Additional Subjects.—A new form of report upon these subjects has been introduced by the department. The degrees of proficiency are henceforth to be indicated by the expressions, "Excellent," "good," "satisfactory," "fair," "moderate," and "inferior." In the following summary of class and additional subjects the same nomenclature has been adopted, but each subject is shown separately :—

	Number of Classes examined.	Inferior.	Moderate.	Fair.	Satisfactory.	Good.	Excellent.
Class subjects—							
Grammar	53	4	16	10	13	5	5
History	50	...	10	23	10	4	3
Geography (Standard II.) ...	31	...	2	1	11	5	12
Science and object-lessons ...	52	4	15	17	13	2	1
Mental arithmetic	47	9	19	18	1	...	...
Additional subjects—							
Recitation	56	...	15	19	15	4	3
Drill	8	...	...	4	1	3	...
Singing	7	...	1	3	1	...	2
Needlework	38	...	4	2	15	2	15
Comprehension	56	...	6	13	27	5	5

The whole of the Board schools, and most of the aided schools, have made a praiseworthy but fruitless attempt to grapple with all the class and some of the additional subjects. The attempt on the part of teachers of small schools is praiseworthy, because it manifests an earnest desire to attempt to comply with the inexorable demands of an exorbitant syllabus; and, as far as some of the class-subjects are concerned, in most cases it may fairly be described as fruitless, since little or no lasting benefit is conferred upon the recipients of such instruction. As illustrating the miserable results of the teaching of the class-subjects, I gave last year some specimens of grammar (?) papers, and, though the treatment of that subject was much better this year, many similar cases might have been quoted. I now subjoin a few specimens of answers to history questions, which will show better than I could describe the hopeless confusion that must exist in the minds of the scholars as to some of the "leading events," &c., dealt with. (1.) Conquest of Canada—"Admiral Nelson led an army and defeated the French at the Battle of Quebec." (2.) First Parliament—"King Edward was wanted to go to the Catholic Church, and was wanted to go to the Scotch Church, and he went to the English Church, and thirteen Welshmen had laid sixty barrels to blow up the house with the king in it." (3.) Battle of Hastings—"When Henry died the French king was called upon to do homage for Henry. They met at Stirling Bridge, and were defeated." (4.) "Magna Charta, or Simon de Montfort's Parliament, was signed in 1215. It was fought at Wakefield Green, when King Richard was struck down with a dagger by the Lord Mare. But Henry escaped, and was finally captured and put to death." (5.) "Battle of Bannockburn was fought in 1415. It was defeated, and King John was crowned King of England; he led the Scotch army." (6.) "Magna Charta was fought in 1215. It was fought between the English nations on the west and the Mohandioms, in which the (?) bound himself up to the door"!!! (7.) Simon de Montfort's Parliament was fought between the French and the English in 1265." (8.) (Standard V.) "Christopher Columbus was a Roman General who discovered the New World." It can scarcely be doubted that as far as these scholars are concerned they would have been more profitably employed in the playground during the time occupied in teaching "history."

The fact that object-lessons (in Standards I., II., and III.) and elementary science (in Standards IV., V., and VI.) are considered as a single subject disguises to some extent the shortcomings of the latter. Excepting at the largest schools, the marks awarded for object-lessons frequently cause the report for the combined subjects to be much more favourable than the work in the upper standards alone would justify.

Under the English education system the teachers have long since been allowed to choose two out of a list of subjects corresponding to our class-subjects, and an alteration in this direction has been frequently recommended by myself and others. I notice that the New Zealand Institute of Teachers has recently resolved to press upon the Government the necessity for some such change. I believe that nothing but good would result were the alteration made. Much valuable time at present wasted (at least in small schools) in the vain attempt to cope with the entire syllabus would be saved and profitably applied to the more thorough teaching of the essential subjects. Moreover, each teacher, in choosing his optional subjects, will naturally select those for which he has a decided predilection, and is consequently most qualified to teach; and, having made his selection, he will certainly make every effort to obtain such success as would justify his choice.

Irregular attendance still continues to give trouble, in spite of—or we might almost say, in consequence of—the School Attendance Act. This last attempt to "tinker" with the Education Act has rather increased than diminished the irregularity it was supposed to prevent, since it almost authorises a certain number of absences every week; and, moreover, allows parents to keep