

small one at that, of more intelligent training. Free-arm drawing cannot be satisfactorily introduced unless at some expense for appliances; the slates which are used, and by some teachers used well, being only a makeshift substitute. Brushwork in many of the schools is displacing drawing, and the progress has been very satisfactory. Grammar as at present prescribed is not, and never will be, satisfactory. This seems rather a sweeping statement, but throughout the colony the Inspectors report on it unfavourably. Indeed, there is little in it to appeal to the children, and the educational results are not commensurate with the labour expended. Good mental training could be obtained by teaching much of the grammar as incidental to composition, and formal grammar should be confined to what will lead to an intelligent apprehension of the synthesis of the sentence. In Standard III. I have required pupils to begin the study of grammar with the study of an easy sentence and its component parts, to know the meaning of a clause and a sentence, and then to proceed to the work of the syllabus. In Standard IV. children learn quite enough if they know the parts of speech, and that phrases and clauses may be equivalent to the parts of speech, and perform the same functions. Much of the Standard V. grammar is quite unnecessary. Strong and weak verbs, subtleties of conjugation, and so on, are I consider mere waste of time for primary school pupils, and the work of Standards V. and VI. might well be confined to analysis and a little parsing. Object-lessons continue to improve, and often receive very skilful treatment. I have previously mentioned how unsuitable are some so-called object-lesson books, and I am pleased to see that they have almost disappeared as guides to method. I have no hesitation in recommending Garlick and Dexter's "Object-lessons in Science" for Standards I. to III., which I consider the best book for method of treatment. Murché's "Object-lessons in Science" for Standards I. to VI. also are good books. The most favoured subject for science is agricultural knowledge, which is capable of ready illustration by experiment without much expense, and is valuable as a training in observation and reasoning. The general science is not satisfactory, as I have reported *ad nauseam*. When giving a syllabus of the work undertaken in science, teachers will be required to hand in also a list of the experiments performed, and a large proportion of the questions will be on these. Handwork I have touched upon above. I am pleased with the rapid strides it has made. In a number of schools recognition under the Manual and Technical Instruction Act has been asked for. In many others the work is being carried on without such recognition, and many of the teachers have provided the necessities for the work out of their own earnings. Last year a grant was given by the Department for the instruction of teachers in the work for school classes, as indicated by the regulations under the Manual and Technical Instruction Act, and when classes were established I was more than gratified at the interest taken in the work, about one-half of the teachers of the district being enrolled. When one considers that it is quite impossible for a large number in the outlying districts to be present the attendance is more than satisfactory. A word of recognition is specially due to the teachers from the country, some of whom come long distances and spend a long and trying day, leaving home early and getting home late, and being fully occupied from the time they reach town to the time they leave, for the classes are held in both the morning and the afternoon. At the time of writing the classes have been reopened and are being even better attended. The examinations at the end of each term were very satisfactory, and certificates were issued on the results. I wish also to place on record my appreciation of the efforts of the instructors, for whose time, zeal, and intelligence any remuneration the Board is able to give them is an inadequate return.

As regards discipline, I classify the schools as follows: Good to excellent, 54; satisfactory, 5; fair, 5; moderate, 1.

Every year the work of the district is becoming heavier. Organization, the classes established for the instruction of teachers, the opening of new schools, the greater distances to be travelled, and the work entailed under the Manual and Technical Instruction Act, all involve so great an increase in the work, both "in the field" and in the office, that I have been unable to cover the ground to my own satisfaction.

I have, &c.,

W. E. SPENCER, M.A., B.Sc.,

Inspector of Schools.

The Chairman, Taranaki Education Board.

WANGANUI.

SIR,—

Education Board's Office, Wanganui, 1st March, 1902.

We have the honour to submit our annual report on the state of education in this district.

I. *General*.—The number of schools in this district continues steadily to increase. Last year we reported that ten new schools had been added to our lists; this year we close with 151, an increase of seven on last year's total. Seventeen schools in two years significantly mark the prosperity and growth within our bounds, and as clearly indicate the increasing demands made on our energy and our time. This latter fact your Board has generously acknowledged. Scattered as our schools undoubtedly are, following as they do our main river-courses or cautiously feeling their way in towards the feet of the distant Ruahines, remote from railways, linked in the back blocks by bush roads, and separated in many instances by considerable distances, it is impossible for us to both inspect and examine them all. One hundred and fourteen were inspected by us this last year, and 141 were examined. This latter number (which does not include four Roman Catholic schools) exceeds that of any former year by eleven. As showing how rapidly our work is increasing, we give the schools examined for each of the last seven years: 1895, 106; 1896, 114; 1897, 116; 1898, 125; 1899, 129; 1900, 129; 1901, 141. As we have stated, and as all indications show, the total will mount with each incoming year.