

Speaking generally, the work of our schools has been satisfactorily progressive: we have our strong subjects, and subjects which cannot exactly be described by any such term; still, I am thoroughly satisfied we have attained a good average standard of the whole. The work, too, is now fairly uniform throughout the district. Looking over the works from which Table 1 is compiled, I find that spelling ranks foremost, arithmetic next, with reading, writing, drawing, geography, and composition following in order of merit. Of the latter subjects, I wish to say a few words. Reading is one of the more important subjects with which we have to deal, and few pupils actually fail in it; yet I seldom listen to a really intelligent reader during the course of my examinations. The intonation and emphasis are not sufficient to impress one with the belief that the sense of the passage read is properly appreciated. The fact is our children have not sufficient matter to read, they know their reading-books by heart, and the subject of the lesson has no interest for them. I hope to see some improvement, at least for a time, after the introduction of the Imperial Readers. Of writing, previous remarks still hold good. The children appear to leave school before getting sufficiently advanced in the vertical style: the ultimate formation of a good hand is thus a matter of chance. In drawing, the pupils of several of our schools have met with much success in the examinations for first grade, conducted by the Wellington Technical School. It is a matter for some regret that more of our teachers have not entered their pupils for this examination. Plain books are now in almost general use, and I find the pupils make excellent progress in them, as compared with the work in the printed books. A supply of charts to all schools would materially assist the teaching of this subject.

Geography is thoroughly taught in but few schools. In most cases too little attention is devoted to the relative positions of places; and, although the pupils may be able to point out a place on the map, yet they signally fail when asked to describe its position. As pointed out before, all answers, whether written or oral, should be given in complete sentences. Were this done, the descriptive powers of the children would be enlarged. I have noticed the same defect, to a greater or less extent, throughout all school-work. Often a child answers in a single word—correct, it may be—but certainly not sufficient to show that the child knows really anything about the subject. In this way, pupils of Standard III. often fail to discriminate between a country and its capital: they know the two names go together, but which is which, is, so far as they are concerned, quite immaterial. It shows all the same how the children have been taught. Teachers have the remedy in their own hands, for only by sound teaching, and insisting on answers being given in complete sentences, can really intelligent work be secured. Composition would also derive considerable benefit from the above: children are often at a loss in expressing themselves in their own words when reproducing a short story. Paraphrasing is still poorly done, and although sentences are usually well corrected, the reasons given are very indifferent. Grammar does not receive the attention it deserves. I trust, however, that the new regulations will affect a vast improvement in this respect.

Recitation cannot be said to be deserving of special praise, too often it degenerates into mere repetition.

The needlework is a very satisfactory feature in our schoolwork. Scarcely a girl failed to do the prescribed work, the neatness and cleanliness of the specimens being deserving of commendation.

Drill is carried on, where male teachers are employed, in a satisfactory manner up to the present time. Mainly owing to the smallness of four schools, no school cadet corps have been formed in our districts; at the same time, physical drill is well carried out at the Cobden School.

The subject of home lessons has received some attention from the Board during the year, and a resolution was passed to the effect that only such home lessons as are consistent with efficiency are to be given in future. As in many other things, objection is not taken to their use in moderation, but to their abuse. Several of our schools have done and are still doing good work without making use of home lessons at all. In our small schools, where much individual attention can be given, I do not consider them to be at all necessary. In other schools sufficient work to occupy the attention of an average child for half an hour is, I consider, quite enough. I freely stated my views on this subject to teachers during the recent examinations, and without wishing in any way to coerce them in the matter, I still think they will find it inadvisable to give any written work whatsoever for home lessons. Teachers should always bear in mind that the chief use of home lessons should be to fix in the minds of their pupils lessons which have been already explained in school. In the future I wish every teacher to keep a record of home work.

Roman Catholic Schools.

Reports, &c., were prepared and furnished to these schools in every respect similar to those supplied to schools directly under the Board.

Classes.					Presented.	Examined in Standards.	Passed.
Above Standard VI.	...	...	...	...	19	...	...
Standard VI. . .	...	...	...	...	17	17	15
" V. . .	...	...	...	...	20	20	19
" IV. . .	...	...	...	...	35	33	28
" III. . .	...	...	...	...	39	36	35
" II. . .	...	...	...	...	24	23	23
" I. . .	...	...	...	...	11	10	10
Preparatory . . .	...	...	...	...	104	...	...
Totals . . .	...	...	...	...	269	139	130

I have, &c.,

WILLIAM L. F. FETCH, M.A., Inspector.

The Chairman, Grey Education Board, Greymouth.