

out in my last report, the comprehension of the reading-matter and the use of words in the lessons leave much to be desired. In the upper classes I should like to see all the pupils make preparatory study of the lesson for the day, and the teacher testing the study so made. There seems no reason why the elder pupils should not learn to intelligently use a dictionary ; yet how often do we find pupils without one. Teachers should remember that they are training their pupils how to read and comprehend any book they may meet with later in life.

Spelling is generally well taught.

Writing shows improvement in many schools, but there are still to be found teachers who quite undervalue the proper way of holding the pen, and appear to pay little or no attention to posture. Copy-book writing has almost crowded out exercise-book work. When home-work was more extensively given, we had more exercise-work. I am not urging that written work should be given for home lessons, but that more exercise-work should be given during the school hours. Once more I should like to point out that I disapprove of infants writing words with hard elements after being a few weeks at school. Where this is done there is lack of method.

Composition is the weakest of the English subjects, though there is improvement in the work of some of the classes. Oral work needs considerable attention right through the school course. There is an idea in the minds of some teachers that grammar need not be taught, but a study of the syllabus should quickly disabuse their minds on that point. We have done with a great deal of formal grammar, but wherever it is necessary for the purpose of training children in the use of their mother-tongue, there it must be taught. Teachers are expected to study carefully the directions and examples given in the syllabus.

Generally speaking, the work in geography was well done. A full course of work was taken in nearly all schools. There is, however, a danger of the teacher attempting too much. He must be guided by the progress of his pupils ; there must be no hurry, no rush. There was no subject of the syllabus which the teachers entered into more heartily than this.

In nature-study the work varied considerably. Where teachers had their hearts in the work it was done splendidly. In many schools very fine collections have been made by the pupils, and I should like to see the Board encourage this kind of work by providing suitable cupboards for the specimens, which are of all kinds. I have nothing but praise for those teachers who, though labouring under many disadvantages, not the least of which was the very wet and stormy season, have succeeded in interesting their pupils in gardening.

While not wishing to undervalue the physical-instruction lessons given weekly, I think it would be a valuable addition if a few minutes were given each day to simple breathing exercises. The frequent use of singing as a change from the more wearisome of school studies would be advantageous.

I am pleased to be able to report that my instructions given to teachers throughout the year have been faithfully carried out.

The Chairman, Grey Education Board.

I have, &c.,
H. SMITH, Inspector.

WESTLAND.

SIR,— Education Board Office, Hokitika, 13th February, 1906.

I have the honour to present a general report on the working of the schools of the district for the year 1905. The usual tables attached to the report embody information with reference to the examination of thirty-three public schools and five Catholic schools. Separate reports have been presented relating to the secondary class of the Hokitika District High School, pupil-teachers, the candidates for scholarships, two classes in woodwork, and four classes in cookery.

The following table presents information relating to the annual examinations :—

Classes.						Number on Roll.	Present at Inspector's Annual Visit.	Average Age of Pupils in each Class.
								Yrs. mos.
Standard VII	...	...	...	...	...	49	45	15 6
" VI	...	...	...	...	...	75	75	13 10
" V	...	...	...	...	...	87	86	12 7
" IV	...	...	...	...	...	115	114	12 2
" III	...	...	...	...	...	94	93	11 2
" II	...	...	...	...	...	110	110	9 7
" I	...	...	...	...	...	118	117	9 1
Preparatory	...	...	...	...	...	356	346	7 4
Totals	...	...	...	...	...	1,004	986	11 5*

* Mean of average age.

To the information supplied by the above table may be added the statement that the number of pupils of the preparatory class over eight years of age is seventy-four and that the number in standards presented in a lower class in arithmetic is nineteen.