

little cultivated. I do not think that a much better training in singing can be secured unless more time is available for the teaching of it. At present the time needed cannot be found. Teachers would get much help in dealing with this subject from Curwen's "Code Tests in Singing," which costs a few pence. It is a pity that the song-books in use by classes do not show the melodies in both notations. Outside infant departments, singing is rarely heard, except when the singing-lesson is due. Its effect in brightening school life, and in affording a welcome relief from severer studies, is little appreciated in our schools.

The new regulations of January, 1900, have made no change in the too heavy course of study now prescribed for the public schools. A decided lightening of it must be made before we can look for any great improvement in such subjects as science, grammar, geography, and singing. There is, I am happy to say, much likelihood of such relief being afforded soon.

By the flaccid discipline, to which reference has been made above, I mean the want of a sufficiently strong hold on the inclinations and application of the pupils. The exercise of this control is a refined point in discipline, but it is one of the first importance. This failing is partly traceable to the pupil-teacher system, which, in spite of the willing and worthy service most pupil-teachers render, has inevitable disadvantages in this and other directions. In the broader and more common sense of the term, the discipline of the schools is almost uniformly satisfactory, and is often good, and the order is nearly always good.

In many schools daily home-written exercises are still prescribed. These might very well be confined to one composition exercise a week. On the average the writing of work done at home is distinctly below the level of similar work done in school. There is no need for setting arithmetic exercises as home-work, and I should be glad to see the practice abolished. Home preparation can best deal with spelling, the study of the reading-lesson, recitation, geography, and the preparation of matter for on-coming composition exercises. I should like to see more specimens of the work done in school entered in exercise-books in such subjects as dictation and spelling, explanation of difficult words and phrases, composition, &c.

The need of preparation by teachers for the smart, economical, and intelligent handling of lessons has been referred to above. More system in dealing with this would save them a great deal of time and trouble. Suitable series of subjects for composition exercises could easily be made out, that with occasional revisal or enlargement would serve for years. Of equal and permanent service would be a series of simple exercises on the spelling of possessive cases, irregular plurals, and such words as "there," "their," "to," "too," "were," "where," &c., in all of which even senior pupils continue to make blunders. If entered in a note-book, these exercises could be dictated by a pupil or read out by the teacher frequently in the course of the year, and the systematic practice in dealing with such pitfalls could not fail to be beneficial. The spelling of the names of familiar objects and of things connected with the household, the garden, and every-day life, words which may not occur in ordinary reading-books, might well be taught from lists entered in a note-book for this purpose. Such words as "bouquet," "onion," "mattress," "rhubarb," "mignonette," "mantelpiece," "chandelier," and many more might be so treated.

In teaching composition similar arrangements of the highest utility could be easily made. In a MS. book could be entered under suitable headings numerous good instances, gathered from the work of the pupils, of such matters as—(a) Improper division of sentences, (b) mistakes in the syntax of agreement, (c) mistakes in the syntax of government, (d) errors in the reference of pronouns, (e) confusion of statement, (f) sprawling sentences surcharged with "and," "as," "so." In this way a teacher could soon accumulate splendid material for special detailed lessons on any of these points. Such full and detailed study of each type of mistake or defect would be vastly more profitable than the disconnected and casual notice taken of them during the correction of the varied errors that crop up in an ordinary composition exercise. Sets of sentences suitable for parsing and for analysis at the various stages of progress, and sets of short sentences fitted for combination into longer ones or for transformations, might also be got ready in a permanent form for use in school, either by entering them in a note-book or by having them marked off in a helpful text-book.

Systematic preparations of the kinds just described would not only be of great service in making the teaching more efficient, but would economize the teacher's time, and in the end save him a great deal of trouble. When I have inquired for evidence of preparation of this sort I have very rarely found anything of the kind, and I believe that many teachers pick out passages for parsing, for analysis, and so on, almost at random and on the spur of the moment. So long as this continues, a very considerable leakage of efficiency must result.

Though, as I think, many of our teachers are justly liable to the strictures here passed, the Inspectors can yet say, with Mr. Mulgan, that a great majority of the teachers in the service of the Board are hardworking and capable, and are animated by an earnest desire to do justice to the positions they fill, and faithfully to discharge their responsible and onerous duties.

I have, &c.,

The Secretary, Auckland Education Board.

D. PETRIE, M.A., Chief Inspector.

TARANAKI.

SIR,—

Board of Education, New Plymouth, 5th April, 1901.

I have the honour to submit my report for the year ending 31st December, 1900.

At the close of the year sixty-five schools were open, all of which, with the exception of the newly opened schools at Tahora and Pohokura, were examined.