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EDUCATION:
REPORTS OF INSPECTORS OF SCHOOLS.

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Presented to both Houses of the General Assembly by Command of His Excellency.

AUCKLAND.

SIR,— Education Board, Auckland, 16th March, 1906.

I have the honour to submit a general report on the schools of the Auckland District for the year 1905.

At the close of the year there were in operation 442 schools, of which seventy-two were half-time schools. Since the close of last year the number of schools has increased by fifteen. The public schools that were inspected numbered 400; in the case of half-time schools only one of the grouped schools was visited for inspection. The number of public schools examined during the year was 421. As in recent years, the Mokau School was inspected and examined by the Inspectors of the Taranaki Education Board. All the examinations and the work of the schools throughout the year were conducted under the new syllabus.

In addition to the above, the twenty-three Roman Catholic schools were examined, and seventeen of them were inspected. The Parnell Orphan Home School was also examined.

The following table shows in summary the examination statistics of the public schools for the year:—

SUMMARY OF RESULTS FOR THE WHOLE DISTRICT.

Classes.	Number on Roll.	Present at Inspector's Annual Visit.	Average Age of Pupils in each Class.
			Yrs. mos.
Standard VII	203	150	14 4
" VI	2,050	2,015	13 7
" V	2,948	2,851	12 7
" IV	3,424	3,334	12 2
" III	3,767	3,651	11 4
" II	3,672	3,535	10 4
" I	3,610	3,504	9 2
Preparatory	11,939	10,979	...
Totals	31,613	30,019	11 11*

* Mean of average age.

The Roman Catholic schools had a roll-number of 1,813, and 1,743 were present at the annual visit. At the Parnell Orphan Home the roll number was eighty, and all the pupils were present at the annual visit.

At the public schools 1,512 pupils gained certificates of proficiency, and 171 gained certificates of competency in Standard VI. At the Roman Catholic schools seventy-one certificates of proficiency were gained, and sixteen certificates of competency.

The roll-number at the public schools shows for the year the unusually large increase of 1,377, and the number present at the annual visit increased by 1,792.

The promotions from class to class have in nearly all schools been determined by the head teachers, and the classification has been made for the most part with satisfactory care and discretion. In a few cases the Inspectors have felt that it may be necessary to modify the head teacher's classification, in accordance with the results of the Inspector's next examination of the schools, under clause 10 of the regulations. With one or two exceptions, the schools here referred to are small ones.

Promotions of pupils have been very rarely made except immediately after the annual visit, and this practice is likely to obtain for the future. In determining promotions from class to class head teachers need, in many cases, to insist more strenuously on satisfactory facility in reading the various books into which those promoted are to be advanced. Unless these books can be read with considerable readiness and the matter be fairly understood, the work taken up on promotion cannot be satisfactorily utilised as a means of intelligent training, but must remain an unsatisfying or even a depressing grind. This is a matter of no small importance, and I would earnestly invite all head teachers to give it serious consideration. Pronouced backwardness in composition and arithmetic should in general be considered a bar to promotion, though decided weakness in any single subject other than reading need not be so regarded. Under the present regulations the passing of standards has been abolished in all classes below Standard VI. In certain circumstances certificates of competency can be gained for any lower standard. These have been awarded on the head teacher's classification of pupils. The certificate of proficiency is practically the equivalent of the former pass certificate for Standard VI. The level of attainments required for gaining this certificate has proved much lower than was desirable; in some cases, indeed, pupils who failed to qualify for the lower certificate of competency for Standard VI could not be prevented from gaining a certificate of proficiency. In the course of the year the standard required for gaining the latter was very properly raised. It was not, however, deemed advisable to introduce the application of this higher standard except at the beginning of a year, and, in accordance with the option allowed by the amended regulation, the Board wisely directed that the change should be brought into force at the beginning of 1906.

The examination schedules now in use show the classification of pupils according to standards, but do not show how head teachers propose to deal with the promotion of their pupils. A separate column to show this might well have been provided, though it may quite well be shown in the column for head teacher's remarks. The Inspectors would like all head teachers to indicate definitely for each pupil in each class, whether he is "promoted," "conditionally promoted," or "not promoted." The initial letters of these words would form a sufficient entry. By "conditional promotions" I mean cases where somewhat backward pupils are promoted, on the distinct understanding that they will earnestly apply themselves to make good their shortcomings, failing which they will be put back after sufficient trial.

Head-teachers need to realise that, under the new examination arrangements, the efficiency of their schools will be more and more definitely indicated by the work done by their Standard VI pupils. The promotions in all classes are now placed in their hands, and as their control is practically untrammelled, no pupil should get into a higher class, and especially into the Standard VI class, unless the head teacher considers him competent to undertake the work with an assured prospect of making satisfactory headway. Under these circumstances the public and the Inspectors may justly look for a high level of proficiency in the work of the Standard VI class. This class is, moreover, the only one the individual pupils of which undergo a full and careful examination, and thus have their attainments gauged with considerable thoroughness and accuracy. I dwell on this, not to encourage head teachers to give a disproportionate share of time and attention to the Standard VI class, to do which there may sometimes be a very real temptation, but to emphasise the paramount importance of exercising a due discretion in making promotions throughout the lower classes. Unmerited promotions at any stage will most probably involve comparative failure in the Standard VI class, and may in general be justly inferred from that fact.

Those concerned in the work of elementary education have now had some considerable experience of the working of the new syllabus. There exists among teachers a very general feeling that it is still overloaded, but on this point it would be premature to express any decided opinion. For part of the year it was in many cases impossible to get class-books suited to the new courses of study, more especially in the subjects of arithmetic, geography, and history; this difficulty has doubtless helped to foster the impression that the syllabus may prove too heavy.

The Education Department might, with great advantage to teachers and Inspectors, have afforded them more definite guidance in dealing with such subjects as nature-study and the various branches of handwork that are so ardently recommended as additional means of educative training. Suggestive courses in nature-study suited to the needs of country schools and also of town schools, and similar courses in stick-laying, brick-building, paper-folding, carton-work, and brush drawing, would have been both welcome and helpful, and might well have been prepared and issued by the Department, whose resources can readily command the services of experts in these subjects. It is easy to prescribe in a syllabus the teaching of a definite course of nature-study, but it is a difficult and onerous task for teachers, who have so many other calls on their time and thought, to do this satisfactorily in a short time. In a land where teachers move from school to school, and from one type of school to another

so frequently as in New Zealand, definite help and guidance from the Central Department in these studies would be of high value, and I trust it will yet be made available.

In most of the Australian States an education journal or gazette is issued by the Department of Education, in which helpful and suggestive papers on many subjects of interest to teachers are published. Something of the same nature might, I think, be undertaken by our Central Department with no small advantage to the cause of education. It is true that the administration of elementary education is much more centralised in the Commonwealth than it is with us, but this difference does not seriously affect the matter under consideration.

During 1905 the public schools have in the main fully maintained the satisfactory level of efficiency reached in the last few years. In the large schools, with some few exceptions partly arising from unfavourable conditions of a permanent nature, sound work and satisfactory progress continue to be the rule, and the same can be affirmed of the vast majority of the schools with a staff of two or more teachers. The sole-teacher schools, though necessarily placed in less favourable circumstances, are in general satisfactorily taught, and a very considerable number of them are highly efficient. As the Inspectors have this year taken charge of new districts, they have had a good opportunity of recognising any general advance that may have been made since they were last conversant with the work of the schools again placed under their supervision. Mr. Grierson has thus renewed his acquaintance with the schools of the northern district, long reckoned a rather backward one in educational efficiency; and it is gratifying to find him able to point to a marked general advance in the work of the schools during the six years that he has been employed elsewhere. Bearing in mind the decidedly unfavourable conditions under which many of the schools are taught, he "cannot but feel admiration for the results achieved by the large majority of the teachers in the backblocks of our 'Never-never Land.'" The like praise can, doubtless, be truly given to a large number of the outlying schools in the other districts. The improvement noted by Mr. Grierson reflects great credit on the teachers of the far north, and on Mr. Purdie, who has worked earnestly among them for some years past.

The wider course of reading now used in the lower classes of nearly all our schools has greatly improved the readiness and fluency with which new lessons are dealt with, and has made the teaching of reading a more engaging exercise for both teachers and pupils. In a considerable number of schools of all grades I this year heard most or all of the standard classes read from detached pages of books not previously seen, but well within the range of their knowledge, and I was agreeably surprised by the fluency and accuracy of the pupils' performance. Some years ago the proposal to considerably enlarge the course of reading in the lower classes by using additional appropriate Readers was regarded with no small alarm by a large body of teachers, but few now fail to recognise the great benefit that has accrued from this policy, and some have desired authority to use a larger number of reading-books than appeared in the last list authorised by the Board.

In the Sixth Standard class in all schools the pupils have had to read passages from books not previously read, and the marks given were awarded on this test. Only a comparatively small number of pupils did poorly, the majority did satisfactorily, and a good many, in all classes of schools, read well. In the schools of the northern district Mr. Grierson reports that he "was well satisfied with the reading by Standard VI of previously unseen passages." Mr. Mulgan's experience was less favourable. Writing of the schools of the eastern district, he says, "In very few schools are pupils of the upper classes able to read with feeling and intelligence. This applies more especially to the previously unseen test in Standard VI, where ability to give a fluent and expressive rendering of the passage selected was very seldom seen. A 'pass' in this subject unfortunately does not in any degree depend on a knowledge of the meaning of the passage read, as tested by oral and written questions; hence the necessity of insisting on something more than the mere mechanical utterance of sounds. The main purpose of teaching reading is to enable pupils when they have left school to master the contents of written matter for their own information, and our chief efforts should be directed to this end." He suggests, further, that previously unseen passages should be used to test the reading of all classes, and points out that an examination of this nature would greatly tend "to discourage working up the class readers against the day of the annual visit." My own experiment, mentioned above, shows that there need be no difficulty in using a test of this kind in some or even all of the classes, at any rate in the smaller schools, and I believe it is quite practicable even in the largest. I would add that head teachers might well use the same plan at their later periodical examinations.

"In the lower classes," Mr. Goodwin (south central district) says, "the meaning of the language of the reading lessons is well understood," and this is true of the schools generally. It is less satisfactory in classes Standard IV to Standard VI, though in a considerable number it is well taught. Still, the comprehension of the language of all reading-lessons in the higher classes calls for more earnest attention from both teachers and pupils. Faithful preparatory study needs especially to be insisted on and to be tested daily, and pupils should be encouraged to ask their teachers for elucidation of their difficulties before the reading of a lesson is begun. In small schools some time might quite well be allowed for studying the language and thought of reading-lessons within school hours, provided the time is properly used.

The teaching of reading-lessons, it must be frankly allowed, is often a much more dismal and uninteresting business than it should be made. What interest can possibly attach to the "simultaneous reading" that has sometimes to be resorted to where undeserving pupils have been promoted into books they are unable to read? If the children were able to think the thoughts, as well as to utter the words, of the writer, all this might be easily changed, but really sound classification is an essential prerequisite. A skilful teacher of reading manages to invest the lessons with life and interest, and every teacher should resolutely strive to achieve this. Changes of reading-books every three or four years, and the use in each class of a variety of books sufficient to make the rereading of all but one short well-graded work unnecessary, would greatly help to make class-reading bright and stimulating. From

this point of view, the hostility of the average parent, acquiesced in by the Board, to reasonably frequent changes in the Readers that may be used in the public schools is greatly to be deplored. The cause of this hostility to a desirable and helpful change and variety is obviously the expense it entails on the heads of families. The time seems to have come when an effort should be made to lessen this expense. As we compel all parents to send their children to school with high regularity, and incidentally compel them to buy all needful school-books, is it unreasonable to ask that these books should be procured at the lowest possible cost? If all school-books, and especially all reading-books, were published by the Education Department, printed by the Government Printer, and supplied at cost-price through the agency of Boards and head-teachers or otherwise, the outlay incurred by heads of families would be greatly reduced.

Recitation is worthily treated in only a relatively small number of schools. Mr. Crowe bluntly says, "This subject is badly named. Treated as it is in this district (the southern), repetition would be a much more suitable term." Mr. Mulgan writes of it: "This subject has not improved to any great extent, if at all, during the last few years. When I say that the repetition was accurate I have exhausted the laudatory vocabulary. Clearness of enunciation, pleasant delivery, and, above all, expression, are conspicuous by their almost entire absence. I find, too, that the meaning of simple passages is not always understood. So far as the younger children are concerned, it does not matter very greatly whether the meaning is known or not, so long as the pupils are interested in learning the poems. With the older pupils, however, a knowledge of the meaning of the passages learnt is a matter of such absolute necessity as to form an irreducible minimum of what should be required." There is, I believe, considerable ground for these criticisms, and teachers who are true to themselves and their calling will need to make a strenuous effort to teach recitation more worthily. No poem should be committed to memory until the reading of it has been properly taught. With older pupils the general study of the poems as specimens of literary art should be complete and thorough. Not only should the meaning of the language be understood, but the nature and force of the imagery and the other rhetorical devices that give poetry its characteristic excellences, should be carefully considered. The general scene and setting, as well as the emotional effects, should also be noticed. All this is indispensable if the learning and study of choice poetry are to contribute to the growth and ripening of literary taste in any worthy degree. No teacher should feel that the demand for such treatment is unreasonable.

In teaching both spelling and writing good work is being done in the great majority of schools. Mr. Grierson finds writing "not altogether satisfactory, though in many schools it is distinctly good. In a few schools the pupils, while writing, are allowed to assume a posture that absolutely prohibits the possibility of good writing." Serviceable lessons in word-building are generally given, but, so far, no really helpful text-book has appeared, so that teachers have had to rely mainly on their own resources in evolving a course of lessons. It is highly desirable that most or even the whole of the work done under this head should be entered up in the pupils' exercise-books.

In general the written composition exercises have afforded evidence of careful, and often of well-directed, training. Weakness in this subject is most commonly apparent in Standards IV and V. On the whole, teachers are aiming at, and are to a creditable degree reaching, a distinctly higher level of performance than was thought possible a few years ago. Insistence on fairly long exercises has done much good by encouraging thought and requiring consideration of its orderly arrangement. Teachers should be inexorable in enforcing this demand. The schools of the northern district display some grave weaknesses, but in them "the composition exercises were in general well done. As a rule, the pupils wrote naturally, and seemed to find no difficulty in complying with the regulation as to quantity." In Standards IV and V classes the comparison of familiar animals and objects might be more generally used as topics for composition exercises. Many have found such subjects helpful in eliciting thoughtful observation. For the culture of the imagination original stories suggested by suitable pictures, and the so-called "autobiographies" of animals and articles of use and of dress, might appear more freely on the list of composition subjects.

Oral composition—one of the new features of the syllabus—has been very fairly dealt with in the lower classes. Mr. Goodwin says he has often found it good in Standards I and II. "The importance of oral composition," Mr. Mulgan writes, "does not seem yet to have been fully realised. One of the aims of education is to insure that a pupil has an ample fund of information about the common things of life, and that the words necessary to set it forth are readily forthcoming. This can be best secured by a course of oral composition continued throughout the school, and dealing in the case of the younger pupils with talks on familiar subjects. There is hardly any subject demanding greater skill than that of oral composition. Much of the work done under this head is marred by the too liberal help given by teachers—the result partly of anxiety to cover as much ground as possible, and partly of the choice of unfamiliar and unsuitable subjects." Among suitable subjects common domestic and wild animals, vehicles of various kinds, the apartments of a house, articles of furniture and utensils (such as the kettle, the bellows, the looking-glass, the clock, the lamp, &c.), the operations of gardening, farming, and house-building, and even familiar trees and plants possessed of well-marked characteristics (such as the cabbage-tree, the oak, the pine, the willow, the tree-fern, the cabbage, the turnip, &c.) might find a place. About any such subject even young children will have a good deal to say, and could soon be trained to set it forth in satisfactory form. The forming of sentences to contain given words is not to be commended in this connection. Altogether, oral composition wisely handled will prove a valuable agent in securing facility of literary expression, and much may be expected of it.

In most schools the parts of formal grammar that are important for correct writing receive a considerable share of attention. As text-books on grammar are no longer in general use, most or even the whole of the work done under this head should be concisely entered up in the pupils' exercise-books. For the higher classes in all schools there should be prepared a scheme of work setting out a suitable

co-ordination of grammar and composition, and fitting the work of one class into that of its successor. This scheme should be entered in a note-book so that it can be considered in detail if needful. During the year the Inspectors have used the sets of questions on grammar and sentence-structure issued by the Department. The series for Standard III has been found to be much too easy. In the higher classes the cards have, as a rule, been unnecessarily long; this was especially noticeable in Standard VI, where the time required for the examination of the class has, largely in consequence of this, greatly exceeded the usual school hours. The pupils often experienced difficulty in understanding the drift of the questions. The exercises in sentence-structure were in other respects very elementary, and were sometimes marred by unnecessary suggestions. It is surely undesirable to cull examples for this exercise from poetical writings. Plain and easily intelligible prose is what is wanted.

For some considerable time after the work of the new syllabus was taken up, books suited to the new courses in arithmetic were not available. To this is probably due the disappointment which the Inspectors express with some of the work in this subject. In Standards I, II, and V the pupils on the whole failed to show as good a knowledge of the work taught as we have been accustomed to, though I do not see any reason to apprehend a permanent lapse of efficiency. The questions given in Standard I, though necessarily simple, were all or nearly all oral, and a thorough training was no doubt needed to answer them quickly and accurately. In Standard II many failed to do an easy addition sum because they were unable to write down in one of the lines such a number as twenty-eight tens, the knowledge of notation required being very often wanting. Such a mistake is not likely to recur at any rate in wholesale fashion. The work of the class was, however, on the whole satisfactory, and in some schools Mr. Mulgan and I have found it really good. The frequent weakness of Standard V class is no doubt due to faults of teaching. Both here and in Standard VI calculation is seldom accurate or rapid enough, and problems—in general easy enough—are poorly done. There are a good many schools, both large and small, to which these strictures do not apply, but on the whole the command of arithmetic in Standard V, and to a less extent in Standard VI, is not proportionate to the time and attention devoted to its study. The frequently expressed surprise of teachers at the lame performance of their most trusted pupils tends to show that nervousness, in large measure pardonable, makes the teaching appear worse than it is. Fuller attention to smart oral computation, and more practice in setting forth quickly and clearly how problems worked out on the blackboard or on slate have been solved, must be given if improvement is to be secured. Mr. Grierson speaks in very pointed terms of the inferior work done in Standard V arithmetic in the schools of his district, and the teachers concerned must rouse themselves, and wipe away this blot on their skill.

In most schools drawing is af satisfactory quality. In many of the larger ones the making of patterns and designs, in part original, both in pencil and in brushwork, receives much attention. The units disposed radially or otherwise in the design are necessarliy on a small scale, and the completion of the whole often occupies three or more weeks. Too exclusive attention to this type of work is not desirable. Larger figures with freer curves, balanced or other, will give at least equal facility in using the pencil and brush, as well as afford a pleasing variety in the exercises. In the smaller schools little has been done to give a training in the principles of design. In very few schools does drawing from objects or from nature receive adequate attention; this—the ultimate object of all training in drawing—should be practised in at least the two highest standard classes. It is important that all original designs should be plainly marked as such in pupils' drawing-books. Brushwork has now been widely taken up, and is much more popular than pencil drawing. Where it has been practised for a considerable time a large amount of excellent work is generally produced. The capable direction of Messrs. Wallace and Cockburn has proved of great advantage in connection with this branch of drawing. Creditable work has, however, been found at various schools—Dargaville, for instance—that have not benefited by expert advice and direction.

The most radical of the changes introduced in the new syllabus concerns geography, where the course of study has been fundamentally remodelled. Course A deals almost exclusively with matters requiring personal observation, measurement, &c., on the part of the pupils, and it provides materials for a fine and interesting training. Mr. Mulgan's report to me on this subject may be quoted, as it is in general harmony with the impressions of the other Inspectors. "Geography, Course A, was on the whole well attempted, though considerable improvement may be looked for during this and following years. The chief fault to be found with the teaching is that too much reliance is placed on mere book knowledge, and too little is made of the opportunities provided by the natural surroundings of the school. The work of the river, for instance, should be learned by the study of some stream of which pupils have personal knowledge. The work of erosive agencies should be observed on some range of hills or sea-coast with which pupils are acquainted. The mathematical and astronomical portions of the subject continue to receive better and more intelligent treatment, though I cannot say that results have reached a satisfactory stage in a good number of schools. This is owing, in part at least, to a syllabus that is still overloaded, though an additional cause may be found in an attempt to crowd into a few months work that should be spread over the entire year." The special text-books written for this course are not without merits, but they give far too great prominence to geological changes, that need for their bare comprehension a vastly wider field of observation than school-children can possibly command. The peculiar characteristics of "old plains" now much eroded into valleys and ridges, the general line of ancient river-courses as inferred from widely scattered deposits of shingle often occurring at high levels, and the former outlets of such a river as the Waikato cannot possibly be learnt by observations restricted to the neighbourhood of a school. All this is book knowledge pure and simple. Such topics teachers will be wise to omit altogether. In inland districts coast-erosion can be made intelligible only by the use of suitable pictures. The phenomena presented by land and marine ice and those of glacier action, though no doubt interesting, and in the geological sense important, lie altogether beyond the range of pupils' observation, and can be made intelligible only by the aid of pictures. The illustrated

weekly newspapers contain numbers of views that will prove very helpful in this connection, and even render limited observation at second hand practicable enough. But without suitable pictures the study of all such features—features that pupils can never have seen—must be reckoned of very little value, from the point of view of Course A. I would advise teachers who desire to get a wider view of the topics dealt with in this Course to consult Huxley and Gregory's beautiful and admirably illustrated book on "Physiography." For recognising the more conspicuous stars, and for understanding why the face of the heavens changes from month to month, "Philip's Planisphere" will be found most useful and instructive.

Geography, Course B, and history are now studied with the help of definite suitable Readers in these subjects. The mere reading of the lessons or chapters will not by itself impart a serviceable knowledge of what is to be learnt. While maps, atlases, and pictures should be freely used, the more important topics must be further impressed by questioning, supplementary discussion, and frequent revision. These conditions of satisfactory instruction are not always kept in view.

In the lower classes of nearly all schools nature-study has been taken in hand, in many instances with very encouraging results. It is often intelligently treated, and has certainly aroused a wide and keen interest among pupils. The chief aim of these lessons should be to arouse and develop a spirit of observation and investigation without making a fetish of the gathering of information, which will be a natural concomitant of all fruitful work in this sphere. Both plants and animals should be studied as organisms showing definite activities or functions, and possessing important relations and adaptations to their natural surroundings. Some comparative lessons on such topics as common leaf-forms, flower-types, &c., will not be out of place, but as a rule these parts of organisms should come under review only in considering, on the one hand, their structure as related to their life-activities and functions, and, on the other hand, their adaptations to their environment. It is obvious that it will be peculiarly difficult to form a trustworthy judgment of the value of the work done in nature-study from mere examination of the knowledge gained, for the method by which it has been acquired is a much deeper and more crucial consideration. Its value can be judged to a considerable extent from work seen at times of inspection, and from special inquiry as to methods.

Definite steps have now been taken to begin in country schools a practical and experimental course of study in elementary agriculture. An expert to direct the training of teachers in this department, and to further organize the schemes of work to be undertaken, is soon to be appointed by the Board, and fruitful development may be looked for. I hope that he will also aid us by arranging suggestive courses of lessons in nature-study.

In many schools the old courses of general science have been continued, while in others the work outlined in the syllabus has been taken up. The latter course is avowedly incomplete, and will need to be supplemented. This will be matter for consideration during the coming year. A good deal of satisfactory work has been done in the subject.

In general, moral instruction and health have received a fair amount of attention during the year. It is important that full records of what is done in every class under these heads should be entered in note-books, so that the complete course, spread as it is over several years, may be available for examination. Reviews of work covered in previous classes will be indispensable to efficient instruction.

Some form of handwork is now taught in a large number of the smaller schools, as well as in all the larger ones. The new centres for teaching woodwork and cookery recently opened at the Thames and at Whangarei have been much appreciated in these districts. Closer supervision of pupils travelling by rail to and from some of the centres is urgently needed, and head teachers should make it a point of honour with their pupils to behave quietly and decorously on these journeys. This is a matter that cannot be too strongly impressed on all concerned. The handwork taught in the primer and lower standard classes is in general carefully done, and it is to some extent co-ordinated with drawing. But it is far from easy to judge of its educative value from the occasional lessons and the finished articles seen by the Inspectors, though teachers generally speak favourably of it. Brush drawing, referred to above, is frequently taken up in the Standard I class, and a continuous course of work follows on this beginning.

The work of the primer classes has been good in nearly all the larger schools, and in not a few excellent. In the smaller schools, where the time available for the direct teaching of these classes is necessarily much less, it has been on the whole satisfactory and often creditable. The Board has now authorised the use of several series of Primers and Infant Readers, and I would recommend that the books of the Royal Crown Series be made the principal class-books, the Queen and the Imperial Infant Readers being used to supplement them. These books should be read through only once, revision of lessons being taken weekly or at somewhat longer intervals, and fresh books being taken up successively. This will make the reading more interesting, widen the pupils' vocabulary of easy words, and get rid of the unintentional memorising that often obtains now.

The teaching of number up to twenty is all that is prescribed for the primer classes, though more than this may be, and often is, overtaken. The prominence given to analysing numbers by aid of concrete objects is in every way commendable, but in the smaller schools there is insufficient time for the repeated drill in this kind of exercise that is necessary for firmly fixing the results in the mind, and the learning of addition tables will still be advisable. The simultaneous teaching of the principles of the four first rules, applied to very small numbers, presents grave difficulties where time for practice is limited, and has caused no small perplexity and disappointment to many earnest workers. Mr. Grierson frankly says that "teaching by the concrete alone may succeed in large schools, but it is a delusion and a snare in the smaller schools." The difficulties here noticed we may hope to overcome by better arrangements, but in the meantime it is certain that the primer pupils of our smaller schools have not as ready and accurate a knowledge of the results of addition and subtraction of numbers under twenty

as they have generally shown in recent years, and that even in the larger schools the knowledge gained has been much more unequal than heretofore. This, a direct consequence of the requirements of the new syllabus, is not a fact of happy augury. Our new syllabus, as Mr. Crowe remarks, would be none the worse if it did less in the way of prescribing the methods which teachers are expected to use.

The progress made in the primer classes is not quite as rapid as could be wished, at all events in many of the larger schools. This is a matter that head teachers should look to.

All who are acquainted with the working of different types of elementary schools, will allow that the sole-teacher schools, with an average attendance of from thirty to forty, involve on their teachers the heaviest work and the greatest difficulty of organization. In view of this, it seems to me deplorable that the heavy work and the skill and alertness required for the successful management of these schools should count for so little in fixing the remuneration of their teachers. As soon as the average attendance rises above forty a second teacher is added to the staff, while the head teacher's salary is advanced. With an average attendance of forty-one to fifty-five, or even sixty, each of the two teachers on the staff has a much lighter burden of work than has the sole teacher with thirty or forty of an average attendance. The sole teacher has all the standard and primer classes to teach, and though the actual number of pupils in each class is less, there is no very great advantage and some real disadvantage in this. Bare justice demands that the teachers of schools between thirty and forty should be paid as liberally as the head teachers of schools between forty-one and sixty. The inadequate payment of the teachers of the smaller schools must tell strongly against their efficiency as a class.

An equally serious blot on the scheme of salaries now in force is the totally inadequate remuneration of the special teachers of district-high-school classes in nearly every grade. The salaries given are quite insufficient to secure the permanent service of experienced and capable teachers for the secondary pupils. I think the lowest salary for this work should be £240 a year.

Many disinterested persons think it desirable that teachers should be encouraged to gain the higher ranks of classification, by allowing in certain circumstances a small annual bonus to those who possess certificates above Class D. For each higher class a certain salary could easily be fixed, below which teachers of that class would be entitled to this bonus. This would not mean attaching a minimum salary to each class of certificate, and would involve much less expense, but it would doubtless prove a real stimulus to young men and women to gain and give evidence of higher culture and attainments than the Class D certificate assures. Much has been done in recent years to improve the payment of teachers; but, while the defects I have dwelt on remain, we cannot say that the basis of payment is either as just or as liberal as it might be.

The fuller and freer oral answering, on which the Inspectors have been laying stress for some years past, makes but slow progress. No one pretends that good oral answering is easy to attain; but in nearly all departments of school work its value is so great that I must again urge our teachers to strenuous efforts for improvement in this direction. At bottom it is a matter of discipline, and the discipline in our schools is in most respects so good that one wonders at its comparative failure here. Mere driving will never accomplish what is desired; it can come only from the growth of more friendly and sympathetic relations between teachers and scholars. To get their pupils to try, willingly and habitually, to state fully and clearly what they know should not be beyond the power of any really capable teacher.

The Inspectors gladly testify to the diligence and hearty application of the Board's teachers as a body. In many cases they render enthusiastic service, often under discouraging conditions. A special word of appreciation is due to the considerable body of young teachers who are doing excellent work in the small schools and in the backblocks.

During the year the supply of qualified teachers for the smaller schools has run very low, and quite a number of persons without experience or professional training have had to be employed. The only alternative was the closing of a number of small schools. This dearth of qualified teachers is not confined to this district, and is certain to continue for some time. After a year or two we may expect the Training-college to furnish a steady, if not an ample, supply. The dearth may not, however, be assuaged until we employ a larger staff of pupil teachers and greatly lessen the amount of teaching required of them—a reform in every way most desirable.

In concluding, I would take occasion to record the sincere regret of the inspectorial staff at the retirement from the Board's service of Mr. Mulgan, who rendered most valuable service as an Inspector in this district, and earned to an unusual degree the confidence and esteem of all connected with the public schools.

I have, &c.,
D. Petrie, M.A., Chief Inspector

The Secretary, Auckland Education Board.

TARANAKI.

Sir,— Education Office, New Plymouth, 31st March, 1906.

We have the honour to lay before you our annual report for the year ending the 31st December, 1905.

During the year seventy-six schools were open. In accordance with the arrangement made with the Auckland Board, the school at Mokau was examined and inspected. Some schools in the northern portion of the Clifton County, and properly in this district, are at present administered by the Auckland Board, but when the Ohura Road is opened up we recommend that they be taken over.

The following table contains a summary of examination results :—

Classes.	Number on Roll.	Present at Inspector's Annual Visit.	Average Age of Pupils in each Class.
			Yrs. mos.
Standard VII	77	72	14 4
" VI	246	241	13 11
" V	439	432	13 3
" IV	590	574	12 2
" III	651	627	11 5
" II	649	640	10 1
" I	664	643	9 2
Preparatory	1,668	1,475	7 0
Totals	4,984	4,704	11 5*

* Mean of average age.

Compared with the return for 1904 the following increases are shown : Roll, ninety-three ; present at the Inspector's annual visit, 104. The number of pupils absent at the annual visit was 280—eighty-seven in the standards and 193 in the preparatory classes. The number of pupils in Standard VII was seventy-seven—a decrease of three. In addition to the public schools the Roman Catholic schools at New Plymouth, Stratford, and Opunake were inspected and examined. The summary of results shows : Roll, 275 ; present, 258—an increase of eight and twelve respectively on the 1904 return.

The annual reports have frequently referred to the unsatisfactory nature of the school buildings caused by the hampered finance of the Board. The former building grant was allocated on a capitation basis which was very unfair for districts in which the rapid growth of small schools, consequent upon the settlement of new land, was a constant drain upon the funds. Schools had to be built with cramped accommodation, limited air-space, and with equipment much below requirements. The present system, however, is much fairer. Schools in newly settled districts and additions due to the increase of population are erected by the Government, and an allowance is made for maintenance. During the last few years it has been possible, therefore, to better equip the schools, and by painting, repairing, &c., when necessary, take such care of the buildings as will undoubtedly give them longer lives. Older buildings are being gradually improved, and, with respect to hygienic and educational requirements, rendered more suitable for the purposes for which they were intended. In the matter of teachers' residences much remains to be done. Many of them, we may say most, do not provide the conveniences that an artisan would put into his house. It will be a long time before the evil effects of parsimony necessitated by the former limited building grant will be eradicated ; but we, and we believe also the teachers, recognise the efforts made by the Board to give the teachers the comfort and conveniences to which their positions entitle them.

As there was considerable difficulty in procuring competent teachers, positions as assistants and even as sole teachers were offered to pupil-teachers before the expiry of their apprenticeship ; and, though the curtailing of their course of instruction was a matter for regret, we have been pleased with the very good promise shown by most of those so appointed. This scarcity of teachers is felt all over the colony, and it remains to be seen if the training colleges recently established can supply a sufficient number to replace those who, in the usual course, leave the service. One effect of the scarcity of teachers is the great increase in the number of uncertificated teachers now employed in this and other districts. A few of our ex-pupil-teachers, we regret to say, have not shown the desire to obtain certificates that was formerly displayed. It may or may not be due to the ease with which appointments are obtained, but the fact remains that a number, who in the ordinary course would be expected to take their certificates, make no effort in that direction. We are pleased, however, to note that among the more experienced teachers there is a strong desire to obtain a higher status, and that a considerable number have been successful.

As teachers have the greatest freedom in classifying their pupils, some teachers have exercised a wise discretion in dealing with the children in the Preparatory classes and Standards I and II. These classes may be looked upon as groups of children in which promotion according to ability and progress can be readily and easily carried out without detriment to the child. Not infrequently we find that pupils strong in the work of Preparatory II are promoted to Standard I, and pupils strong in the work of Preparatory III are promoted to Standard II, and with excellent results, the promotion itself being a stimulating factor. Should, however, the work of any standard appear too onerous the teacher has the matter in his own hands, and can give lengthened instruction in the work found most difficult. Far be it from us to advocate the undue forcing of children, but, if freedom of classification means anything at all, it means promotion in accordance with ability ; and what can discourage a pupil more than being kept at work with which he is fully familiar, and in the performance of which habits of diligence, application, and thought are not required.

The quality of the work in the lower classes shows steady progress. In schools where a teacher has to manage unaided probably five or six classes in addition to the infants, not much time can be given to the little ones, though much can be done by systematic and careful preparation of the work ; but, in large schools where the infants are in charge of assistants who have the help of pupil-teachers, good work is expected and is being done. Sometimes more variety might be introduced into the work ;

for lessons which are too long, or in which there is insufficient variety, prove uninteresting and irksome to the pupils. Action songs and musical drill might be used to greater advantage, as they serve as a pleasant relief to the ordinary routine.

In practically all schools, even where not required by regulation, a definite course of nature-study is undertaken, and often taught exceedingly well, inducing in the child a spirit of inquiry and in an elementary way fostering a mental attitude of scientific method in dealing with objects and phenomena. Where elementary agriculture is taught in the upper classes the nature-study of the lower classes, while including lessons from Course A geography and other matter, in the main lead up to the elementary agriculture, and the pupils make use of the school gardens though they do not actually work there. The abolition of the term "object lessons" has done much to remove misconceptions with regard to this class of work, but in a few cases the courses are not well chosen, arouse little interest, and, though supplying a certain amount of information, have little, if any, educational value. Though it is only turning a phrase, we have found that, by saying that "nature-study" is "the study of nature," we have been enabled to give teachers a better insight into the educational aims of the work. If teachers understood that what is now called scientific method is merely the oftmentioned method of teaching by the three steps of (1) observation or experiment, (2) result, (3) inference by which all lessons should be taught, the subject would present less difficulty than it seems to do in some cases.

The supplementary literary reader has been supplanted by geographical readers and historical readers, which, in addition to providing a wider range of reading that will undoubtedly be beneficial, cover the Course B geography and the compulsory history. Owing to the difficulty in selecting suitable historical readers the books have only recently been authorised, but the geographical readers — an excellent series ("The World and its People")—are now in general use. The lessons are, as a rule, well handled by the teachers, and prove attractive to the pupils. The majority of teachers give efficient instruction in reading but some would benefit from the remarks in the report for the year 1900, in which it was pointed out that correct pronunciation is far from the chief esential. Pronunciation is in a sense mechanical, for it can be found from a dictionary after pupils leave school, whereas correct phrasing, modulation, inflexion, &c., being not readily acquired after school-life must be taught and must become in some measure matters of habit. We consider that the terms "phrasing," "inflexion," &c., should be understood by the pupils, that the teacher should indicate the character of the error made, and that, without further assistance, the pupil should endeavour to make the correction. This method is in accord with one of the first principles of teaching—*i.e.*, "the pupil should be told only so much as will enable him to discover the truth for himself." It leads to a more intelligent comprehension of the passage, for to correct the error the pupil must discover the writer's meaning, and in some measure must enter into his feelings. Instead of the pupils pointing out only errors of pronunciation, we much prefer to find them pointing out errors in phrasing, and so on, thus bringing into play a higher degree of intelligence.

Spelling in the special tests is satisfactory and the general spelling in the geography, composition, &c., as a rule receives attention. Where the latter is unsatisfactory, in almost every case it is traceable to lack of thoroughness in the correction of the general exercises of pupils. Writing is very satisfactory, and in setting out all work with neatness, method, and tidy arrangement, the pupils acquire habits that have a most important bearing. We find that the redistribution of the arithmetic over the several standards meets with general approval and that the work of no standard now presents conspicuous difficulty as was formerly the case in Standard IV. Mental arithmetic continues to be very unsatisfactory. Composition up to Standard IV continues to be very satisfactory indeed, but in Standard V and VI does not show the advance that the promise of the lower work would lead one to expect. This has frequently been referred to. We are aware that teachers have strenuously endeavoured to improve the work of the higher standards, but in only a few cases have their efforts resulted in marked success.

The progress made in handwork deserves more than a passing notice. The number of schools in which it is undertaken is increasing; but a far more pleasing feature is the teachers' recognition of its value as a method of teaching, and the decreasing number who look upon it as introducing new subjects. The difficulties and misconceptions inseparable from the introduction of new ideas are being overcome, and some of those who displayed at least no sympathy are now its strongest advocates. In the lower classes it has produced a very marked beneficial effect upon the development of the intelligence, and in all classes concrete teaching through handwork enables some of the work to be taught, and taught with ease, a standard or two before it is required by the syllabus. In drawing and arithmetic this is particularly noticeable, and the general intelligence developed reacts more or less on the school-work. The schemes of work formulated by teachers show greater coherence and more systematic treatment from Preparatory to Standard VI, are better graduated, and dovetail better into the ordinary school subjects. Brushwork is not so generally taught as formerly, and we believe that as good, if not better, educational results can be obtained by means of blackboard drawing co-ordinated with freehand. Carton and cardboard work are now undertaken more extensively than formerly, and are being well used as improved methods of teaching much of the drawing, especially scale drawing with instruments, object-drawing, plane and solid geometrical drawing, and model-drawing. Though these subjects were prescribed before handwork in its present form was so well recognised, it was very evident to any one who had to deal with pupils after they left school that the results could not be called satisfactory; and we are satisfied that the new methods will produce much better training during school life, and in after life will be found of practical benefit to many of those taking up a trade or profession. In some cases we find that teachers make many models, but do not use them to the best advantage. As far as is possible carton or cardboard work should proceed side by side with the geometrical drawing; and, when finished, the objects should be used for object-drawing, elementary solid geometry, model-drawing, and so on. It will be found that a comparatively small number of models judiciously used

in this way will produce the best educational results. We find that geometrical drawing is still taught on the old methods, and not applied to exercises requiring a grasp of geometrical principles. To be of any value the geometry must be applied to the construction of designs, patterns, plans, geometrical solids, and so on. For the ordinary school geometry we desire to bring under the notice of teachers "Preliminary Geometry," by Rawdon Roberts (Blackie and Sons, 1s.), and for more advanced exercises "Geometrical Drawing and Design," by J. H. Spanton (Macmillan and Co.).

Classes in more advanced handwork, including elementary agriculture, woodwork, botany, ambulance, dressmaking, swimming, science, &c., were recognised in twenty-one cases. At the Stratford District High School, where a centre consisting of rooms for science, woodwork, dairying, and for general purposes was established two years ago, pupils undertake a wide range of subjects, including woodwork, 2 classes; botany, 2; dressmaking, 1; science, 3; and dairying, 2. In dairying, in addition to classes for pupils of the school, during the winter holidays classes of a fortnight's duration were held for pupils from neighbouring schools, and were well attended. We cannot speak too highly of the way the staff have put their hearts into the work, and we believe that, as time goes on, their efforts will be more and more appreciated by the general public.

As we have received numerous inquiries as to the programme of work for dairying, it is evident that the desire for instruction in dairying is spreading; and for general information we here give the course which has been adopted: 1. Composition of milk—Water, fats, albuminoids, ash. Variation in quality in different breeds of cattle. 2. Structure of udder; milk-secretion; effect of cow's physical condition; variation in quality during period of lactation, colostrum, variation during one milking; importance of complete removal of milk; retention of milk; regularity and time of milking; methods of milking—wet and dry milking; treatment of cows, benefits of gentle handling and kind treatment. 3. Importance of cleanliness in the animal, in the byre, in utensils, in the dairy; means of securing cleanliness; washing prior to milking; the byre, site and structure; the utensils, material and methods of cleaning; bacteria; effect of temperature on germination and fermentation; sterilisation; pasteurisation; absorption of odours, &c., by milk. 4. The keeping of milk, cooling, stirring, aeration; mixing milk of successive milkings; carriage of milk to the factory; the dairy—site, structure, ventilation, and temperature. 5. Testing cows for the purpose of securing a good milking herd; breed of milking-cows; importance of good pasture and water; flavours and odours due to feeding—remedies; winter feeding; rugging; breeding; effect of age on lactation. 6. Separation of cream; shallow-pan and deep-setting systems; effects of dilution and temperature; the separator; skim-milk testing. 7. Ripening of cream; over-ripening; effect of temperature; testing starters and cultures; Wisconsin curd-test. 8. Churning and butter-making; effects of temperature; kind of agitation; effect of agitation; washing and working; salting; packing; defects in butter. 9. By-products of dairy; butter-milk; feeding animals on skim-milk; precautions in using separator-milk for animals; substitutes for removed fats. 10. Milk-supply; cleanliness, &c., as above; delivery in uniform quality; legal standard of quality; adulteration and detection. 11. Common diseases in milking-cows.

The practical work in connection with the above includes instruction in actual milking. Defective and efficient milking are shown. The milk drawn under different conditions of cleanliness, feeding, stages in any milking, &c., are examined by the microscope, by the lactometer, by the Babcock tester, and by its keeping-qualities, fermentation and sterilisation are shown, and elementary notions of bacteriology taught. The effects of aeration, cooling, &c., are shown by contrast with other samples not so treated, and their effects in the factory tests are demonstrated. Normal milk, cream, and skim-milk are submitted to tests. Milk is passed through a hand separator, and the churn and the butter-maker are used to make butter in small quantities. Each pupil keeps his own samples, numbering them, noting the conditions (cleanliness, temperature, condition of milking, &c.) and noting the results. The primary object of the course is to teach the pupil how to deal with the milk from the time it is grass to the time it reaches the factory—for the success of the dairying industry depends upon the condition in which the factory receives the milk. At the end of the two years' course an idea of the best methods of butter-making is given. Two cows are available for the use of the classes, and the Stratford Dairy Factory has been associated with the Technical School. Pupils visit the factory in order to watch the several processes of treatment, the testing, &c. The course is intended to extend over two years. Pupils are encouraged to bring milk from home, and test it in order to gain information which may lead to more efficient milking, to the better selection of stock, and so on. In this way it is hoped that the knowledge gained at the school will be carried to the homes, and be of general benefit to a most important industry.

It may not be out of place to describe one of the last lessons seen. A cow was brought in, its udder was well washed, and it was milked by one of the pupils. As the milking proceeded the milk was put into bottles with numbered labels attached, and thus were obtained samples of milk from the first drawn to the strippings. These were then tested by the Babcock tester, and the columns of butter-fat in the test-bottles showed in a most striking way the value of thorough and complete milking. The percentages of butter-fat were then computed, and graphs were drawn showing the improvement in the quality of the milk and its increased value as the milking proceeded. Of the practical value of such instruction in a dairying district there can be but one opinion; but we go farther and say that as an educational subject dairying is a valuable means of teaching many scientific principles, and is no mean substitute for a special course in science. A very casual glance at the programme above outlined will convince one that many of the fundamental principles of physiology, agriculture, and general science are taught through the milk as the medium.

We have, &c.,
W. E. Spencer, M.A., B.Sc.,
W. A. Ballantyne, B.A.,
Inspectors.

The Chairman, Taranaki Education Board.

WANGANUI.

SIR,— Education Office, 31st January, 1906.

We have the honour to present our report on the primary schools of the district for the year ended 1905.

SCHOOLS AND ATTENDANCE.—Compared with last year the number of schools examined and the attendance of pupils on the day of examination both show a slight increase. In 1904 the number of schools examined was 169; in 1905, 176. The total roll-number for the district as shown on the day of examination was 12,295, as against 12,249 for 1904; while the actual number present on the day of examination was 11,752 for 1905, and 11,560 for 1904. Thus it will be seen that while the roll shows an increase of only forty-six, the number present shows an increase of 192. The following table gives the roll and the average age for each standard. For the sake of comparison the corresponding figures for 1904 are also given:—

Classes.	Roll.		Present.		Average Age.	
	1904.	1905.	1904.	1905.	1904.	1905.
					Yrs. mos.	Yrs. mos.
Standard VII	251	257	241	240	14 6	15 6
" VI	818	849	802	833	13 10	13 9
" V	1,187	1,169	1,155	1,149	12 11	12 10
" IV	1,402	1,398	1,357	1,371	12 1	11 11
" III	1,580	1,569	1,534	1,527	11 0	10 11
" II	1,558	1,474	1,514	1,445	9 11	9 11
" I	1,466	1,457	1,419	1,427	8 10	8 11
Preparatory	3,987	4,122	3,538	3,760	6 11	6 11
Totals	12,249	12,295	11,560	11,752	...	...

NOTE.—The above figures do not include the Catholic schools.

It will be seen that the gain in attendance to the district is practically confined to the primer classes. Indeed all the other classes except Standards VI and VII show a decrease. Notably is this the case with Standard II, in which class the roll is eighty-four less than in the previous year. There is, however, nothing surprising in the fact that there should be a decrease in any one class. It very often happens that the numbers in a standard vary from year to year; but it is somewhat puzzling to find a decrease in all the intermediate standards. It may mean that the tendency to withdraw children from school as soon as they are old enough to join in the ranks of the wage-earners has been in operation to a greater extent than hitherto; or it may mean, though this is somewhat unlikely, that the net result of the migration that is going on between one part of the colony and another has left us on the wrong side of the ledger so far as Standards I to V are concerned. There is no doubt that the gross and almost criminal indifference of many parents leads them to place a higher value on the products and gains of their farms than upon the training and welfare of their children. In another place we refer to some of the difficulties which teachers have to contend against, and at the risk of repetition we would emphasize here the carelessness of many parents in the matter of the education of their children. Perhaps we are wrong in supposing that the tendency we have noted above is becoming stronger; but leaving out of account altogether the slight decreases in the roll of Standards I to V, the loss of over five hundred pupils between Standards IV and VI is quite sufficient to justify us in making a protest against the practice of withdrawing children as soon as they have reached the limit of school age prescribed by the law. We cannot think that the stress of existence and the task of making ends meet in this colony at the present juncture of its history are so pressing as to make it necessary to rob children of their just due in the matter of education. Every child should have its rights in this matter, and the serious question emerges in the presence of some facts that are constantly meeting us, whether some stricter measures should not be taken with those who wilfully, and from no good cause, neglect to give their children the full benefit of the training afforded them by the State. We are persuaded that it is not so much poverty and necessity as downright greed of gain that is the operating cause with many of those whose action has been censured in the paragraph just written. The time has surely come for making it compulsory that every child shall be educated up to a certain standard, without regard to his age. Why should a boy, simply because he has reached the age of fourteen, be exempted from school attendance? The time must come when those who leave school, be they fourteen years or more, to enter the ranks of the workers will be required to pursue their studies at evening schools. If it is deemed right and proper that a youth of fourteen may leave school while still uneducated, then it should be the duty of the State to provide future means for continuing his education, and to insist that he shall continue it. In the working of our present scheme of continuation classes we have over and over again come face to face with lads who would willingly continue their studies, but who cannot afford to do so. For such the conditions of continuing their studies should be made absolutely free.

The figures for Standard VII are practically the same as for last year. Of the 247 pupils on the roll on the examination day, 177 belonged to the district high schools. This leaves eighty to be supplied by the remaining schools—a very fair proportion.

DISTRICT HIGH SCHOOLS.

School.	Average Roll.	With reference to Town Schools.		Admitted from Country Schools.	Number of Pupils who, in 1905, were spending			
		Number passed Standard VI, 1904.	Admitted to Secondary Department.		First Year.	Second Year.	Third Year.	More than Third Year.
Eltham	26	16	8	2	10	10	8	1
Hawera	53	40	20	20	40	14	5	...
Wanganui	52	59	43	7	50	10	3	1
Marton	36	18	11	9	20	16	4	4
Feilding	33	28	12	13	25	5	1	3
Total, average roll ...	200	161	94	51	145	55	21	9

These figures are for the period between one examination and another, not for the school year ending 31st December.

CATHOLIC SCHOOLS.—The six Catholic schools in the district were examined as usual. The statement below shows the number of pupils attending there, and the average ages of the different standards :—

Classes.	Number on Roll.	Average Age.
		Yrs. mos.
Standard VII	14	15 1
" VI	45	13 11
" V	57	12 11
" IV	99	12 2
" III	98	10 11
" II	89	9 10
" I	57	8 10
Preparatory	244	6 6
Total	703	

EFFICIENCY OF SCHOOLS.—The last heading of the examination report is entitled "Efficiency." The mark given sums up the Inspectors' judgment of the school as a whole. It is a brief estimate of the manner in which the school is fulfilling its purpose of training those who enter it in habits of industry and obedience, and of giving them power to apply the facts and information gleaned from books, from nature, or from the teacher. The mark is given by comparison with the Inspectors' ideal of what the school should be, and also by a comparison with the standard actually attained in the best schools. The points entering into this judgment may be put in the form of these questions: Are the pupils earnest and diligent in their work? Do they readily attack the problems set before them? Do they perform their tasks with alacrity? Is their eye keen and eager? Is their ear always open? Are their senses fully aroused in the presence of new facts? Is there evidence of thought in the answers given? Is the knowledge accurate within the range it has been imparted? Are the outdoor school recreations fully supervised and utilised? Is the school kept clean? Is the whole atmosphere of the place conducive to the development of industry, of thoughtfulness, of earnestness, and of good taste? These and many more points weigh with the Inspector when he is giving his judgment. He takes account also of the circumstances of the school and the difficulties of the district. It will thus be seen that "efficiency" in the sense in which it is now used means something more than a summary of the results gained by the application of certain tests. It is this partly, for tests of some kind must always be given, but it is much more. It is an estimate of the school as a means of stimulating and arousing mental effort, of enlarging knowledge, of increasing power to think and to reason accurately. Something like this is what the Inspector has in his mind. The ideal as we have stated it above serves to convey at least this: that when we are speaking of the efficiency of a school something far greater, far nobler, far higher is meant than its power to equip pupils for examination of the memory order. Under this kind of classification it is quite possible, if our judgment is discerning, for a school which "crams well" to take rank as "unsatisfactory." The time is surely coming when schools which cram, even if they cram ever so wisely, will all rank as such. From a succeeding paragraph it will be seen that we have made a strenuous effort to break away from old and stereotyped methods of examination, with the sole purpose in view of eliminating stereotyped, obsolete, and irrational methods of teaching.

For efficiency the schools are classified as follows: Very good, three schools; good, sixty schools; very fair or satisfactory, eighty-four schools; fair, twenty-one schools; weak or inferior, fourteen schools. That is, of a total of 182 schools examined (the six Catholic schools are included here) 147

are in a satisfactory condition, the remaining thirty-five ranking below satisfactory. The majority of the schools are in the great middle class, doing good average work. The number of very good schools appears small; but, considering the increased demands made upon the teachers in adjusting themselves to new ideals, new methods, and new conditions, and considering the increased difficulty of gaining the highest marks under the application of new and radically different tests, it is gratifying that so many schools have maintained a standard above satisfactory. There is nothing very alarming in the fact that thirty-five schools are below the satisfactory limit. In comparatively few of these could better work be expected. The conditions have been such that good work was out of the question. Bad attendance, owing to the long distance many of the pupils have to travel; bad roads during a considerable portion of the year; changes of teacher; inability to procure suitable teachers, owing to the isolated nature of the districts and the smallness of the remuneration offered; these are some of the contributing causes to the unsatisfactory nature of the training received and given in some of our country schools. Must this condition hold? Is it possible to alter it? Will it always be the case that many of our backblocks schools will be but poorly manned? For after all the "teacher" difficulty is the most serious one. Actual experience shows that in small schools in charge of good, competent, earnest teachers more work can be covered in a given time than is possible in schools where the classes are larger and the conditions of attendance better. With regard to the possibility of finding teachers who will do this work better than it is in many cases being done at present, we venture to make a suggestion which, if carried into effect, might help towards the solution of what is one of the most vital problems which the Board has to face. The suggestion we make proceeds on the assumption that it will be rarely possible to obtain for out-of-the-way isolated schools the services of highly trained and fully competent teachers, and that we must be content to choose between teachers of no training at all, and those of training of a more or less complete kind. We think it might be possible to give this training in one or two of the larger of our outlying schools—such as, for example, Taihape, Kimbolton, and Raetihi. In such centres as these it should be possible to find young people who would be willing to take up the profession of teaching, but who cannot afford to go through all the preliminary expense involved in the regular course of training. Could not a limited number of such, two or three at each centre, be received as trainees on the understanding that, if they undergo a year's training to the satisfaction of the headmaster and of the Inspector, they will be given appointments to outlying schools adjacent to their homes? Some small increment might be added to the headmaster's salary for the extra work. Such teachers could be put on a further probation of a year in the schools to which they were appointed, and be made to understand that when they had obtained the necessary certificate, and had satisfied the Inspector as to their suitability for the profession, they would rank as teachers in full standing. It does not appear that the ordinary avenues of training will ever provide for such schools as we have been discussing, and it is unfair to the districts—unfair to the settlers, who at considerable sacrifice go forth as pioneers in new districts, that they should be left to the tender mercies of chance in the matter of teachers for their schools. The proposal we have made offers a solution of the difficulty, and it is worthy of the consideration of the Board.

Some Hindrances to School-work.—It is well sometimes that the public should be brought face to face with some of the difficulties by which many of our teachers are beset in the carrying-out of their onerous duties. The work of teaching undoubtedly has its compensations, and teachers as a class are not unmindful of these; but the unfortunate part of the business is this, that in the eyes of a sometimes not too generous public the teacher's life appears a most joyous one, with not a sorrow, or pain or ache, or trouble to mar the sweetness of his lot. Here, as nearly always, the public makes one of its undiscerning blunders; for there is probably no other calling which demands the exercise of patience, long suffering, and self-sacrifice to the same extent as does that of teaching. We do not here wish to refer to the difficulties within the school; these are many and sometimes very irksome. Nor do we refer to the isolated nature of the life the teacher is often called upon to lead; that is a factor too often left out of reckoning altogether by those who imagine his lot to be one of unalloyed bliss. It is to difficulties tending to retard his work, and make it ten times more arduous than it need be that reference is now made. We have already referred to the indifference many parents show in regard to giving their children the full value of the opportunities for schooling offered them. Regardless of the future of the children they take them away as soon as ever the law permits or allows them, after they have reached the age limit, thereafter sending them to school for only a day now and again. This is a source of great annoyance to every earnest teacher. Not less so is the baneful practice that has grown up under our School Attendance Act of keeping the children at school just the requisite number of times required by the law. The extent to which this is done in some schools is most disheartening. It would be much better to close school one day every week, for then there would be the advantage gained of having all the delinquents absent on the same day. Here is a most serious difficulty, and it raises the question whether any option of absence at all should be given. Is it right that an absence of two half-days a week should be legalised? Another great difficulty which confronts many teachers in a fast-progressing district such as ours is the migration of scholars from one district to another. In some of the schools examined the school has altered to the extent of half its roll. What this means under present conditions only those know who have been brought face to face with the facts in the actual work of the schoolroom. The difficulty arising from these changes will be very greatly lessened when the practice of examining Standard VI and of making the promotions from class to class at the end of the year comes into operation. We trust the time is not far distant when this practice will be universal throughout the colony.

The work of the Infant Class, especially in the larger schools, is very seriously hampered by the admission of beginners at any and every time throughout the year. A great gain both to scholars and to teachers would be effected by the observance of stated times of admission for new primer pupils.

The average attendance of the school is at present such an important matter, both to committees and teachers, that young children are rushed into school as soon as they turn five, in order that they may swell the roll and raise the grade of the school or keep it from falling; and so long as payments continue to be based upon average attendance so long will this difficulty continue, which is created by the haphazard admission of beginners at any time they choose to come. The multiplication of classes in the primer departments caused by this very fact is a great source of retardation to the general work of the school. Perhaps the most serious trouble confronting many of the teachers in certain parts of the district is that created by the employment of children in dairying and other farm occupations to such an extent as to render them physically unable to take intelligent and effective interest in their school-work. It is not against the welfare of children that they should have some regular employment at home in addition to their school duties; we believe that it is right and proper that they should. It is of excessive labour we complain, and a careful investigation into the circumstances of some of the schools, especially in our dairying districts, leads us to protest strongly against what amouunts to a gross injustice to many of our growing boys and girls, and indirectly to the community at large. As we have pointed out elsewhere it is not always, nor even frequently, that the necessitous circumstances of the parents give rise to the trouble. More often we believe the cause is greed of gain, and a culpable ignorance of the needs and demands of the growing body. Here is a table showing the amount of work and the hours of employment of the children of one of your country schools. It is only one case in many. The table speaks for itself, and we trust it may have the effect of arresting what seems to be a growing tendency with us—viz., the employment of children at tasks beyond their strength at a time when they should be reserved for such education as the State offers them.

List of Milkers.

Age of Scholar.	Time of Rising.	Number of Cows, Night and Morning.	Time occupied by Two Milkings.
Yrs. mos.	A.m.		
14 9 ...	4.40	12	Four to five hours.
16 1 ...	4.40	9	"
15 10 ...	4.15	12	"
15 3 ...	5	10	Three to four hours.
13 6 ...	5.30	9	Four to five hours.
15 0 ...	5.30	10	"
11 8 ...	4.45	10	"
8 6 ...	5	10	"
10 6 ...	5	10	"
7 6 ...	5	7	"
7 9 ...	5	6	"
9 7 ...	4.45	5	"
15 2 ...	5	12	"
13 11 ...	4.30	12	"
11 2 ...	5	9	"
12 9 ...	4.30	11	"
10 0 ...	4.30	10	"
10 2 ...	5	7	"
11 9 ...	4	15	Five hours.
11 4 ...	6	7	Three hours.

It needs no remark of ours to point out the hardship which this excessive homework imposes upon the teachers. What is the remedy for this? That is the question.

PRIMER DEPARTMENT.—In the Primer department notable progress has been made in many directions. The introduction of subjects for hand and eye training has dealt a death-blow at the stepped gallery, whose only recommendation was its capacity for accommodating large numbers. We have seen as many as a hundred children packed in one of these great stairways in a space, which by all the recognised laws of hygiene should not have accommodated more than forty or fifty. A few still survive as those who have outlived their age and generation; but if the present policy of the Board continues, as we have little doubt it will, their days are surely numbered. Further, the introduction of manual training has resulted in the pupils of the lower classes taking a greater interest in their work. Let us trust it will mean a complete and effective arrest of that dull, prosaic, stolid, unresponsive attitude which was so readily developed under a regimé in which the work of the two lower grades consisted largely in an alternation between writing and figuring, with an occasional song thrown in to vary the monotony. Even to-day there are those who do not sufficiently realise the importance of making the work of the little ones as varied and active as possible. The little ones must be active. It is thus and only thus that they can possibly attain their proper development. To put an undue strain on them is to arrest their mental growth. The teacher's aim is not to restrict, but to develop; to keep mind and body profitably employed, and by varied occupation to impart sufficient interest in the work to insure that the body is working with the mind and the mind controlling the body. The teacher's task here is an extremely difficult one, owing to the diversity of the natures of the pupils. Where one will find steady employment for fifteen minutes, another exhausts all the possibilities of the occupation in less than five. What to do with him during the remaining portion of his period is just *the* problem; it is here that the difference between the skilful and the unskilful teacher becomes manifest. In the

lowest grades of schools, those below grade 5, and especially those with an average of between thirty and forty, the infants are likely to fare badly unless a strenuous and methodical effort is made by the teacher to use the material at his command. The Board has been almost lavish in granting supplies to help the teacher of this class of school—material consisting of plasticine, crayons, bricks, and sticks has been supplied—and yet we have not unfrequently found the material untouched. To the question, "Why?" such answers as "want of time," "want of knowledge," &c., revealed a lack of interest quite inexcusable. If the matter cannot be viewed from the position of the scholar, it might be from that of the teacher. Surely for his own sake, if not for the sake of the pupil, this work is worth taking in hand. In striking contrast to this attitude is that of those who find in the material supplied the solution of the great difficulty of planning a suitable time-table for the little ones, who from the nature of the case must for a good part of the day be left to themselves.

In composition, both oral and written, a great step forward has been taken; but many teachers have not yet realised the great possibilities that may be developed in the very early stage. The principle we are making towards is this: that the written expression of ideas should commence as soon as a child begins to know words, or as soon as it begins to be able to write the symbols for sounds, and so make up words. Even those teachers who are using the "word and sentence" method of teaching reading fail to realise that an important part of this method is the use in sentences composed by the pupils themselves of the words learned in the reading-lesson. That is to say, composition is an integral part of the method. Reading, writing, and composition go hand in hand. It is just here that the realm of the unexplored lies—the undiscovered country to many teachers—and the call is, "Go forward and take possession of it."

In the upper primer classes the place of composition is now sufficiently recognised and many of the pupils showed considerable facility in writing on the subjects we allotted to them. The teachers are unanimous in this, that the scholars take keen interest in expressing themselves in writing; and in this also, that the written and the oral composition in the very early stages furnish the very best means at the teacher's command for becoming acquainted with the mispronunciations, mis-spellings, and wrong impressions of individual pupils.

It is one of the rare treats of an Inspector's life to go into an infant room where the little ones are being trained from the very day of entering school to say what they have to say in clear and distinct tones and in a succession of sentences.

The Work of the Standards.—We do not propose this year to enter into a detailed criticism of the various subjects or to make a comparison of the progress made in the different standards. Many of our teachers have striven earnestly to bring their methods into line with a higher test than that of mere examination; they have endeavoured to give reality to their teaching; they have endeavoured to lead the pupils to an intelligent mastery of the facts brought before them; they have sought to extend their own knowledge in directions where it was found lacking; they have shown themselves receptive of new ideas; they have turned to good account the opportunities afforded them of learning more about their work, its methods and ideals, and the material with which they work. So much we can say without reservation, and there is little need to say more. When the work of teaching falls into hands of willing, enthusiastic, and open-minded men and women, the task of criticism gives place to the much more pleasant and agreeable one of pointing out still better ways, new paths to progress. Moreover, much criticism is at the present juncture undesirable, even if it were necessary. It is the word of encouragement that comes appropriately just now. Troubled and almost baffled as many have been with the new demands of a very full and very suggestive syllabus, dismayed by their own deficiencies in the face of the new methods suggested, it would be out of place for us to say anything that might discourage. The work many have so strenuously done this year will make next year's task less heavy, and the careful preparation made with many misgivings will pave the way for more confident future effort.

True we can find those in our ranks who make light of serious preparation for their daily work. There always is and always will be the annoying minority who do not realise the tremendous responsibilities they, as teachers, have undertaken; people who take pleasure in seeing their work through at the earliest possible moment in the afternoon, and who take care to begin at the latest legal minute in the morning. Unfortunately some of our young teachers have shown symptoms of this perfunctory habit—worst of all maladies in a profession, which, as we have said before, calls for the exercise of the highest powers of work and devotion. If this paragraph happens to catch their eye, which is very doubtful, we would in all earnestness ask them to mend their ways, or end their days as teachers, falsely so called, and find their way into some avenue of life where half-hearted and spasmodic service may be productive of less harm.

We have made a very strenuous endeavour to break away from the stereotyped form of examination and inspection. We feel that intelligent and thoughtful teaching is inseparably bound up with intelligent and thoughtful methods of examination. Many teachers, however, are too much inclined to remember the details of the Inspector's examination, and to model their methods of teaching accordingly, while they ignore the broad principles underlying these details. Thus, in seeking to emphasize the importance of practical work in geography, the examiner deals somewhat fully with, say, the keeping of weather calendars, and the next year the teacher pays special attention to this and ignores the importance of practical work in other parts of the subject. If this is to be the result of examinations, then far better that they should be abolished altogether. Nothing must come between the teacher and his supreme task of developing the intelligence of his scholars. A summary of the points upon which stress was laid will indicate the lines along which the examinations in the main were conducted.

1. *Free Oral Expression upon Familiar Subjects in every Class in the School.*—We have tried to set as an aim before ourselves and before our teachers that pupils should at every opportunity be encouraged to give in continuous form a description of that about which they have been learning or which they

have seen. In some schools the results of this test were simply surprising in point of merit; this, too in some of the remote country schools where timidity and natural aversion to talking to strangers are supposed to reign supreme. The development of this power will lead to many very important results, among which we may mention: (*a*) greater reciprocity between teachers and taught; (*b*) better pronunciation and enunciation—results much to be desired; (*c*) elimination of common errors in speech; (*d*) ability to talk about subjects which possess some interest; (*e*) opportunity for ascertaining the amount of knowledge pupils possess on any given subject. One of the outstanding defects of our school-work has always been this: that it has found little place for the exercise of that power of expression which in their natural surroundings children use freely and abundantly, and a great gain will be made if the power so freely used at home can be let loose as school.

2. *Power to read at Sight Passages dealing with the Scope of the Comprehension of Pupils.*—Rarely during the examination was any other than unseen reading given. Even the primer classes were asked to read and to interpret matter which they had not previously seen. Pupils were first asked to read silently the paragraph given them; next to tell to the class in their own words the substance of what was read, and lastly to read the piece aloud. This may seem a somewhat severe test to apply all round, but we are fully persuaded that it is the only fair and right one; and, moreover, experience has shown that wherever the pupils have been well taught they not only readily undertake it, but they enter into it with much more zest than into the oft-read and doubly stale lessons from the book. We believe that it really gives the pupils a better chance to show how far they have benefited by their teaching. Besides all this it will, we trust, be one factor in dealing a death-blow at the pernicious and foolish practice of reading and re-reading lessons until all interest has gone out of them. We are aware that there is another difficulty underlying the practice—viz., that of obtaining suitable reading material. This is not so great as it would appear. Many schools overcome it by using one or other of the school papers published, others by encouraging the formation of a school library; and others by appealing to their Committees for funds to purchase a supply of supplementary Readers. The question of school Readers is one of paramount importance in the working of the school, and from the teacher's point of view, as well as from the point of view of many of the parents, there is very much to be said in favour of the proposal that they should be provided free to all schools.

3. *Much more Practical and Mental Work in Arithmetic.*—In almost all the schools a practical test was given. Here is an example from Standard IV: (1.) Measure your desk, draw a plan of it, and show its area in square inches. (2.) Count the money given on the table, and find out how much more you would require to give 1s. 3d. to each of the boys in your class. (3.) How much milk will the given vessel hold, and find its cost at 3d. per quart. (4.) A man begins work at 8.15 a.m. and works till 6.30 p.m. with a break of an hour at 12 o'clock; find his wages at 1s. 6d. an hour. As far as possible we tried to find out whether the measures and tables had been practically taught, and whether the problems submitted to the pupils had some relation to actual things and actual needs. Such tests as the above were given in all classes, and where they were well done displaced the usual test cards. Mental tests were given in some of the classes, and the results of these were sufficiently striking to bring home to the minds of all the need of giving this important branch a very prominent place in the teaching of the subject. When it is considered that most of the arithmetic we are called upon to do in actual life is of the order of rapid mental calculation, it will be recognised that we are right in seeking for a revival in this class of work. Much that we teach in the way of theoretical arithmetic might well be thrown to the winds; while much that we exclude in the way of real practical tests and rapid mental calculations should be prominently and diligently included.

4. *In Written Composition, the Expression of Knowledge gained in other Departments of School-work: Geography, History, Science, Nature-study.*—Every child should be able to express itself intelligently about what has been learned in any of the other lessons. Thus composition is co-ordinated with the other subjects. Every lesson, we say, should be, more or less, a lesson in language; and nearly every lesson in science or geography or history may profitably be completed by a short written exercise in which the child is required to express as accurately as possible his knowledge of some portion of the subject about which he has been learning. Thus to a certain extent we have discarded special themes in composition; but not altogether, for letter-writing naturally turns itself into such channels as holidays, public functions, railway excursions, &c., and it is when handling such topics as these that the imagination is let loose and fuller opportunities given for the use of figurative language in which so many children delight. What we have wished to insist upon is that the ability to compose correctly should not be confined to such efforts, and that the ability to write correctly should be judged just as much from the efforts made to convey information regarding the facts of geography, history, or science as from the efforts made when the child is deliberately seeking to work out some theme. Expression should always be as accurate and correct as possible, even if it is given only in regard to the position, direction, and importance of a river.

5. *Ability to spell correctly the Common Words of Everyday Use and the Words with which the Pupil is brought into Contact in its Study of the Facts of History or Geography, especially where these are Words of Ordinary Usage.*—The habit of habitually gauging ability in spelling by tests from prepared books should largely be abolished. It is a notable fact that good spelling of words and paragraphs from the reading-books may coexist with poor spelling in composition and in exercises where ordinary words of ordinary speech have to be employed. The remedy for this is apparent. Teaching must be systematically directed to the correct spelling of the words which form the pupil's volcabulary. We have drawn emphatic attention to this need by including in our tests for spelling words of common speech, and by counting it of the first importance when forming our judgment on the work in this important subject that the words used by the pupils in expressing their answers to questions in geography, and especially in their written compositions, shall be correctly spelt.

6. *Practical Work in Geography and Science.*—The proper teaching of these subjects is still a "dark continent" to a good many teachers, and we fear that the readiness with which text-books are put into the hands of the pupils, and the slavishness with which the lines laid down there are followed, will leave us very little better off than we were before in the matter of method. Contact with the facts first, inference from these second, and the book third and last, should be the recognised order. It is the method prescribed for these subjects in the syllabus rather than the matter which marks the point of departure from what we were formerly accustomed to; and the onus is laid upon every teacher of seeing that his treatment of them does not degenerate into the mere gleaning of information from the text-book. It is "mastery over facts" through looking at them and understanding them that is our aim; power to interpret the forces and phenomena of nature and of life, power to think, power to look out into the world and to see. Text-book work will never give this result, and though information about things is of some value, it can never become a substitute for first-hand knowledge gained by observation, search, and discovery.

7. *Unification of the Various Subjects of the School Course.*—Those subjects which present points of contact must be brought together, schemed together, and dovetailed into one another. Thus the reading-lessons, by judicious selection, may be made to cover over the courses in geography and the whole course in history, these being in some of their aspects highly suitable for treatment through the medium of the reading-lessons. One scheme of lessons could be formulated to include all the necessary practical work in geography, science, and the "measurement" part of arithmetic. And so what seems a hopeless and embarrassing multiplicity of separate subjects may be skilfully reduced and applied under two or three headings. "Correlation" is the word we use to express this unity we have been speaking of, and "correlation" is the watchword of the teacher who would most efficiently direct his work. Nature and knowledge are one, the human mind is one, and though for purposes of discussion we separate our various branches of knowledge, we must never allow such separation to prevent us running together for purposes of instruction and demonstration such subjects as in the nature of things are closely allied.

Such are some of the principles we have endeavoured to carry with us into the schools. We fully appreciate the difficulties teachers have experienced in adjusting themselves to the new order of things. There was something so definite about the old, and there is something so indefinite about the new. It requires something approaching courage to step out and realise our freedom. The matter of adjustment is just as difficult for Inspectors as it is for teachers, but we are surely at one in welcoming a change which gives so much freedom, so much scope for initiative and enthusiasm.

Signs of Progress.—The progressive spirit has been abroad in our district in matters outside the course of instruction. To the credit of the Board a lead has been taken in several reforms which are destined to have far-reaching influence throughout the whole colony. Some of these reforms were foreshadowed in last year's report, and we are grateful for the fact that the suggestions vaguely hinted at have been taken up in earnest. First among the reforms we place the adoption of the single desk in lieu of the dual. This step, which for many reasons could be taken only after very serious consideration, carries with it several very important results from the teacher's point of view, and it is valuable from his point of view because it enables him to do fuller and more adequate justice to his scholars. It secures the absolute independence of each pupil; it recognises his claim for separate and independent treatment; it makes discipline easy; it insists on an adequate amount of air and floor space for each child. These and other advantages are surely adequate gains for the increased expenditure which the new method of seating will involve. Next there is the matter of consolidating rural schools so as to render instruction in them more efficient. Although this has been fully discussed, for good and sufficient reasons no scheme of consolidation has yet come into operation. We will have to possess ourselves in patience yet awhile. It will be some time before the public mind becomes sufficiently formed on the subject to render a scheme effective. Several parts of our district lend themselves well to the working-out of the system. Among these may be mentioned Rongotea, Marton, Rangiwahia, Manaia, and Kaponga; and we trust that when the suitable opportunity comes, and the displacement of the smaller school becomes practicable and necessary, there will be no hesitation in adopting the conveyance system, which in similar circumstances in other lands has proved an unqualified success. The small school is a necessity in new districts where roads are bad and settlement sparse; but in older districts, where roads are good and settlement closer, a system of consolidation should prevail, and no school should be found within eight or ten miles of a neighbouring school. The Board has done valuable service in giving the matter prominence, and we trust it will be brought under public notice at every possible opportunity. Another matter in which the Board has given a lead to the colony is that of providing out of its funds two travelling scholarships, one for men and one for women, to be competed for annually by the teachers of the district. The scholarships are of the value of £20, and carry also the privilege of a month's leave of absence. The first awards were made this year, and fell to Mr. W. Adams, headmaster of the Patea School, and Miss Finlayson, mistress of the Rongotea School. Both these teachers have arranged for their leave of absence. Miss Finlayson goes to see the schools in the southern districts, while Mr. Adams goes to Australia to visit Victoria and South Australia. The scholarships are awarded by the Inspectors, partly for a specially prepared thesis on an educational subject, and partly for efficiency in school-work. A scholarship will on no account be awarded, however excellent the thesis submitted, unless the actual work of the school bears marks of thoughtfulness, progress, and thoroughness. The appointment of a special instructor in nature-study is another step in the right direction. In a rural district it is of the first importance that the teaching should give special and direct prominence to a subject which bears so directly upon the life work of so many people. In appointing a man who has had a large and varied experience as a teacher, and also an intimate scientific knowledge of plant and insect life, the Board has acted wisely, and we anticipate for Mr. J. Grant a useful career in this new department. His will be to a large extent the work of the pioneer, and we will watch with more than ordinary interest the developments that result from his efforts.

In the matter of providing apparatus for school-work, the Board has again dealt with its schools and teachers in a generous manner. The latest purchase, in the shape of a splendid lantern with specially selected slides, should prove of great value to teachers, and we trust there are many who will make arrangements for its use in their schools for a short period each year. Enterprising committees in the district might act upon the hint given here to the effect that, if they cannot see their way to purchase a lantern for themselves, they might materially assist in the matter by providing darkening shutters to enable the lantern to be used. In the matter of providing science apparatus the Board has been most generous, and it is to be hoped that every teacher will show his appreciation of this by using every piece of apparatus provided for his school. Nothing should rust unused, and nothing should be allowed to get into disrepair. To have everything in thorough working-order should be the aim of all in respect of apparatus and material.

School Hygiene.—Much might be profitably written under this head. The attention of school authorities everywhere is being directed to the need there is that greater precautionary measures be taken in regard to the physical well-being of the children attending our schools. In some other countries it is the practice to have all children medically examined, and there is much in this course to commend. In New Zealand during the past few months an examination has been made of the teeth of the scholars, and the researches of dentists have revealed a deplorable condition of neglect in this matter. Where the movement will eventually lead is still undetermined; but it is sure to have the good effect of arousing more interest in matters affecting the general health of scholars. Leaving alone for the present general matters of health, and the whole question of the desirability or otherwise of having all our pupils medically examined, we venture to think that there is a field as yet little touched where teachers might exercise some considerable influence, and help to prevent the growth of defects. In the matter of eyesight and hearing a few simple tests might be placed in the hands of teachers by which they could discover defects that are likely to retard the pupils' progress, and perhaps lead ultimately to serious trouble. Medical testimony goes to show that defective eyes and ears are all too common, and further to indicate that school-work does not tend to improve matters. Would it not be possible for the Board to arrange with some medical man to give a few lectures to teachers on the subject, or to put in their hands in pamphlet form certain tests by which they might discover faults and defects in the eyesight and hearing of their scholars?

School Exhibition.—Not the least important event of our school year was the exhibition of school-work done under the Manual and Technical Regulations. This was held in the Technical School, Wanganui, towards the close of the year. The schools of the district were closed a week earlier than usual to give to all the fullest opportunity of visiting the exhibition. Arrangements were made with the Railway Department whereby scholars were allowed to travel at school-excursion rates. Teachers were allowed to come in free by using the tickets provided by the Education Department. The citizens of Wanganui, with characteristic enthusiasm, undertook to billet scholars who could not conveniently make the visit in one day. The undertaking was on the whole successful. Something like a hundred schools sent in exhibits, and from very many of these exhibits were sent for various classes. The amount of work sent in, and the quality of most most of it, was an evidence of the whole-hearted enthusiasm evinced by teachers in the movement. A very large number of schools availed themselves of the opportunity thus offered for seeing what was being done in manual and technical work throughout the district. Special trains were run from all parts of the district, and during the week the crowd of visiting scholars and teachers gave quite an animated appearance to the town. About a hundred and fifty children of outlying schools availed themselves of the hospitality of the Wanganui townsfolk, and stayed for one or more nights. Needless to say these will long remember the exhibition. The testimony of teachers on every side was that the work shown was of the nature of a revelation. It is quite easy to understand why it should be so. Working away by himself in his own school, the average teacher has few chances of seeing what his neighbours are doing; so that when he does see it, as he had the opportunity of doing in Wanganui, it comes with all the freshness of a great surprise; and we trust it will prove to many a real incentive to aim at a higher standard and produce work of a quality which hitherto they had not believed it possible to obtain. To Mr. Varney, Director of the Technical School, and his energetic committee we are extremely grateful for the assistance they rendered in bringing the exhibition to so successful an issue.

One or two matters akin to the exhibition and in part suggested by it are worthy of mention here. It seems to us that, good as are the present travelling facilities for children offered by the Railway Department, greater advantages might still be given. Schools might be allowed two or three days in the year on which they could go from home to visit other districts or other towns than their own, no charge being made for their fares, and attendance on such occasions being as compulsory as on ordinary school days. Again, the billeting of so many children in Wanganui during the exhibition suggests the possibility of schools in different parts of the district entering into similar holiday arrangements with one another. Suppose for example that Rongotea and Manaia enter into some such arrangement, each in turn acting as host to the other for two or three days during one of the term holidays. We are pleased to recognise here the enthusiasm and whole-hearted zeal of those teachers who have been furthering the ends we have in view in writing this paragraph by organizing, in connection with their schools' camping parties, visits to local industries, visits to agricultural shows, &c. A contingent from the upper classes of one of our northern schools, under the direction and supervision of the headmaster and first assistant, paid a two or three days' visit to the Palmerston Show. One of the local schools was kindly lent for camping purposes. Needless to say the excursion was both enjoyable and profitable. How much more profitable it might have been had it been possible to take treble the number?

Pupil-teacher Examinations.—The regulations for pupil-teachers were revised during the year The most important changes made are (1) the abolition of the local examinations and the substitution of the Civil Service and Matriculation Examinations; and (2) the arrangement whereby instruction in

most of the subjects of the course is given at centres, instead of at the schools to which the pupil-teachers severally belong. The centres of instruction are Wanganui, Hawera, Marton, and Palmerston.

In adopting the former change, we have come into line with the Department's general regulations on the subject, and we believe that it will be a great advantage to the pupil-teachers to have the number of examinations they are required to face so substantially reduced. The regulations require that the instructors at the various centres shall examine and report periodically on the work done, and also that the Inspector shall, on the occasion of any of his visits to the school, investigate carefully the work of the pupil-teachers. It is too early yet to give a pronouncement upon the success or otherwise of the scheme for centralising the instruction; but we believe it will prove better for all concerned than the previous method. It gives to all an equal opportunity by bringing them under the same conditions; it shortens for them the ordinary school day; it removes a burden from headmasters, whose school work demands their whole thought and energy; and when once the system is fairly established, we believe it will result in better and sounder progress than was possible before.

The local scholarship examinations have also been abolished, and candidates for these will now be required to face the National Scholarship and Civil Service Examination. The amended scholarship regulations have been sent to the Education Department for approval, and will be issued shortly. This unification of our examination system is a decided step forward, and means for pupils and teachers a relief from a strain which at certain times was well nigh intolerable.

Certificates of Proficiency and Competency.—The number of candidates for the certificate of proficiency was 849, and of these 537 gained proficiency certificates, and 140 competency certificates. During the year, while the examinations were in progress, the regulation regarding the conditions on which this certificate is to be awarded was altered; but we deemed it inadvisable to make any change until the end of the year. The new regulation adopts a higher standard than the old and therefore makes a much clearer line of demarcation between the competency and the proficiency certificate. It will be much better so. The proficiency certificate will under new conditions be gained only by those pupils who have thoroughly mastered their work. The majority will have to be content with the lower certificate; and the fact that the higher certificate is beyond their reach will, we trust, effectively put an end to the tendency to put undue strain upon backward pupils.

With regard to the certificate of proficiency, it may be pointed out here, in order to remove any apparent idea of harshness there may be in refusing to grant it in the case of a large number of pupils who may be fit only for the lower, that after three months' additional preparation a special examination may be asked for. Such an examination was held at the close of year, and was taken advantage of by a considerable number who had at the previous examination been unsuccessful.

Conclusion.—We have once more to express our thanks to the Board for the ready support given to us in our work and for the consideration given to any proposals we have had to make; to the teachers for their co-operation and help during examination and in the furtherance of our plans and schemes for the betterment of the schools, and to the office staff for the assistance they have rendered from time to time.

We have &c.,

Wm. Gray,
Jas. Milne,
T. B. Strong,
} Inspectors.

The Chairman, Education Board.

HAWKE'S BAY.

Sir,— Education Office, Napier, 31st March, 1906.

At the close of the school year in December last, ninety-three schools were in active operation under the Board's control, and six under the control of the Catholic body. Two of the Board's schools were opened during the year—viz., Wigan and Argyle—and the small half-time school at Whakarau in the Motu district was closed. Eight of the schools have an attendance of less than ten pupils, ten of them have between ten and thirty, sixteen between twenty-one and forty, and thirty-five between forty-one and ninety. In the schools with an average attendance of not more than forty, one teacher is allowed, and two teachers in schools where the attendance exceeds forty and is not more than ninety. Thus more than two-thirds of the Board schools are staffed with one or with two teachers. When the staffing was controlled by Education Boards, three teachers were recognised by the Board as being necessary in schools where the average attendance exceeded seventy-five, and an experience of the working of the schools under both schemes compels me to report that a modification of the present staffing is desirable in schools where the average attendance at present exceeds seventy-five. In fact, the present staffing scale is seriously defective in several important particulars. The efficiency of the schools would be improved by a modification of the staffing in the direction indicated.

Attendance.—The school attendance for the year shows a very small increase compared with the previous year. Although much activity is shown by settlers for the establishment of small schools the total increase in the school attendance does not compare favourably with the increase of previous years. Small household schools are increasing, and settlers in remote parts of the district avail themselves of the advantages offered by the Board in the way of grants. The question of suitable buildings for small schools often presents a difficulty, but this might easily be overcome by the erection of a small and inexpensive building to meet the temporary requirements of a district. The type should be fixed and the work of erecting a building could be undertaken by the settlers themselves, who would take care to have specifications and conditions carried out to the fullest extent. A total of 8,865 children were returned as belonging to the schools, and 8,238 were actually present at examination. This is exclusive of 598 pupils belonging to the Catholic schools. In twelve schools all the pupils were present on examination day, but the existence of various forms of sickness brought up the number of absentees

from the annual examination to 627. Compared with the school rolls of the previous year, there was an increase in the attendance of 184 pupils. This amounts to barely two for each school, and does not equal the number of new attendants that ought to be shown by the ordinary increase of population in the district, without taking into consideration the steady inflow of population from outside districts during the past years. One can only account for the smallness of the increase by supposing the rapid extension of settlement and, as a consequence, that many children of school age in the remote portions of the district are receiving no education whatever.

School Accommodation.—A good deal has been done of late to meet the wants of the district in the matter of accommodation. The special building grants have helped very materially to bring about a much better feeling among Committees than was the case a few years ago. Much inconvenience is felt at Tokomaru Bay and at Mohaka from the absence of suitable buildings, but the fact that grants have been available for a year or more shows the existence of other causes in the supply of needful accommodation. Port Awanui and Wigan (Takapau) have been provided for, and the two large schools now being built, one in Gisborne and one on the Kaiti just outside the borough boundary of that town, will supply places for 700 pupils. Several applications have been made for the opening of schools within the Wairoa County, and inquiries are now being made as to the actual wants of the places concerned. To the south of Napier the most urgent demands have been met, and all the larger centres have sufficient places except Hastings, where accommodation is much needed for the large secondary classes of its district high school. Provision is also necessary at Hastings, Waipukurau, Dannevirke, and Woodville, under the manual and technical regulations, if manual training is to make successful headway in the work of the schools. The grant recently made to Waipawa will be of service, but full provision must be made in the places indicated, if special instruction under the manual and technical regulations is to be carried on satisfactorily.

Condition of Buildings.—Most of the school buildings may be classed as being in fair working-order. The plan of painting the interior of the schools equally with the exterior is a wise one, and will save the full cost of the work in a few years by the partial destruction of the wood-borer. Many of the schools present an attractive interior, and the effect upon teachers and children is obvious. One thing still remains to be done in the schools of the district. The old desks that have been in use for twenty years or more require to be replaced—for young children by a similar type of desk as is at present used, for children between Standards I and III inclusive, by dual desks, and for children above Standard III by the single desk. This arrangement is possible in all cases where there is an infant department, whilst in the smaller schools of the district the dual desk might be used without distinction. All teachers' residences require a careful overhaul, as in many cases repairs are badly needed. Teachers cannot obtain needful accommodation in either of these places, and they suffer serious privations in consequence. When visiting the Puketitiri School a short time ago, I found the schoolroom divided by a screen from floor to roof. On inquiring as to the cause, it appeared that one portion was used as a living-room and bedroom by the mistress and her paralytic son, no other accommodation being available in the settlement. The Committee had made the arrangements, and so anxious were they to have a residence that they offered £10 and 2,000 ft. of timber towards making the needful house provision. The position at Waipiro is more harassing, but the case related will suffice to show some of the real hardships experienced by teachers who take up duties in the outlying parts of the district. No wonder that teachers are hard to obtain for country schools, and the difficulties will increase unless the people themselves assist teachers to obtain some of the home comforts of a country life. The school-grounds continue to receive much careful attention. Without wishing to place schools in competition with one another, it must be said to the credit of the Committees, teachers, and children in Poverty Bay that the school-grounds are better kept, and the cultivation of flowers is more fostered than in the schools further southwards. The idea is fast taking hold of the people that, if nature-study is to form part of school training, much of the work must be done in the vicinity of the school; hence the school-grounds, equally with the schoolroom, must be used for the instruction of the children. The view is a correct one, and the more we can associate the beautiful and useful in the training of pupils the better will be their ideals in after life.

Examination Tables.—The accompanying tabulation contains the number of pupils according to standard classes who were attending the schools at the time of my annual visit. The figures include pupils belonging to the senior classes of the four district high schools. These appear under Class VII in the tabulation, which also includes the Seventh Standard children from other than the district high schools :—

Classes.	Number on Roll.	Number present at Examination.	For Corresponding Period, 1904.		Average Age, 1905.
			Number on Roll.	Number present.	
Standard VII	146	139	160	136	14·6
" VI	782	565	511	502	14·0
" V	784	750	829	803	13·1
" IV	1,118	1,074	983	948	12·2
" III	1,080	1,041	1,162	1,102	11·2
" II	1,160	1,103	1,077	1,034	10·0
" I	1,127	1,050	1,164	1,114	8·8
Total	5,997	5,722	5,886	5,639	11·11
Preparatory pupils ...	2,868	2,516	2,795	2,494	7·5
Grand totals ...	8,865	8,238	8,681	8,133	11·4
Catholic schools ...	598	549	645	575	...

These facts present the barest information as to the actual condition of education in the district. Standard VII class shows an actual falling-off in numbers; but this is balanced by the satisfactory increase that has taken place in Standard VI. Generally it may be remarked that very little change has taken place in the classification as shown in the return for 1904, and this, I think, must be set down as showing a satisfactory working-condition in the schools of the district. These results, except in the Sixth and Seventh Standard classes, are summarised from the promotions made by the teachers, and they show the wisdom of intrusting teachers with increased responsibilities in the examination, classification, and promotion of their pupils. Responsibility tends to train the judgment, and so far as the larger schools are concerned I have no occasion to direct attention to improper classification under the regulations. It is mainly in the small schools where weaknesses are met with, where most of the teachers are untrained and unclassed, and where the tendency exists to over-classification. In such schools it often becomes necessary to regulate the classification in the interests of children and teachers. The next examination in the district is to be synchronous, for all schools and for all classes. Regulation 26, it appears, enables this to be done; and, with the approval of the Board and the united support of the teachers, the plan is to be adopted in December next, when all class-promotions will take place other than those made in accordance with Regulation 4 of the instructions dealing with the examination of schools. My own examinations will not be less formal than heretofore, but they will be directed to a different end than the mere pass. The quarterly tests set by the headmaster will be studied and the pupils' papers examined. The work prepared under Regulation 5 will be revised, and in the larger schools opportunity will be given for class-teachers to set certain questions bearing on the syllabus they have been preparing.

The Syllabus.—With reference to the subjects of instruction, there appears to be a general feeling among teachers that the syllabus contains too much to hope for thoroughness in the various subjects. The subjects of instruction are undoubtedly too many, but I am inclined to think that teachers mistake the intention of the regulations. No doubt the syllabus in subjects like geography, history, and nature-study presents a formidable amount of work to be prepared, but the work to be done covers a term of years, and teachers may select a course for themselves, so long as it is based on the syllabus. The discretionary power that constitutes the real strength of the regulations appears to frighten most of the teachers who have been so long spoon-fed, and told what to do and what to leave undone, that their own individuality has almost been lost by the lack of use. The present is a time of transition. The schools are passing from the old to the new, and the teachers who anticipate to-morrow and bestir themselves betimes will find mere bands of elastic binding the regulations that have been issued for their general guidance, and suggestion. What is to be feared is the lack of thoroughness under the regulations that are pressing children into the scholarship examinations, and thence into the district high schools and secondary schools at too early an age. There is no doubt that pupils can be prepared at thirteen to pass the bare requirements as set forth for Standard VI, but there is a lack of that thoroughness which is indispensable to those children whose school life will close under ordinary circumstances after passing the Standard VI examination. It seems to me that the tendency is to foster the leaving period at too early an age, but at the expense of thoroughness and against the future well-being of the children. The economic aspect as it affects labour appears to have been altogether overlooked.

Essential Subjects.—Reading and writing do not receive the attention formerly given to them in the schools. Intelligent class-reading is seldom heard, and some urge that in the case of writing the typewriter will soon be in general use, and that handwriting will hardly be required. But, whatever new methods may come into vogue, it is certain that thoroughness will be necessary. Notwithstanding the growing use of the typewriter, reading and writing will be necessary for the individual in his dealings with his fellows, and in the early stages of a pupil's training they should be thoroughly prepared. The new method of teaching in English has many advantages, and I am inclined to think that there is evidence of more freedom in the compositions of senior pupils. Much less formalism is apparent, and the tendency is to deal with a much wider range of subjects. Geography in its physical aspect is receiving much more rational treatment in the schools. The work is practical, and much of it is based on actual observation. Scheme A is a form of nature-study that deserves to be promoted, but it is curious that so many teachers having once learned how to carry out an experiment fail to repeat it or even encourage their pupils to do so. Thus many schools obtained a year or so ago a thermometer, a mercurial barometer, and a rain-gauge, and records were taken twice a day for some time after the instruments were obtained, but the interest in several schools has died away. Children can be trained to experiment of their own accord by merely arousing their curiosity in the measurement of heat as applied to life—the life of a plant equally with that of an animal—and if their attention was called to the absence of growth, to the partial disappearance of flowers in winter, and to the effects of cold and heat upon themselves, suggestions would be available whereby other experiments might be made, keeping the barometer, thermometer, and rain-gauge equally under notice. The power to do something is a great factor in the upbringing of children, and experimental science, or the art of doing something in order to bring about a certain result, should be kept steadily in view by every teacher.

Science-work.—Instruction under the manual and technical regulations of the Act has made satisfactory progress. Cooking-classes and dressmaking-classes for girls, and woodwork-classes for boys, have been established at Napier, Hastings, and Gisborne; and for dressmaking only, in Taradale, Waipawa, and Waipukurau. The employment of special instructors in the subjects named is working well, and the classes will be extended to include Dannevirke, Woodville, and other places as soon as the necessary arrangements can be made. Of the three kinds of classes named, dressmaking has hitherto been the most popular, as the mothers of the girls appeared to realise at once the practical advantages to be derived from this form of instruction. The country schools in some cases are receiving instruction in elementary agriculture from some of the more experienced teachers, but it is hoped that the benefits will be much widened now that there is an instructor available qualified to deal in a practical manner with this subject. As an example of the kind of work being done in the

school-gardens, the following is quoted from a master's memorandum: "Matawhero School-garden, 1905—Planted 40 lb. 'Up-to-date' potatoes. Sprayed four times, following the instructions in the Government pamphlet, by Mr. Kirk. Dug out 600 lb. of eating-potatoes, and not an unsound one in all. The boys did all the work of planting, hoeing, moulding, &c. The ground had been trenched and limed, and superphosphates had been applied when planting. Memo: Every garden in the neighbourhood was affected by the Irish blight except the school-garden." This surely is a practical way of training lads to adopt scientific methods. It is impossible for lads so trained not to appreciate the method adopted in the school-garden as against the absence of method in the home garden, and practical good must be the outcome of such training. Then, again, the Chairman of a School Committee remarked to me in a recent visit that "his son grew better tomatoes in the school-garden than he himself could grow in his own garden." But the reason was simple—the methods had been different, as in the case at Matawhero. Examples such as these are quoted to illustrate the possibilities of the school-garden in the furtherance of agricultural science where practical and competent teachers are available. The time spent in the gardens is small, and certainly does not stay the progress of the children in other directions. But skilful teachers are necessary, and if such are to become available for technical training and instruction in the more important centres, there must be pecuniary attractions provided at least equal to what are offered to teachers in the towns.

Nature-study.—Most of the schools present a list of work that has been prepared under the heading "Nature-study." The subject, interesting though it is, fails to bring out, except in a few instances, any traces of originality of treatment from teachers, either in matter or method. The school is still the place where, sitting at a desk, pupils gather information from books what others have said and done. But is the school-room alone to remain the place of instruction? Nature-study implies open grounds and fields and sunshine, where nature is at work and can be seen and studied in action, bringing about those changes without which life would cease to be. "The forests," says the poet, "were God's first temples"; and it is in field and forest, in brook and hedgerow, where inspiration can be found to study nature as well as nature's God. In three schools I had the pleasure of accompanying the senior pupils in observation studies out in the open, and no one appeared to realise that our work was for examination purposes. The children looked upon our work as a holiday, and to myself it was a source of much pleasure. The tastes of pupils were soon discovered, suggestions were made about collecting and preserving specimens, and I learnt how the studies of children were being directed by the teachers. What we want to realise in this branch of school training is the fact that the children must be given rein. Less formalism and more individual activity will give life to the study of nature. Although I am not dissatisfied with the general improvement apparent, no teacher has yet worked out a scheme of nature-study for his own district or locality under the aspects by means of which the known can be made a stepping-stone to the unknown, as pupils widen the bounds of their studies. Topography, geology, botany, zoology, and meteorology—these can all be studied and made the starting-point to a wider acquaintance with knowledge just as the study of the historical, social, and industrial aspects of a district can be made the starting-points to the study of history and the modern economic conditions of a country. If teachers would take up nature-study along the lines suggested, science would soon become a reality in the schools, and the pleasures of both teachers and children would be greatly increased.

Regularity of Attendance.—It is interesting to notice the different means adopted by teachers and committees to foster regularity at school. At the Napier Main and other schools what is known as the "class board" is in operation. This is a board on which the regularity of each class is daily entered, and the class making the highest percentage of attendance for the week has the honour of keeping the board and entering the daily results. The plan is effective, and during my visit the regularity at the Main School was 97·7 per cent. of the school roll and 99·1 of the class which kept the "honour board." The School Committee of the Dannevirke North School present every pupil that makes full attendance for the year with 7s. 6d. in lieu of a book. The regularity has much improved since the plan was adopted. Pututahi grants to every pupil making full attendance a silver medal or a silver clasp. Many medals have been gained and some children may be seen on examination day wearing two or three or even four of such medals. The fostering of habits of regularity by the means described is a wise one, and will result in more good being done than is possible by the employment of the policeman. In a number of districts regular attendance at school has hardly been possible in consequence of measles and other forms of youthful ailments. One district suffered from a succession of floods that made attendance impossible unless children were able to ride. Closely connected with school attendance and regularity is the "milking problem." Sooner or later this question will come up for settlement by the State. Laws are made to regulate the employment of adults, but it would seem that laws are wanted to regulate the "school day" of children whose parents are engaged in the milking business. If eight hours a day are deemed sufficient for an adult to labour, surely less time ought to be expected from young children. Facts gathered from teachers and others go to show that many children are sadly overworked, if the time spent at school and in milking are taken into account. Whether from necessity or not cannot be stated, but it is certain that better supervision is called for on behalf of the children who are engaged by the milk-suppliers in towns and by many parents where dairy factories are established in the country.

School Libraries.—The school library is growing in popularity, and many of the larger schools possess a fair collection of readable books. Some of the teachers have expressed a desire to exchange books with other schools, but at present no arrangements are possible. It would be a good plan if the Central Department could formulate a general scheme for the easy interchange of books between the schools of the district. Next to the study of things comes the study of books, and it is encouraging to find the scope of school life widening within as well as without the walls of the schoolroom. About one-third of the schools possess a school library of over 100 volumes, whilst that of the Napier Main exceeds 500 volumes. Books treating of nature-study, for reference purposes, might easily be added to each library where funds are available. I make bold to say that no money in the improvement of education would be better spent than in the purchase of books to form a teacher's educational outfit in every town and country school. The limitation of a teacher's reading to the mere perusal of text-

books tends to hinder rather than advance the progress of science, particularly science as it affects the organic world. Standard works of reference would foster inquiry, and teachers who reside in isolated localities would have the satisfaction of knowing that, with the aid of standard books of reference on the flora and fauna of this country, the book of nature need not remain closed to them.

District High Schools.—The number of proficiency and competency certificates issued on the result of Standard VI exaination was: Proficiency, 319; competency, 192. In the four district high schools the numbers attending do not show a large increase. Hastings and Dannevirke are, however, prospering in numbers, Gisborne is just holding its own, but Woodville has gone back. With a large district school like that of Gisborne the smallness of the secondary department is to be regretted. It must, however, be set down to the local demand for boys and girls in the business houses, as the school is strongly and efficiently staffed. It appears to me that the time has arrived for all district-high-school pupils to be tested through the channel of the public examinations now open. The Junior Civil Service and Matriculation should be the objectives of every pupil. These examinations would supply a suitable leaving certificate, besides insuring in the schools systematic training and preparation. The range of subjects for examination is a wide one, so that studies could be easily adapted for the varying wants of each district.

Winter School.—The winter school which was held in Napier in July was much appreciated by teachers. The lectures given by Messrs. Kirk, Hamilton, Gilruth, Dinwiddie, Caughley, Watson, Smith, and Dr. Kennedy were inspiring and practical in their relation to school life and training. A request has come from the Poverty Bay teachers asking for a winter school at Gisborne during the midwinter vacation. Although the cost of carrying out a course of instruction for the benefit of teachers is somewhat heavy, the benefit to education is lasting, and of great advantage to the district. Perhaps the Board may see fit to accede to the application of the teachers from Poverty Bay.

Superannuation Scheme.—This scheme has at last become a fact for teachers. It has been long in coming, and is not what was hoped for by some, but it contains something that will be welcomed by many teachers who have laboured well for the country when conditions were very different from what they are now. Several teachers in the Board's service will retire under the scheme, but those who remain should be required by the Board to join the superannuation scheme in anticipation of the future. Advantages are certainly offered to all members of the profession, and the provision that is allowed under the scheme is likely to keep the best teachers in the service.

Conclusion.—In conclusion I have to state that my reports on the different schools, including those controlled by the Roman Catholics, have dealt with the details of school-work and progress in each locality. The spirit of educational progress is working in most districts, and many committees continue to manifest much interest in the progress of the schools. Perhaps there is not as much voluntary effort apparent as was shown a few years ago, but the notion is abroad that the Government will supply everything, hence the incentive to provide locally for the petty wants of a school is dying, if not already dead. The tone of the schools continues good; attention is paid to training in manners and behaviour, and a love of country is fostered among the pupils, both by precept and example. As a class, the teachers in all the larger schools are capable, and their attendance at the Saturday classes shows their desire to prepare themselves in the work required under the new regulations of the Department. Altogether, the past year's work has been one of general and satisfactory progress.

I am, &c.,

The Chairman, Board of Education, Napier. H. Hill, Inspector.

WELLINGTON.

Sir,— Wellington, 24th February, 1906.

We have the honour to present our report for 1905 on the condition of the primary schools in the Wellington Education District.

Statistics.—At the close of 1904 the number of schools returned as being in active operation was 152; during 1905 five new schools were opened and three were closed, making a total of 154 in operation at the end of the year. Of these, 150 were examined, the remaining four (all in Grade 0) not being in operation at the time of the Inspectors' visits. Special examinations of the secondary classes of eight district high schools were also held. In addition to public schools, eight Roman Catholic schools were examined. The following is a summary of the statistics contained in the annual return forwarded to the Education Department:—

Classes.	Number on Roll.	Present at Inspector's Annual Visit.	Average Age of Pupils in each Class.
			Yrs. mos.
Standard VII	513	490	14 7
" VI	1,344	1,311	13 9
" V	1,665	1,626	13 0
" IV	1,983	1,931	11 11
" III	2,016	1,939	10 11
" II	1,946	1,858	9 9
" I	1,947	1,856	8 8
Preparatory	5,091	4,499	6 11
Totals	16,505	15,510	11 2*

* Mean of average age.

These totals show an advance on the totals for the previous year of 412 on the roll, and of 372 present at the Inspector's annual visit. Though there is an increase in the total number of children in the district who are receiving instruction, there is a shrinkage in the numbers of Standard VII, Standard II, and the preparatory classes. For 1904 the roll-numbers in these classes were 696, 2,076, and 5,108 respectively, and for 1905, 513, 2,016, and 5,091. The falling-off of the numbers in Standard VII is satisfactorily accounted for by the opening in the city of the technical classes, which are recruited mainly from passed Standard VI pupils.

For the Catholic schools the totals were—1,255 on the roll, and 1,168 present at the annual visit. For 1904 the corresponding numbers were 1,266 and 1,219—a decrease for 1905 of eleven on the roll, and of fifty-one present at the annual visit.

The following table shows the improvement since 1903 in the average attendance for the whole district:—

	Average Roll.	Average Attendance.	Percentage.
1903	.. 15,496	12,801	82·6
1904	.. 15,886	13,462	84·7
1905	.. 16,235	14,071	86·6

or an increase of 4 per cent. in the average attendance since the appointment of a Truant Inspector, some eighteen months ago.

Accommodation.—With regard to school accommodation generally, a slow but steady improvement is taking place every year, though in some of our oldest school buildings great difficulty is experienced in organizing the classes on a satisfactory basis under the present system of staffing, as the scale regulating the staffs of public schools is a rigid one, determined solely by the average attendance. It is therefore the same for a modern structure specially built to meet the provisions of the scale as it is for an old building antiquated in design and altogether unsuited to modern requirements.

Taking the district as a whole, progress in educational matters continues to be of a satisfactory nature. As a body, our teachers are imbued with a high and proper sense of responsibility, and are earnest in their efforts to discharge their duty towards the children committed to their care. The 150 schools examined during the year we have classified as follows: "Satisfactory to good," 119; "fair," 20; "inferior," 11. Changes of teachers have been made in the cases of seven of the eleven schools classified as inferior. The majority of these schools are in Grade 0, and, as we have pointed out in previous reports, the salaries are so small that the greatest difficulty is experienced in finding qualified and suitable teachers to undertake their management. In several instances schools of this class, owing to lack of teachers, have remained closed for two and three months at a time.

Syllabus and General.—Matters of the syllabus connected with ordinary school methods have already been discussed with the teachers personally. We shall here confine ourselves, therefore, to remarks of a general nature. In the English subjects we find reading, on the whole, satisfactory, as far as fluency and expression are concerned, but faults in pronunciation and enunciation are still too prevalent, and, in some localities, reprehensibly so. We have never been slow to recognise and appreciate the numerous difficulties with which the teacher has to contend in the performance of his arduous duties, but in this matter of pronunciation we are disinclined to accept excuses. Cases have come under our observation where the evil has been remedied by a few minutes' drill a day in a selected list of words in which errors in the pronunciation of the vowel-sounds and omissions of final "d," "t," or "g" most frequently occur. The singing lesson can also be made a means of correcting these faults, as they are rarely noticeable in classes in which voice-cultivation and ear-training regularly form portion of the singing-lesson. During the coming year we hope to see in the majority of our schools the work of some standard author in use as a second Reader. For the upper classes excellent selections can be made from any of the ordinary school editions of English classics, and for Standards IV and III we have recommended works such as Kingsley's "Water Babies," and Carroll's "Alice in Wonderland," as being suitable. Spelling, as tested from dictation of newspaper matter, or from the reading-book in use, is generally good, and rarely marked lower than satisfactory. Distinctly improved work in both composition and spelling has resulted from a systematic course of work, as laid down in "Wood's "Word-building and Composition," or in Arnold's "Language Lessons."

The results in composition, judged by the essays on set subjects, are very creditable, and in schools in which nature-study and observation-lessons form prominent features of the teacher's scheme of work, some really excellent and original composition is done. Essays, however, in some schools are apt to become purely descriptive of something seen or a mere relating of a string of facts already committed to memory by the pupil for the express purpose of essay-writing, and we have found children trained on these lines to make a very poor attempt at a letter in which they are required to answer an advertisement or to give information on some business matter. The exercises in composition issued by the Department were used for the first time throughout the whole district, and with only moderate results so far as the upper standards were concerned. There is quite a mistaken idea in some quarters that, because formal or technical grammar has practically disappeared from the syllabus, nothing has taken its place. As a means of teaching composition, we have done—and we hope for ever—with the complicated analysis, the intricate parsing, the perplexing and exasperating classifications and definitions of the old grammar text-books, but it is only to make room for a saner and more rational system. But some teachers appear to be in a fog as to what the new requirements with regard to grammar are, though the directions on the syllabus are surely clear enough: "No grammar is to be introduced into the course of primary-school instruction beyond that required for the purpose of training children in the correct and ready use of their mother tongue." Copious examples illustrating the methods to be employed in order to achieve this result are given for each standard, and any teacher who is training his children in the knowledge of the functions of words, their relations to each other in a sentence, and their correct use is meeting all the requirements of the syllabus with regard to grammar. There are teachers who think that this cannot be done without having recourse to the abstruse terminology

of the grammarian; but, though the syllabus deprecates the unnecessary use of technical grammatical terms, it does not forbid their use altogether. For example, if a child is required to understand the functions and their relations to the other parts of the sentence, of the italicised words in "*Amidst thy bowers* the tyrant's hand is seen," it is sufficient, according to the new regulations, that he should recognise them as an answer to the question, "Where is the hand seen?" But if a teacher feels that he can convey to the pupil a clearer and more intelligent comprehension of these functions and relations by making use of the term "adverbial adjunct of the predicate," so far as we read the syllabus, there is nothing to prevent his doing so. Moreover, instruction on such lines will frequently lead to highly satisfactory results—satisfactory, that is, from the grammarian's point of view. For as a distinguished educational authority at Home shrewdly remarks, "Many children acquire a ready facility in applying mechanically the most elaborate analysis that perverted ingenuity can devise." We advise all teachers who still hanker after the old order of things to read Professor Meiklejohn's "Art of Writing English."

In about 50 per cent. of the schools handwriting is marked "very satisfactory to good," in about 25 per cent. "satisfactory," and in another 25 per cent. "fair to moderate." Weakness in this subject is mainly due to lack of systematic instruction not only in the formation, spacing, and joining of the letters, but also in the manner of holding the pen and the position of the body. Writing as a subject in school method has not in the past formed a sufficiently important part of a teacher's training. Few pupil-teachers appear to have any higher idea of teaching writing beyond putting a headline on the blackboard. This is one of the faults which we may look to the new training-college to remedy. The bad writing of many children is undoubtedly due to the different styles of writing that are taught during their short school life. We are by no means advocates of a uniform system of text-books, but we do think it would be a decided advantage if a uniform style of handwriting were adopted in all the schools in the colony. In many of the districts in this province the population is very shifting. At one school in particular, out of a roll-number of 997 children, no less than 581 had been admitted since the last examination, and among these newcomers there were a least half a dozen different styles of handwriting. Now, to have satisfactory results in writing in a large class, uniformity is essential, and, in cases like the above, one of the greatest obstacles to this uniformity is the continual influx of new children who have been trained in a different style of handwriting from the one in vogue in the school. There are at least seven or eight totally distinct styles of copy-books in use in the various educational districts of the colony—no two alike in the form, method of joining, spacing, and slope of the letters, and any change from one to the other entails on teacher and child a vexatious waste of time and energy.

There is still a considerable difference between the quality of the work done in the arithmetic of the upper standards and that of the lower standards. From Standard IV downwards the results are as a rule satisfactory to good, while in Standard VII to V they are seldom more than fair to satisfactory. As in the majority of cases the teachers of the upper classes are the more experienced and efficient, this difference should not exist. The explanation seems to us to be that in this subject the syllabus makes relatively too great a demand on the upper standards. In schools in the higher grades the treatment of numbers recommended in the syllabus has resulted in much improved work, but in schools under sole teachers a practically entirely oral treatment of arithmetic in the Preparatory and Standard I classes makes too great a demand on the time of the teachers.

What was formerly known as elementary science has, in this district, been largely displaced by nature-study and elementary agricultural knowledge. A few of the larger schools with laboratory accommodation have taken up chemistry under the Manual Technical Act, and are doing highly creditable work. Those schools taking up elementary practical physics are working on the lines of Sexton and Sharman's text-book, but with only moderate results so far. The number of schools in which instruction is given in elementary agricultural knowledge, combined with cottage gardening, is steadily increasing. The recent appointment as agricultural expert of Mr. W. C. Davies, whose work at Masterton West has given him quite a colonial reputation, will now insure for this subject a treatment in some degree adequate to its importance to an agricultural community. In addition to giving instruction to school-classes under the Manual and Technical Act, Mr. Davies will organize Saturday classes for teachers at one or more of the chief centres, and as soon as the laboratories can be fitted up and the grounds put in order, the work will be in full swing. With the exception of needlework, which forms part of the ordinary school course, the only subject in domestic economy receiving special treatment is cookery. The usual classes for the city and suburban schools have been satisfactorily conducted by Mrs. Neeley, at Newtown and the Terrace; and similar classes have been conducted at twelve centres in the Wairarapa by Miss Millington.

We are stongly of opinion that the science subjects would benefit by receiving more attention than at present is given to them in the Junior National Scholarship Examination. The papers for this examination are issued by the Department, and were naturally considered as an interpretation of the syllabus and a guide as to the standard to which instruction in public schools should attain. We are fully alive to the danger and evils of teachers attaching too much importance to examination requirements and results; but, at the same time, while we have examinations in our schools, it is advisable that they should give to each subject of the syllabus its due share of consideration, and we do not think that one or two odd questions in a general-knowledge paper are calculated to encourage teachers who may have made some special branch of elementary science, such as physics, a prominent feature of their programme.

In 1905, 110 schools obtained capitation under the Manual Act. The great majority of the schools have taken brushwork and plasticine-modelling, and with some excellent results. We frequently see specimens of modelling and original design with the brush that would be no disgrace to a professional artist. Provision has already been made at Thorndon for classes in woodwork. We have recommended the Board to supply to the Department for a grant for another centre in South Wellington, and before the close of the year we hope to see similar centres in the Wairarapa.

Physical instruction in our schools consists of free exercises, and exercises with clubs, dumb-bells, or poles. Proper breathing exercises should accompany all physical training, and a correct posture at writing or other lessons should receive more attention. Military drill is making satisfactory progress in our large schools. As a subject, physical instruction was marked "good" in sixty-nine schools, "satisfactory" in forty-three, and "fair" in the remainder.

There are still some teachers who do not pay sufficient attention to Regulation 5, which states: "The head-teacher shall draw up for each term or quarter schemes of work for all classes of his school, &c." If a process of inspection is to supersede the old method of individual examination at the annual visit, it is essential that the Inspector should have before him a scheme of the year's work, to aid him in forming a correct judgment on the efficiency of the school. Moreover, whatever be the method of inspection, the want of such a scheme shows that a teacher fails to recognise the necessity of a definite aim in his teaching. The new regulations are not drawn on the hard and fast lines of the syllabus of the Education Act of 1877. As they allow more freedom in the choice and treatment of subjects, it is to the teacher's own interests to show that he has exercised that freedom in a wise and judicious manner. His best method of doing this is to have a scheme of work at the beginning of the year, not necessarily to be followed rigidly, but to be amended at any time if the interests of his scholars demand its revision.

Teachers' Saturday classes for instruction in drawing, handwork (including cookery), and drill were held in Wellington, Masterton, and Pahiatua during the past year. As the training-college course will include work of this kind, a Saturday class in nature-study and elementary agriculture would, at a centre like Masterton, be of great advantage to our country teachers.

SCHOLARSHIPS.—The new regulations for Board's Scholarships came into force last year, the chief changes from the old regulations being the lowering of the age of candidates from fifteen to fourteen years, and the limiting of the number of scholarships to be held by any one school. The scholarships were awarded on the results of the National Scholarship Examination. In Class A (schools over 200 in average attendance) and in Class B (under 200 and over forty in average attendance) the competition was very satisfactory; but in Class C (attendance under forty-one) only five schools were represented, and no candidate qualified for the Junior National Scholarship allocated to this class. A number of children from the small schools are undoubtedly deterred from competing for scholarships owing to the difficulty in reaching the examination centres. Outside the city the only centres are at Otaki, Pahiatua, and Masterton, and to reach these places many candidates from the "backblocks" would have to travel thirty or forty miles. The expense to the parents of travelling and lodging is also a factor in the question. It will, of course, be impossible to meet the difficulties of even the majority of cases, but the establishment of two or three additional examination centres would afford some measure of relief. We think a good plan is the one adopted by the North Canterbury Board, which refunds the travelling and lodging expenses of all candidates who make 50 per cent. of the possible marks.

DISTRICT HIGH SCHOOLS.—District high schools have now been established at Masterton, Pahiatua, Newtown, Terrace, Petone, Hutt, Greytown, Carterton, and a secondary class has been added to the Thorndon School. We have previously reported at some length on the special problem of difficulty presented by these schools—namely, the determination of the curriculum—and it is not necessary to repeat our remarks, except to say that they are in substantial agreement with the views of the English Board of Education, as laid down in the latest code. We notice that the programmes of work drawn up for these secondary classes are apt to be too much on the lines of an English grammar school, where scholars remain for five or six years, and are prepared for special examinations. Our district high schools serve another purpose, for the majority of the children will leave at the end of two years, if not before. It is true that a few children will remain for three years, and these may be prepared for the Matriculation Examination, but it is not necessary that the whole of the children should undergo a course of work mapped out as a preparation for examinations of this class. If Latin or French be taught, the course should be optional, and should be undertaken only by those who are intending to stay at school for at least three or four years. Another danger is that too many subjects are undertaken by some of the scholars. The regulations require, as a minimum, English, arithmetic, and three other subjects, but some children have been taking as many as nine subjects. In such cases, owing to limitations of time, each subject can not possibly receive adequate attention, and as an intellectual training its value must be materially lessened. A few subjects well taught will produce better results. Mr. Tate, Director of Education in Victoria, in a report upon "Some Aspects of Education in New Zealand," says, "These district high schools may be made a most effective aid in developing a good system of technical instruction. At present they appear to me to devote too much attention to what are usually called 'high school' subjects. No doubt before long the work will become genuine 'continuation-work' of a distinctly practical nature, havng close relation to the material needs of the districts served by the schools. They will thus become elementary technical schools, and with vigorous and capable handling they should, in country districts especially, be able to solve many of the problems involved in agricultural education." The nearest parallel in England to our district high school is the higher elementary school, for which new regulations have just been issued. Some remarks made about the curriculum in the prefatory memorandum of the English Code for 1905 are worthy of quotation: "In considering curricula, it will therefore be desirable not to introduce any subject which is not a natural continuation of, or outgrowth from, the studies of the elementary school, unless it is clearly capable of being taught so as to be practically useful in view of the fact that the scholars must seek employment at fifteen or thereabouts." The English Board of Education does not approve of exactly the same curriculum for boys and girls, and it adds: "The curriculum for girls will, as a rule, be expected to include a practical training for home duties which is applicable to the circumstances of their own homes." It lays great stress on the necessity for including a sufficient amount of general instruction, and it advocates that the principle of adaptation to environment should be the guide in the choice of special subjects. "In rural districts the needs of agriculture will naturally have considerable influence in determining the

character of the practical instruction." Mr. Davies has already visited the centres where our district high schools are established, and he has received both from Committees and teachers great encouragement in his work. We look forward to seeing in most of our country schools a course in nature-study in the primary department, leading up to practical work in the garden, and to extended experimental work in the secondary classes of the district high schools.

SECONDARY SCHOOL IN WELLINGTON.—In our report of last year, and on previous occasions, we have advocated the establishment of another secondary school in Wellington, which would, in addition to giving a wide educational training, prepare children for a commercial or an industrial life, and we are pleased to note that the Board has applied to the Minister of Education for the establishment of such a school. The application is supported by the signatures of the parents of 211 scholars, but we are of opinion that the number likely to attend would be considerably more than this. The numbers entered this year at Newtown are 116, at Terrace 117, and at the Technical School 290—a total of 523—and as every year there is likely to be an increase, it is evident that the demand for an education beyond that of the primary school is such that the Minister will, we feel confident, give the application due consideration.

PUPIL-TEACHERS.—As most of our pupil-teachers are matriculated students, under the new regulations only six candidates were compelled to enter for the first examination—namely, the Junior Civil Service. One, who was absent from duty the greater part of the year owing to illness, was excused, five entered, three passed, and two failed to reach the required minimum of marks.

TRAINING-COLLEGE.—The training-college, which we have been looking forward to for years, has now become an established fact. On the acceptance of the Thorndon School for the purposes of such an institution, several conferences were held with the architect and the Department, and we here beg to acknowledge the valuable suggestions made by the Inspector-General, who readily gave us much of his valuable time. The plans of additions and alterations were accepted by the Department; and, as the contractor is at present engaged on the building, we hope soon to have suitable accommodation for efficiently carrying on the work of a training-school. The appointment to the principalship of such an experienced educationist as Mr. Gray augurs well for the efficiency of the institution. The Board recognising that the most important and most difficult work in our schools lies in the infant department, has appointed as kindergarten mistress, a teacher selected from the best training institution in England by Professor Sadler, one of the most eminent authorities on education in Europe. This lady has previously had experience with infants as well as with students in training. Moreover, she will come to us with the latest ideas from England on infant-training, a branch of educational work which has been receiving special attention of late. Her assistance, therefore, promises to be valuable not only to the institution itself, but to all the teachers of the district. The regulations drafted by the Department wisely allow of the entrance to the training-college of students of a certain academical standing, who have not had previous experience in teaching. This arrangement prepares the way for the gradual elimination of pupil-teachers by the substitution of trained assistants, a reform we have been looking forward to for some time. The next improvement to be made, on the abolition of pupil-teachers, is a reduction of the number of pupils allotted to every assistant. In the higher grades of schools the scale allows of the addition to the staff of an assistant for every increase of sixty in the average. This number is far too large to enable a teacher to carry out the spirit of the syllabus efficiently. We recommend the Board, on the approval of an Inspector, to allow our country teachers to enter the training-college for a short period. Even a week's experience would be invaluable to many of them and to the children under their charge, and, subject to the consent of Committees, an arrangement can easily be made to effect this without interfering with the work of their schools.

It is gratifying to note that Parliament, by increasing their salaries and also by making provision to establish a superannuation fund, has recognised that our teachers have not been well paid in the past for their services. Under the Superannuation Act of last session, several teachers who have served the Board faithfully and efficiently for nearly thirty years, will be retiring from the active work of the profession, and it is only fitting that they should receive some recognition from that State in whose moulding and building-up they have taken a most onerous and most important share. We welcome as a colleague Mr. J. S. Tennant, M.A., B.Sc., who began his work as an Inspector towards the end of the year, and we look forward to his valuable co-operation in our efforts to administer the work of this district.

We have, &c.,
T. R. FLEMING,
F. H. BAKEWELL, } Inspectors.

The Chairman, Wellington Education Board.

MARLBOROUGH.

SIR,— Education Office, Blenheim, 18th January, 1906.

I have the honour to present my second general report on the schools of Marlborough.

NUMBER OF SCHOOLS.—We have sixty-six schools on our list, of which (from defect of teachers) six were not operating. These six are all small schools of from two to eight children, situated in the Sounds. The Board is willing to accept, as teachers of these schools, youths of either sex, if in other ways fit, and qualified by having the proficiency certificate (Standard VI).

INSPECTION.—Sixty visits of inspection were made to schools under the Board, and nineteen special visits in connection with school gardens and new schools. Opportunity was taken, on these visits, to teach such subjects as appeared specially weak—the metric system, geography, and military drill receiving most attention. The Governor is empowered by the Weights and Measures Act of 1903 to declare from 1st January, 1906, the metric system of weights and measures the only system to be legally used in New Zealand. It is highly important, therefore, that the children receive much practice

in this method of computation. In the early part of the year the teachers were hampered by the difficulty of obtaining the books required under the new code, and the want of a good series of geographical Readers, covering the programme set forth for the higher standards, was sadly felt. A test is being made with slate-cloth, with a view to introducing it as a dado, thus enabling the children to obtain more practice in blackboard drawing. Long desks are largely used in our schools. They are apparently banished from the schools of the United States, in favour of the single desk, which gives more freedom for adaptation to the pupil, and, further, is an aid to discipline. A regulation in force in Ontario runs: "Not more than two pupils should sit at one desk, but single-seated desks are preferable." The Board is recommended to consider the advisability of providing only dual or single desks in future. Inaccuracy or omission in the register was again observed a sufficient number of times to merit a reference to the caution contained in my report of last year. Further, when a new teacher finds the register incomplete he should repair the omission as far as possible. A number of the schoolrooms would be rendered more attractive to the children by the application to the interior of a coat of light-blue paint.

The Winter School.—During the inspection visits it was frequently observed that teachers were hampered in their efforts to cope with the latest modifications of the syllabus by not knowing exactly where to begin geography Course A, or nature-study, or how to correlate handwork with other subjects. Singing also was a source of trouble to those members of the staff who had not had the advantage of training. As many of the teachers are situated in remote localities where they have little opportunity to compare notes, and where they cannot well attend Saturday classes, it was thought best to organize a winter school. The Department generously granted railway facilities, material, and capitation, thus removing financial difficulties. Messrs. Hogben, Isaac, Strong, and Sturrock, and Miss Ellerbeck lent valuable aid, the subjects treated being: The mathematical geography of the new syllabus, plasticine-modelling, and carton-work, science for country schools, singing, brush and blackboard drawing, chemistry, and history. A week in July was given to this work, and almost every teacher in the district was present, both from public and private schools. There is no doubt that the gathering succeeded in securing the objects desired, and enabled the teachers to attack their work with new spirit. I expect the results to show more clearly in 1906 than in 1905.

Examination.—Sixty public and six private schools were examined. Three of latter are in the the Sounds, and, in default of a teacher with a proficiency certificate, were operating with teachers not sufficiently qualified for approval by the Board. Promotions in schools under uncertificated teachers were determined by me; but elsewhere, even when the pupils were examined, the responsibility for classification was thrown on the head teacher.

It is now necessary for the teacher to give special thought to his examinations, using them as far as possible to indicate to the pupil his progress and defect, as well as to satisfy his own inquiry into the amount of the objects of study assimilated, or his success in educating-faculty. The crusade against the Inspector's examination is not an indication that examination is in itself bad, but that as a means of deciding individual results it is insufficient. When reinforced by the teacher's daily knowledge of the pupil, it affords both teacher and pupil a fair summary of the work done, and, viewed simply as a collateral test, added to the teacher's general opinion of the standing of the pupil, is of great importance. Provided their lessons are taken to heart, examinations are indirectly a means of teaching, for they reveal weakness and partiality of assimilation, and give opportunity for useful revision and summation. They show the pupil what he has learnt, what he can do; they reveal talent, and provide a suitable halting-place for the stimulation of honour, industry, and neatness; if fairly frequent, they afford a good incentive. The present system, throwing as it does the responsibility for the classification of his pupils on the teacher, does not make his work lighter; but it leaves him more free to adopt what his experience and intelligence tell him most suits the individual child. The more earnest the teacher, the more frequent, searching, instructive, and stimulating his examinations will be. As the Inspector will occupy himself in discovering the average rather than individual results, and in gauging methods, much of his testing will be by sample. It is therefore the more needful that the teacher preserve the records of his examinations, for in them will be found the necessary reference to individual results that the present system has not done away with, but for which it has shifted the responsibility.

In general, I was satisfied with the attainment of the Convent schools. The girls' school narrowly escaped being classified with those described as "good." The total enrolment at private schools was 167—present 159.

At times of examination there were 1,913 children on the rolls of the public schools. In 1904 there were 1,935. The number present at examination was 1,833, as compared with 1,835 of the previous year. In 1904 only twenty-seven schools had all the children present on the date of the Inspector's visit. This year there were thirty-four.

The larger schools show considerable improvement in attendance, but there is still need of better things—*e.g.*, while the Dunedin and Oamaru schools secure 90 per cent. of attendance, Blenheim Boys has only 81 per cent., and Blenheim Girls 84 per cent. The whole district has an average of 84·3 per cent., which is an improvement on the 1904 record, but Otago in 1904 averaged 88·6 per cent. Teachers can do much to stimulate attendance. Several times I discovered that attendance certificates, though earned, had not been applied for. The law in Ontario bears somewhat heavier on truancy than it does in New Zealand. There, any one employing a child under fourteen years of age during school hours is liable to a penalty of 20 dollars, while parents and guardians, if neglectful in this matter, are liable to a fine of not less than 5 dollars, nor more than 20 dollars. In one of our schools, although four children lived within half a mile, along a good road, the register recorded on six days of the first quarter of 1905—"Wet day; no school." The United States Ambassador, Mr. Choate, speaking at Oxford, said that education was the chief industry of the United States. If a country where the farming interest is so great values education thus much, and has on account of its predilection come to the front, surely there is need for public opinion in districts of low attendance to show itself in an attempt to remove what can only be regarded as a reproach. By contrast, it is worthy of note that at Cullensville two pupils have attained seven years without intermission.

The Truant Officer's report summarised is: Thirty informations, twenty-nine convictions, one case dismissed. Fines, £4; costs (7 cases), £2 9s.

The roll-number of Standard VI in the public schools was the same as last year, namely, 181, of whom 178 were present at the annual visits. Ninety-three obtained certificates of proficiency, and eighteen gained certificates of competency. A somewhat higher percentage of marks will henceforth be necessary for proficiency, in accordance with a *Gazette* notice of last August. In the private schools eleven proficiency and five competency certificates were awarded. Probably forty pupils throughout the district will take advantage of the free places at the Marlborough High School.

The classification of schools examined was: "Good," 10; "Satisfactory," 20; "fair," 16; "moderate," 14.

This is the first year of the introduction of the new syllabus, hence probably the increased number of classes as "moderate." Ten of them are small schools, with an aggregate roll of 42. The number of pupils in the schools classed as "good" is largely in excess of that for 1904.

The following is a general summary for the district:—

Classes.	Number on Roll.	Present at Inspector's Annual Visit.	Average Age of Pupils in each Class.
			Yrs. mos.
Standard VII	37	33	15 1
" VI	181	178	13 9
" V	200	196	12 10
" IV	252	245	11 11
" III	268	262	10 11
" II	241	233	9 11
" I	239	233	8 9
Preparatory	495	453	6 11
Totals	1,913	1,833	11 3*

* Mean of average age.

The staff is classified as follows: Head teachers—Certificated, 11. Assistants—Certificated, 10; uncertificated, 4: total, 14. Sole teachers—Certificated, 11; uncertificated, 37: total, 48. Totals—Certificated, 32; uncertificated, 41: total, 73. There were also eight pupil-teachers at the end of the year.

By "The Education Act Amendment Act, 1905," the salaries of pupil-teachers are increased, but it is not evident why less salary should still be given to them than to cadets in other branches of the public service. Their work is in every respect as arduous and as worthy. The criticism lessons instituted last year should cause more attention to be given to method and to the all-round training of these young people. Judging by the results of the last three years this can be greatly improved on. The defect may have been due to a lack of definiteness in the course. The programme set forth in the new regulations should assist in the advancement desired. After 1906, if a pupil-teacher at the termination of her engagement has not passed matriculation, she loses her chance of a studentship at the Training-college. The requirements in regard to scholarship are sufficiently moderate for one who will probably be twenty years of age, and as the studentship is worth £60 per annum, with University fees, it is well worth the striving for.

Some Aspects of the New Education.—The curriculum of the Training-college includes attendance at the University College at such course of lectures in English and in such other subject or subjects as the principal shall approve for each student. In time to come it will be viewed as a necessary preliminary to teaching that the candidate should have attended a class in biology and in psychology. The former subject gives valuable information to the build and functioning of the human body, the latter is the science of mental growth. The child is a special instance of growth and development, and the student should be taught the chief facts underlying the principal stages of child-life. He should understand what is meant by development of organs and the observed relation of bodily development on the mind, on the imagination, on the ideals. A better knowledge on these points would go a long way to secure better results in the after-life of the pupils.

The head of an infant is large and its brain soft and receptive; he learns very much. By and by his body strengthens. He grows as a poppy grows. The poppy first swells in the bud, which, becoming heavy, droops on the stalk—then in the stalk, which, becoming strong, holds the head aloft. Similar onrushes of stimuli affect the human subject. As the poppy diverts its life-juice into the gorgeous raiment of the flower, so the next stage in the child (in adolescence) is to the imagination with its rainbowed dreaming, and the next towards intellectuality like the maturing of the poppy. Dr. Krohn puts the case in other words: "Mental development in the child occurs by stages—by periods. Just as the entire body is not growing at any one time so all the mental powers are not unfolding and growing at the same time. In bodily development growth settles for a while on some set of muscles, one set of organs, and then another, and another, until the entire body is developed. Likewise there is a nascent period for each mental faculty." Rosenkrantz summarises the case from the mental side: "In the development of the young the perceptive faculty is most active in the infant, the representative faculty (memory and imagination) in the child, and the thinking faculty in youth; and thus we may distinguish an intuitive, an imaginative, and a logical epoch. Dialectically these stages pass over into one another, not only does perception grow into representation, and representation into thinking, but

thinking goes back into representation and this again into perception." The teacher, in his dealings with the child, need not have these thoughts in his immediate consciousness, but if they form the background to his mental working he will sympathize with much that seems erratic in youth, and as the result be a better teacher. He will learn to guide the erratic impulse aright. Youth is quick to intuit sympathy. A teacher ignorant of these things is like him who winds a watch the wrong way and breaks all the teeth in the operation. Thereafter the winding may be continued without difficulty; the watch is passive in the operator's hands, its initiative and individuality, as it were, are gone. The good teacher is not content with the drudgery of the three Rs. He approaches his work with the creative feeling of the artist: here is not an animal to be fed and clothed; here is a spirit to be made, a will to be fashioned, an original faculty to be fostered. To him, the schoolroom is no dull chamber of pain and horror. In the kaleidoscope of youth he sees the rich splendour of the aurora. He will not be a worse teacher because he has imagination. He uses his imagination to interpret childhood, and so becomes its readily accepted guide and philosopher. He will not blindly teach each day's appointed portion. He will search after the reasons for cultivating the studies included in the school course. Like the many-chambered nautilus such a teacher goes forward into temples still more vast.

We are passing slowly but perceptibly along the new lines—increased invention in brush drawing (luring the young mind out to express itself), more attention to nature-study—a greater effort to take the child out of the merely receptive attitude and teach him to look and think and act.

Reading.—Speech and singing are nearly allied to each other. We read somewhere that speech is a fine art and should be taught as such to give pleasure by distinctness and good intonation. The ancients treated oral speech with great reverence. In the German people's schools practice in oral expression is treated as an integral part of the instruction in reading. When a satisfactory degree of facility is accompanied by clearness of enunciation, as is generally the case with the reading in Marlborough, it were well to try to add a pleasantness of tone—the grace that attracts. In this way reading becomes the vehicle of a cultured expression—an end in itself. The phrasal accent is an important means of avoiding monotony. Some schools have not yet two reading-books in use with each standard. In one or two schools the difficulty with "h" was very observable in reading, in dictation, and in ordinary conversation. It is important that this defect should be overcome early, otherwise the error will harden in the child's ear. Any teacher who permits a child to issue from his school with this defect pronounced has done that child an injury and not earned his salary. Considerable amounts have been spent in school libraries during 1905. The Board gives a subsidy of £1 for £1 on money raised for expenditure on books. The libraries thus formed should foster the love of reading and enable the child to acquire increased facility in the art. Sometimes a child comes up for promotion although unable to read from its book without stopping now and again to spell a word. That child needs more practice before promotion.

Spelling.—The tendency to correlate reading, spelling, and composition is increasing. The series of books called "Arnold's Language Lessons" is recommended to the teacher in search of suggestions. There is need for increased effort in dealing with this subject. Nothing but hard work—the correction of errors in composition and dictation, the registering of the errors and frequent recapitulation, together with instruction on observed uniformities—can produce the best results. To attain even good results one must be persistent in tracing out and eradicating error.

Writing has improved in many of the schools. The production of samples from schools that have done well is better than much exhortation. A suitable series of copybooks with business forms for Standard IV and upwards is still in request. Where the forms are not in the copybook it is necessary to give them by way of transcription. The exercises containing this transcription should be preserved for inspection.

Composition.—The essays showed a tendency to greater fluency and a more picturesque treatment of the subject dealt with. They frequently gave evidence of considerable and accurate observation of nature. In so far, however, as the tests employed dealt with grammar the results were disappointing, the very limited requirements under that head being rarely met. It is important that, notwithstanding the claims of scientific subjects for attention, the study of grammar should not be neglected. Dr. Harris, Commissioner for Education in the United States, in one of his monographs, puts the case for some teaching of grammar very forcibly. "The mind is always engaged in predicating something of something, always modifying something by something, and the categories of the mental operation are the categories of grammar, and appear as parts of speech. The child, by the study of grammar, gets some practice in the use of these categories, and acquires unconsciously a power of analysis of thoughts, motives, feelings, which is of the most practical character." The teacher of the primary school is largely engaged in faculty training, and the drill indicated above is an essential complement of nature-study—*i.e.*, of that species of training which results, in an extreme case, in the skilled observation of the Australian black tracker. The latter always goes from a fact to the immediately contiguous fact, and does not attain that broad generalisation to which grammar early accustoms the young mind. It is therefore very important that the portion of grammar still contained in the syllabus should be thoroughly mastered. This can easily be done without giving an undue amount of time to the subject. During the year 1905 specimens of examination questions issued by the Department were circulated, and enabled the teachers to do better work with sentence-building. In the correlation of reading and composition much may still be done, especially in the way of using new words in sentences of the pupils' own construction. The attention of the teachers is also drawn to the requirements under the head "Word-building" for Standards V and VI. Oral composition requires more adequate treatment in Standards I and II.

Although a considerable number of epistles were despatched in connection with the London School Board's letter scheme, only one pupil has had the opportunity to reply to a letter received. I am afraid that the long period elapsing between despatch and receipt of letters will chill the enthusiasm of very young people.

RECITATION.—The number of lines memorised was not always equal to the demands of the syllabus. This year the choice of selections was usually exercised with more discrimination. Sometimes lugubrious pieces were still found too numerous. There appears to be some misconception as to what constitutes unwholesome poetry. Verse in which pathos occurs is not necessarily pessimistic—*e.g.*, "The Burial of Sir John Moore" deals with shadow and tragedy: "Slowly and sadly we laid him down . . . ." but the poem is really a silver-toned pæan of triumph over one whose day's work is well accomplished :—

Little he'll reck if they let him sleep on,
In the grave where a Briton has laid him.

On the other hand Goodrich's poem, "The River," ending :—

But these bright scenes are o'er,
And darkly flows my wave;
I hear the ocean's roar,
And there must be my grave!

is a bad mental furnishing wherewith to equip the quick imagination of any child. The trouble with the aspirate, if at all evident in recitation, should also be accompanied by signs that it is being earnestly dealt with. Since in recitation the standard is oral English of the purest description, there should be no defects of pronunciation; repetition should have given every opportunity to eliminate them. Singing is in a way the poetry of oral expression, but recitation and reading are its prose. In these latter, as in the former, a good full-toned utterance should be cultivated as well as the powers of the memory. In several schools good use appeared to have been made of the recitation as a means of calling attention to choice diction and the cultured expression of thought. The unobservant gaze may move over the landscape of the physical world and come back not enriched; in likewise the unobservant reader may cast his unseeing eyes over the literary gems, which are dull if there be no "subtle exercise of the mind" behind the eye. It is the business of the teacher to call to the conscious notice of the child those apt ways of saying things that make the poetry of the English race a very Johannesburg of riches.

ARITHMETIC.—It is difficult to speak in terms of satisfaction of a subject wherein the Standard VI percentage of success is under forty throughout the district—notwithstanding reduction in the amount required, especially in the upper classes. One of the chief effects of the new syllabus has been to reduce the scope in the upper standards. The power to classify in arithmetic differently from English is not so frequently availed of as the work in arithmetic would suggest to be desirable. In order to get down to the level of the individual pupil there must, at the inception of every new rule, be a very great amount of easy oral work. A teacher satisfied with general impression rarely finds his pupils come up to expectation when taken individually. In the regulations dealing with the common schools of Germany it is directed that "in schools with one or two teachers, as far as possible, and with other schools regularly, all calculations are to be done mentally. In practical applications the relation to every-day life is always to be kept in view, consequently examples with large and many-figured numbers are to be avoided. . . . Arithmetic is to be regarded in all divisions as practice in clear thinking and correct speaking." In correspondence with the above regulation it is found that the arithmetic period for each week in German schools is frequently four hours, with a tendency to fewer hours in the higher classes. The reverse tendency appears in our schools. If one looks only to the principle involved there is possible a reduction in the number of figures required to work the type of sums in several cases appearing on the test-cards. The sums in practice may be quoted in illustration. Still there is the other view that the patient and accurate dealing with the larger-figured sums gives a valuable discipline; and since in a number of the schools really good results are obtained in the subject, it must appear that there is shown here a defect in the teaching-methods adopted in the remaining schools—a defect most probably of that patient repetition and recapitulation, of the attention to the boy or girl, not the class, that is so necessary in dealing with the average child. The promotions to Standard I arithmetic seemed not always well advised. All the numbers up to twenty should have been thoroughly analysed and treated by addition, subtraction, multiplication, division, and in fractions, in concrete and in abstract, until each was clearly conceived. When a child in Standard I has to count on his fingers in order to add eight and seven, it is manifest that he has been promoted to Standard I before he is ready for the class. All these operations should be mechanical before the child is ready for promotion. The setting forth of the arithmetic, both on slates and on paper, showed improvement in a satisfactory number of schools. The children found more difficulty in the tests set this year for Standard IV than was the case in 1904.

GEOGRAPHY.—Most of the schools in Marlborough are treating geography Course B and history in alternate years. During 1905 geography was chosen. No book or series available during the year dealt with the programme of the syllabus in an adequate manner. An experienced teacher may restrict himself to notes, but a handbook is a good background to the treatment of any theme. It enables each pupil to fill out his individual hiatuses of comprehension. Many of the schools used volumes selected from "The World and its People," and by some teachers these appear to have been used with judgment, only the valuable parts being emphasized. Other teachers attempted the memorising plan of the large volume adopted, the result being ill both in regard to geography Course B and to the reading. The report of the Council of Fifteen in the United States refers to the old geography as "sailor geography"—a minute description of the coasts of land, its capes, bays, islands, and gulfs. Much of that information is absolutely useless. Therefore a new school arose who taught what may be called encyclopædic geography. This consisted of heterogeneous scraps of information culled from every land from Tashkend to Titicaca; such information might sometimes be interesting, but much of it was useless—dealing with facts that were never likely to benefit the child and served only to load his memory and undermine his health. The new idea of geography has grown from the ruins of the above. It is to some extent still encyclopædic, but at the same time selective, choosing only such topics as may have a bearing on the child's future—*e.g.*, San Francisco is distant from us but is important in

connection with the transmission of our mails, Singapore has importance for us as the converging point of trade routes from New Zealand and a new centre for its defence. The state of the London wool market is immensely interesting for New Zealand. On the other hand, the lakes of Scotland and the names of the rivers of Siberia have only a remote and contingent importance, an interest that may be met by incidental mention before the map when occasion requires. Geography Course A is intended to be a reasoning on the geographical phenomena observed in the neighbourhood of the school. It is eminently meant to be taken at first hand and not by medium of the book, although a book may be a useful source of suggestion for the teacher—*e.g.*, the question "What is meant by 'noon'?" may be best explained by observation and experiment with a shadow-post. One child's answer was: "It means that it is dinner-time." Weather-charts are in use in a number of the schools, and connected with them were flower-calendars, notes on the phases of the moon, &c. Mr. Strong, of Wanganui, in his lectures at the winter school, gave many valuable suggestions for this part of the work.

DRAWING.—*Geometric:* The elementary notions supposed to be taught to the lower classes were not always satisfactory. The teaching of those notions gives a training in abstraction which is a valuable part of the primary course, more especially when as with Frœbel's gifts it is reached immediately from the concrete.

Scale.—A few drawings in each class correlating the work with instruction in geography will be sufficient to teach the principle of this branch of drawing. It may also be taken in interesting fashion with nature-study. As an instance of correlation of subjects the following may be done: Take a cross-section of a branch of a tree showing pronounced markings. First draw it in pencil and secure good pencil-work, showing annular rings, medullary rays, pith, &c.; then draw it to scale, and afterwards the mass appearance may be shown with the brush, and design may be elaborated from the markings. While the drawing is proceeding many interesting observations may be made in regard to the flow of sap, growth of wood, &c. The large mandible of some insects may also be used to teach pencil-work, scale drawing, brush drawing, observation, adaptation. So also a study may be made of the different kinds of teeth of carnivorous animals, with current explanations of the various shapes. A cross-section of a stove may also be suggested. The drawing of conventional curves and figures taught pencil-work, symmetry, proportion, and in expert hands even radiation, balance, &c.; but there is every reason why drawing should also borrow interest from science, and teach observation, adaptability, cause and effect, &c.

In this subject, as in all others, a diary of the work done should be kept. In the above way all the requirements of the syllabus may be easily covered in pencil-work, scale drawing, nature-study drawing, brush, model, and geometric, in two hours each week. In quite a number of schools the teachers presented good samples of object-drawing (by pencil and by brush); but many others had kept to the drawing of conventional figures.

Brush drawing has made considerable progress. Both nature-study drawing and design are cultivated, and progress and freedom may be expected in 1906.

Model-drawing shows improvement, the teachers' Saturday class evidently bearing good fruit.

Teachers' Instruction Classes in Drawing.—Miss Brown continued with success the Saturday class in brush drawing that had been instituted in 1904. Miss Ellerbeck was afterwards specially retained, and taught Saturday classes in brush, blackboard, nature-study, and model drawing. She was also employed in showing some of the teachers in their own schools how to practically adapt the subjects to the children.

SINGING was taught in twenty-one schools during 1904. Last year the number advanced to thirty-nine. At the winter school opportunity was taken to show the younger members of the staff how to teach the elements of the Sol-fa system. Mr. D. A. Sturrock was very successful with the subject intrusted to him. Modern science never despairs of any organ of the body. If it be made to function, power will increase. The pupil must be taught to use an observing mind behind his ear, and his larynx will develop flexibility by use. Such thoughts may lend a hope to teachers who are beginning to plough hitherto unfurrowed soil, and think the work hard and hopeless. There is room for a more extended course of deep-breathing exercises as part of the drill and of the singing. It is said that the Japanese, in their athletic training, make much of deep-breathing. The modern educationist believes in making the pupil on all sides susceptible to the influence of his environment. One faculty sometimes begins to operate through activity in other faculties. The region of song presents a large field of peculiar experience: "Tones are of all kinds, solemn, joyous, lively, sad, contemplative, discordant—suggestive of bitterness and hate; harmonious and sweet—suggestive of love and agreement." If one is rendered consciously susceptible to such feelings, there cannot fail to be a good reaction in the other mental tracts. I hope, therefore, to see the progress made in the teaching of singing continued and extended.

NEEDLEWORK.—There was a marked improvement in the needlework, especially in the smaller schools. The samples taken from schools where good work was done, and distributed or shown among those where the work was taught with less success, evidently stimulated effort in this direction. Those who taught the subject well were also pleased to have some standard whereby to gauge their own accomplishment.

PHYSICAL INSTRUCTION.—During 1905 progress was made under this head also. Of the thirteen schools returned last year as not presenting pupils in drill, nine had undertaken the work, two were closed, and in two the subject was still neglected. In six other schools, owing to broken time or to the fact that they were newly opened, defect was observed. The larger schools all acquit themselves well in drill, and some of them improved in the readiness and alacrity with which the various movements were executed. A battalion has been instituted and three parades were held. The United States has a military academy at West Point, to which each State is entitled to send one cadet per annum for special training. If each district in New Zealand had a scholarship of this class instituted, the cadet movement would doubtless feel a new impulse. During the Russo-Japanese war the Russian fleet

suffered seriously through having to train raw recruits in gun drill at the last moment. It would be well if the cadets could have some training in the use of guns on board training-ships, or at least an opportunity to gain a good knowledge of the various parts and working of the large guns. In this way a species of reserve would be created that would be of immense advantage in time of war. Our main battles will most probably be on the sea. This would enable New Zealand to show the Imperial sentiment on se as well as on land. At present the most the public are permitted is a very casual inspection of the big guns at long intervals. For many of our smaller schools physical exercises must continue the chief part of the drill. "Movement is as imperious a necessity and demands as much attention as starvation or thirst, and the lack of it begets a general state of nervous excitement which can only be overcome by exercise." (Senor Cabezas at the Educational Congress in Chili). Physical training is good not only for physical health. Dr. Krohn, quoted elsewhere, remarks: "I must say that I have never seen a case of brain disorderliness that was not benefited by physical training" During the year the North Marlborough Amateur Athletic Association was formed, and celebrated sports at Havelock shortly before Christmas. The success of the inaugural meeting fully justified the movement. The competitions included all varieties of physical exercise. Sports like these have much influence in creating a community of feeling between the schools, and doubtless give an incentive that will be productive of good in other departments.

HISTORY will, at least in the smaller schools, alternate with geography Course B. Only eleven schools presented pupils in this subject during 1905; the number will therefore be much larger in 1906. Where a reading-book is used for the double purpose of giving instruction in reading and history, or in reading and geography, the teacher must see to it that the second subject obtains due recognition. Trafalgar Day, as one of the nodes round which Imperial sentiment vibrates, was celebrated in the schools. At the larger ones, leading citizens addressed the children, the flag was saluted, and the cadets paraded. There are branches of the Navy League at Blenheim Boys', Picton, Springlands, Fairhall, and St. Mary's Convent Schools. The members, won by the prizes offered by the League, gave considerable attention to England's naval history. In this way much was done to quicken patriotism and foster the cause of national fellowship. In those schools where history is taken every alternate year an earnest attempt should be made in its year to endow the children with a sense of the charm of our national story. Apart from the strength inherent in a nation which is proud of its great ancestry and anxious to maintain its standards, the teachings of history are an excellent moral discipline. No Briton rightly taught history can do wrong except against the grain. A hundred glamorous traditions tend to make his life beautiful and good. It is very important that teachers should recognise the iron under the velvet of history. We bask at present in the sunny security of a ten-years treaty of alliance with Japan. Yet decades are but moments in the life of a nation. At the late German army manœuvres the men marched on an average thirty miles a day, carrying 50 lb. in addition to rifle and cartridges. If that be the state of peace, and the tax one people pays for its maintenance, it is needful that in a land where conscription is abhorred those subtle links that bind the various parts of our race together be not allowed to corrode for lack of burnishing. The teaching of history is the chief contribution of the schools to the security of the nation. In the moment of peril the arm of our defender will not feel less strong if the great story of army and navy stand like bastions on either side of him. We must read the present in the light of the past. To read the description in "Ranolf and Amohia" of the Rotorua terraces, and then go and view the present desolation of Rotorua, is to appreciate the fate of the Transvaal and many another country that thought itself secure. Carthage, the mighty rival of Rome, when overthrown, had no day of repentance and restitution although two thousand years have rolled by in the interval. We have a smiling land and the fruity times of peace, but the teachers may not labour the less earnestly if they appreciate aright their high mission as the coadjutors of army and navy in the defence of their country.

HEALTH AND MORAL INSTRUCTION.—It would be well for the young teacher to read over every now and again the sections of the syllabus under the above headings. This would keep the topics fresh in his memory, and he would be the readier to seize upon and elaborate the contingencies of school life. He would see the moral and health aspects of school happenings, of school construction and hygiene. It is the capping of incidents like this that comes home to the child and sends him away with a new thought to ponder. I noted only thirteen schools where I could feel confident that any extended instruction of this class had been attempted. This remark applies, however, only to the conscious reasoning on the above topics—that part of them which could be tested by questioning. In so far as moral teaching shows itself in the tone and atmosphere of the school there was little left to desire as the notes under tone and discipline indicate.

NATURE-STUDY.—The subjects of a school course are roughly classified as "formal" and "real." A "formal" subject is one like writing, which consists in a developed skill and is not an end in itself, but is useful as an aid to the acquirement, retention, accumulation, and progress of knowledge gathered from other regions. A science is classified as "real." We study it for the sake of its own teachings. It is its own end. The above is, however, only a rough classification, for every subject may be viewed as "real" in certain aspects—*e.g.*, when we try to produce good writing, and find pleasure in the beauty of the writing, this art has become its own end. Reading is also a "formal" study. But if a teacher sets out to produce in his pupils a sonorous, round-toned enunciation that will be pleasing to the ear, so that one may take a sensuous pleasure and find attraction in the very listening—then reading becomes an end in itself. Some teachers have great success with the treatment of reading as a "real" subject. Spelling and arithmetic are likewise "formal" studies. We do not spell for spelling's sake, but because uniform spelling facilitates communication. It frequently throws light on a subject if we discover the end to be served by it. Nature-study is primarily "formal." It is undertaken in the first place, not for the information gained thereby, but in order that a habit of observing may be formed. Much valuable knowledge may be gained incidentally, but the primary teacher's

first object is not the gaining of that knowledge; he is seeking the formation of a habit. If a child can be endowed with a habit of quick and intelligent observation, he has acquired a species of annuity. It is the richest gift with which a teacher can dower his pupils, for the fruits will continue to be harvested throughout life. Perception has been described as (*a*) ordinary and (*b*) scientific. "Ordinary perception is unsystematic, fragmentary, does not accumulate or collect and retain data in the form of general ideas." In its worst form one looks with unseeing eye at tree and river as a cow looks at a barn-door. "Scientific perception is systematic, exhaustive, and cumulative." It is the intent inquiry after "identity and difference, likeness and unlikeness, force and manifestation, whole and parts, cause and effect, substance and property." A habit of observation can be cultivated; that should be an article of the teacher's creed. Again, the human mind being what it is, some of the facts observed will be retained. Viewed in this way, nature-study is not "formal," but "real." The amount of retention will depend partly on the brain of the child. Some children appear to have viscid brains. If you make a hole in honey the hole will fill up in time and all become smooth again. Honey is viscid. Other children have brains of brass. Whatever is written thereon becomes, to all intents and purposes, indelible as the writings on Chaldean tablets. Nevertheless, a systematic presentment of the subject, utilising the principles of contiguity, similarity, and contrast, &c., may assist much. The teacher's first design then, in teaching nature-study, is to cultivate this habit of observation; but as there is the incidental accompaniment of accumulated knowledge, the objects on which we practice may best be chosen from such as afford information that will be of use. The schoolmaster of the middle ages would say, Try to cultivate the habit by studying the little points of Latin. Somewhat later he might have admitted that the study of conundrums in mathematics, requiring, as it does, attention to minute differences of statement, would also be a useful means of acquiring the habit. Mathematics and Latin, however, were more or less "formal" studies, and even if mathematics be treated as a branch of physical science its "formal" element predominates. The habit would be acquired in these studies if the child could only conceive a liking for them, but the incidental knowledge accumulated would be relatively small. The educationist turns to nature-study because the incidental knowledge is relatively important, and because it has another advantage in being attractive to youth. In nature-study we make use of wonder. This is an element in the human mind that was not recognised in older days. "Philosophy," says Plato, "begins in wonder." Philosophy is the love of truth. With a little guidance the child will get on the right track. Rosenkrantz would endow the child with a love of truth as the surest way of making him love clear thinking. The teacher wishes to cultivate in the child the habit of clear thinking. If the teacher, then, looks up the topics under the head of "Nature-study" in the syllabus he will understand why they are so various. These are only suggestions. The first thing to acquire is the observing habit. The next, for the sake of the incidental knowledge, to see that the objects experimented on give useful information. Here is a collection of useful subjects of study; some may not be near each school, but some may. Choose these. Choose many or few; point out the interesting and call forth the pupil's wonder, but, above all, study him to see if the habit is forming. The children of the Sounds schools to some extent make up for remoteness of situation and fewness of books by a more alert observation. They are in immediate contact with nature. It would tend to make their observing systematic if they were encouraged to make roughly classified collections of objects. In one or two schools nature-study was construed as reading in a book about natural objects. That mode of treatment loses the best part of the study. There must be a first-hand looking at objects—the opening and closing of flowers, the devices used by seed in the endeavour to propagate, the strong and weak flow of the sap, the changing panorama of the flowers, the procession of sun, moon, and tides. Let the pupil act also—pruning, grafting, budding, manuring, growing from slips, seeds, &c. "It is no education," says Professor Robertson, of Ontario, "in the knowledge of oats to learn the names of the varieties of oats. It is an education to grow one variety under close observation and management. The one kind of knowledge is no more real than the other, but he knows that it is real." There is no reason why the observation that feeds the feelings should be neglected—the rich colouring of autumn sunsets and the purple of far-drawn hills. In capable hands nature-study may lead up to the great generalisations of natural science and so serve greater ends.

The teacher at Waitohi was very successful in correlating observation with expression—in drawing the children into writing out their own ideas of what they had seen and thought. Mr. Hogben, in his address at Napier, said: "I contend that any intelligent teacher who is worth his salt, and is earnest in the matter, can begin forthwith to introduce systematic nature-study into his school, and will find that his work will grow easier and the interest greater the further he carries the new methods." Buchanan's "Country Reader," Book II, has a very good account of grasses, with illustrations that may prove helpful to the teacher. In nine schools weather-charts were kept, and a beginning was made with flower-calendars and temperature-charts.

HANDWORK.—The number of schools employing handwork during 1905 was twenty-nine, as compared with eighteen during 1904. Four of the six private schools examined also included handwork in the subjects taught. The means adopted were brush drawing, crayon drawing, paper-weaving, card-pricking, brick and tablet designing, modelling in plasticine, carton work, gardening, ambulance, cookery, and in one small school wood-carving—using the birds of the neighbourhood as models. The school gardens increased from six to seventeen during the year. In these, experiments are made in raising numerous kinds of flowers and vegetables. Technical and continuation classes were carried on in Canvastown. There were special teachers' classes in ambulance (Blenheim and Havelock), brush, blackboard, nature-study, and model drawing (Blenheim). At the close of the ambulance lectures in Blenheim, twenty-four candidates sat at the examination for the certificates of St. John's Ambulance Association, and twenty-two succeeded in passing. The doctor examining referred to the average attainment in terms of high praise. From observation of the daily papers it appears that the class work has time nd again been put to practical use by members of the classes in cases of cuts, fractures and fits occur-

ing in up-country places, on the football field, and by the sea-shore. School cookery classes were initiated at Fairhall, and others followed at Okaramio and Marlboroughtown. These have been very successful. A grant has been made for the building and equipment of woodwork and cookery rooms at Blenheim. The work of building is delayed through difficulty in obtaining bricks and timber. The nucleus of a library for the assistance of teachers desiring to refer to publications on handwork is formed at the Board's office. This was initiated by setting aside £5 from the grant for the instruction of teachers.

An attempt is being made to arrange for an instructor skilled in showing how agriculture may be made a means of education, and in order to obtain some financial assistance the local bodies have been met in conference. Local authorities in other parts of the world, notably in the United States and in England, have taken a large view of their responsibilities in this matter.

The interest taken in handwork is complex: it is due—(1.) To the attempt to cultivate faculties that have hitherto been neglected, but which should, in a complete scheme of education, be considered. Professor Rosenkrantz says: "What appears to be negligence, rudeness, immorality, foolishness, or oddity may arise from some real needs of the youth which, in their development, have taken a wrong direction." Sometimes the scheme of education had, by taking too narrow a view, not given such pupils scope for employing their surplus energy. They had always been called on to understand, but never to act. Professor Robertson, of Canada, referring to rural schools and the effect of manual training on "bad" boys, remarks that "these are simply boys with a form of energy that must find expression, and if not led into good channels will break out into erratic ones that are denominated 'bad.' It (handwork) satisfies the boy." (2.) The other brain tracts may be stimulated by manual training. Sequin began the education of the idiot by training the hand movements, and of these he selected for the first lessons those that were most fundamental—grasping, supporting, letting-go, throwing, catching—and leading up generally by some admirable teaching tact to the accessory; correlation of eye and hand in natural exercises called forth the pupil's interest. Strangely, after two years' education on this plan, the general mentality of the boy whom he describes had also improved to a degree that was marvelous even to teachers. The stimulation of the evolutionary levels in their natural order, through the hand-training, had strengthened them also for the discharge of mental functions." (3.) By handwork the pupil may be drawn towards employments requiring the use of the hand. A person with little facility in reading avoids reading. If the inclination for handwork is roused, a sympathy will be felt for those pursuits that require use of the hand, and the better class of boy may be retained for the country instead of drifting to the town. As the farming industry is the backbone of a country's wealth, the educationist cannot neglect this aspect. We require, in New Zealand, the correlation of agricultural work through the primary to high schools, thence to agricultural colleges and to the agricultural faculties at the university.

The handwork of our schools is, of course, disciplinary, but it leads up to a faculty of fine arts at the University. Chili, in South America, has this faculty represented in its university, but New Zealand has not. A chair of fine arts has a downward influence in developing taste in the production of articles that commend themselves. It has, therefore, a more direct influence on trade than might at first be conceded. Christchurch, with its splendid humanities collection in the Museum, would be a good centre for this chair.

The TONE and DISCIPLINE of the schools is generally high. Twenty-four schools were accounted "excellent" and only four "unsatisfactory." The effect of the schools in raising the tone of the people is summed up by Dr. Harris from statistics for the United States. The illiterate class sent eight times its quota to gaols and two and a half times its quota to prisons and penitentiaries, as compared with the literate (those able to read and write).

According to the Minister's report for 1904, the income accrued under "The University Endowment Act, 1868," and applicable to purposes of higher education yet to be determined by Parliament, amounted to nearly £8,000. Could not some of this be used to provide scholarships for districts like Marlborough, away from university centres?

The Premier has spoken of further land endowments to education. There would probably be little dissatisfaction with an endowment in aid of free text-books. Increases in salary have lately been given to several branches of the public service. This would be a free gift to the people. In America it is by Act mandatory in twelve States that books be provided free. Throughout the Union ninety-two cities of over 20,000 inhabitants find it possible to provide free books. Philadelphia is a city of 1,293,697 people. It began to supply free books in all grades of the public schools in the year 1818. The total amount of land donated to the several States of the American Union for educational purposes since 1785 is 78,659,439 acres, which is more than the area of New Zealand. Dr. Harris gives the American view of this matter: "We are making the experiment of self-government, government of the people by the people, and it has seemed a logical conclusion to all nations of all times that the rulers of the people should have the best education available. Then it follows that the entire people of a democracy should be educated, for they are the rulers." The argument loses nothing of its force by being transplanted to New Zealand.

The regulations in regard to free places have increased the openings to those over fourteen years of age, and increased also the possible length of tenure of the senior free places. The 10 per cent. restriction in regard to junior free places will probably prove vexatious in operation. At least every child who attains his fourteenth birthday during the school year in which he gains his proficiency certificate should have two complete years of free secondary education. The Premier is apparently feeling his way towards throwing open the high schools to children of any age and ability who have the desire to go forward.

During the past year considerable sums have been raised by a number of the schools in aid of apparatus and libraries. The Board subsidises £1 for £1 the net sum raised. Two schools also which

gained prizes at the A. and P. Show had the amounts subsidised on being utilised for the above purpose. The splendid collection of grasses, &c., of the Fairhall School may be mentioned. Some of the schools have, by the above means, provided themselves with microscopes. The Board has purchased a sufficient number of thermometers and compasses to furnish every class-room with one of each. Rain-gauges, barometers, and wind-vanes are still required for the larger schools.

The mathematician has lately found his science strangely altered, and the chemist has seen his most cherished theory—the immutability of the elements—put into the crucible and melted down to be another illustration of the poet's verse: "Our little systems have their day." So, too, there has been change in the educational world. The old canons have been subjected to revision and the new methods have been slowly penetrating the schools. Like the man of science, the teacher must ever keep open mind on the question of reform. The teachers have shown a commendable desire to test the value of suggested reforms, and have shown zeal in discharge of their duties.

D. A. STRACHAN, Inspector.

The Chairman, Marlborough Education Board.

NELSON.

SIR,—

We have the honour to lay before you our report on the schools of the Nelson Education District for the year 1905.

One hundred and fourteen schools were at work at the end of the year, or four less than the number reported last year. Oparara School has been closed since the examination, arrangements having been made for the conveyance of the children to Karamea School. This is the first time the experiment of conveying children to a centre has been tried in this district, and we hope it will prove in every way successful. In this particular locality it would be easily possible to have the children from all four schools brought together, and a strong central school of between eighty and ninety pupils would thus be formed.

Five schools not under the supervision of the Board have also been examined, the total number of scholars being 374, of whom 359 were present. The corresponding numbers last year were 402 and 389, the Colleges now presenting fewer pupils than hitherto. Most of these schools showed decided improvement, and though none have yet reached the "good" rank, we are hopeful of some soon doing so, as all but one produced satisfactory work.

The average weekly number on the rolls for the September quarter was 5,633, or sixty-four higher than for the corresponding quarter of last year. We are pleased to find that after seven years of retrogression the number of children in the district is now again on the up-grade. The number on the rolls at the time of our examination was 5,632, as compared with 5,547 in 1904.

The average attendance for the year has been 4,829 (4,712 in 1904), or 85·6 per cent. of the average weekly number on the rolls. This is the highest percentage yet recorded for this district, though it is only slightly higher than the average for the whole colony last year, 85·5 per cent. Only four, however, of the thirteen educational districts showed a better average, and we are pleased to see that improvement in regularity of attendance, though gradual, is being brought about, and that the majority of our children in this respect are no longer at a disadvantage when compared with those in other parts of the colony. We note that the percentage for the September quarter, 86·9, represents the highest figure for any single quarter that we have ever yet had the pleasure of recording.

In spite of the general improvement, seventeen schools still fail to reach 80 per cent., and four of these are even under 70 per cent., which means that on an average out of every five days in the week that the school is open every child is losing over a day and a half's schooling. As a result, the children are heavily handicapped in the educational race, especially as, in addition to the irregularity, some of these particular schools are open too few times in the year. Parents nowadays are, as a rule, taking a keener interest than ever in their children's progress, as the struggle to obtain proficiency certificates and free places at secondary schools clearly shows, and indifference upon so vital a matter as regular attendance should no longer endure. Seven (household) schools again show 100 per cent., and twenty above Grade 0 exceed 90 per cent., one of these scoring the possible. All of the larger schools—that is, those in each of which more than two teachers are employed—make, with one exception, satisfactory returns.

There were in the employment of the Board on 31st December 165 teachers, whose classification was as follows: Head teachers—Certificated, 32; Assistants—Certificated, 43; uncertificated, 10. Sole teachers—Certificated, 44; uncertificated, 36.

There were also twenty-five pupil-teachers, all female, nine of whom have matriculated. There should be no difficulty in obtaining matriculated candidates for the larger centres, and the passing of the Junior Civil Service or of the Matriculation Examination might well be the minimum qualification for all applicants for pupil-teachership. A comparison of the above with last year's figures shows improvement, except in regard to uncertificated assistants. For several vacancies throughout the year the names of no certificated applicants were received, and consequently uncertificated teachers were temporarily employed. Reasons for the dearth of qualified applicants are not hard to find. In the first place, the salaries of assistants in country schools are not, we contend, on a right basis. An assistant in a Grade IV school should not have to begin at the same rate as one in a city school, which invariably presents greater attractions and advantages in the matter of training and tuition. The abolition of the E, or lowest certificate examination, though it tends to raise the level of scholarship, has necessarily made the acquisition of a certificate more difficult. In districts such as this, where small and necessarily poorly paid schools abound, this is and will continue to be a disadvantage till more effective steps are taken for the amalgamation of schools, the grouping of children at one centre by

payment of conveyance, or the establishment of part-time schools. The last is, in our opinion, the least desirable method, though Auckland District, we notice, possesses seventy-two half-time schools. The proposal recently made by the Department to issue licenses to capable teachers, and especially to those that have passed the pupil-teacher examinations, though it does not strengthen the service, may tide over the present difficulty *re* the supply of qualified teachers.

"The Education Act Amendment Act, 1905," again improves somewhat the salaries of teachers, and in schools above Grade 0, by paying according to grade and abolishing the capitation, the salaries are placed on a more stable basis. In schools of Grade 0—that is, of less than sixteen in average attendance—the teacher is to be paid at the rate of £6 per head; in the case of others, the provision that no reduction of salary can be made unless the average attendance for the two preceding years would reduce the grade of the school is a step in the direction of safeguarding the interests of teachers. We notice that the schools are to be regraded, sixteen to twenty being Grade I; twenty-six to thirty-two, Grade III; forty-one to fifty, Grade V; sixty-one to seventy-five, Grade VII; ninety-one to 120, Grade IX, &c. The salaries of pupil-teachers are also improved, and those of the assistants in a secondary department are to be paid according to the grade of the department. It is a relief to see the last of the former complicated system, with its absurdly high deductions for inadequate attendance, but we certainly question the wisdom of allowing so large a proportion of the salary to go to junior assistants and head teachers. The latter might now reasonably be expected to take an appreciable part of the secondary teaching. The staff of the primary department is reduced to the exact amount that that department warrants. We regret to see any reduction of staff made, the scale being in our opinion none too liberal, and we would especially welcome the lowering of the number (forty-one, average attendance) which a school under a sole teacher must attain to before he receives any assistance. It practically means that one teacher unaided must for at least a year teach not less than twelve subjects to about fifty pupils in different classes, possibly ten in all. It is, in our opinion, a position in which it is absurd to expect any one to do full justice to all his charges.

An immediate effect of the new Act has been to enable the Board to make a much-needed amalgamation of the Nelson City schools. Without any disturbance of present arrangements, there will be two groups of schools instead of four, each under a capable headmaster, who can more effectively than hitherto supervise all departments through having the complete school under his control. There will thus be no loss of power in management, and the pupil-teachers should benefit materially both in variety of training and in tuition.

The following summary for the whole district has been compiled for the Inspectors' annual return:—

Classes.	Number on Roll.	Present at Inspector's Annual Visit.	Average Age of Pupils in each Class.
			Yrs. mos.
Standard VII	95	82	14 9
" VI	464	459	13 9
" V	604	592	12 11
" IV	618	603	12 1
" III	692	672	11 0
" II	714	698	9 10
" I	644	628	8 10
Preparatory	1,801	1,657	6 11
Totals	5,632	5,390	11 3*
Totals for 1904	5,547	5,280	11 3

* Mean of average age.

The number in Standard VII again shows a loss (thirty-three), our secondary departments having fallen considerably. Standards I and IV are also smaller, but all the other classes, and especially the Preparatory, are larger, so that the total is eighty-five higher than last year's. The average age is very nearly the same as in previous years. As compared with the average age prevailing throughout the colony for the respective classes, in the Preparatory class it is two months lower, in Standards I, II, and VII one month lower, in Standards III, IV, and V one month higher, and in Standard VI the same. The large number present at our examinations, in spite of the very unsettled weather experienced in the spring and early summer, was both gratifying to us and creditable to the schools. The class-lists of forty-seven schools showed not a single absentee.

In Standard VI the number of proficiency certificates gained was 249, and of competency 125. The amended regulation, which increased the difficulty of a pass for the former from 50 to 60 per cent. of the possible marks, took effect on the 28th August. By it the minimum mark for arithmetic was also increased to 40 per cent. Those candidates that have been examined since the date mentioned have consequently had to compete under more stringent conditions than formerly. We are, as we indicated in last year's report, in full sympathy with the changes effected, as the value of the certificate is much enhanced, for it now is a guarantee that its possessor has a fair working knowledge of the subjects prescribed for the Sixth Standard course. Considering the increased difficulty, the number of these certificates granted shows little diminution, whilst the number of competency certificates obtained for passing in four out of the five subjects—reading, composition, writing, spelling, and arithmetic—was over twice as large as previously. Over 81 per cent. of the candidates obtained one or the other certificate. Such interest in the competition has been displayed that some pupils, in order to renew their attempts, have followed us from school to school. On one occasion their numbers were such as

to so inconvenience the examination of the school that in future we must claim the liberty given in the regulations, and refuse to re-examine any applicant within three months. The chief incentive towards getting the proficiency certificate is that it may lead to obtaining a free place at a secondary school. The latest regulation *re* free places is again in the direction of extension, as junior free places may be held up to the age of seventeen, and senior to nineteen years, and the day on which the junior free place holder must have been under fourteen is changed from 31st December to 1st December. Ten per cent. of free places may be also awarded to those who have obtained the certificate, but are over fourteen years of age. The Nelson College Governors have, we understand, decided to allot these according to merit, the marks obtained when sitting for the certificate being taken as the basis of calculation. To put the matter baldly, every child possessing a proficiency certificate and under fourteen years of age on 1st December is offered a free college education, which with diligence may be extended to five years. We notice, too, that by the latest amendments the age of entry for the Junior National Scholarships has been lowered from fourteen to thirteen years of age on the first day of the month in which the examination is held.

A special examination was also held in Nelson in November, when nine candidates presented themselves for the sixth proficiency and one for the fifth competency certificate, five being successful. Three other special examinations, in each case of a single candidate, one taking Standard V work and the others Standard VI, were held, and all passed, one proficiency and two competency certificates being granted. At the school examinations we received a very small number of applications to sit for certificates of competency in Standard V, and none in Standard IV, parents being still, we suppose, unfamiliar with the conditions, or having no immediate requirements for such awards. No one whose name was not on some school roll applied to sit at any school examination.

The schools have now had a full year's working under the new syllabus, and though misconceptions still exist in regard to the requirements, as well as concerning the very nature of the work itself, we are well satisfied with the conduct of the great majority of our schools throughout the year, teachers having as a rule more than held their own, improvement being general. The difficulty of making out systematic and intelligible programmes of work was too great for some of our beginners, so that we found it advisable to suggest to our sole teachers a course in certain subjects. This, being almost everywhere eagerly adopted, relieved the young teacher of worry and responsibility and helped to simplify our labours.

The figures submitted show our classification of the schools examined, according to general efficiency: Good, 24; satisfactory to good, 4; satisfactory, 69; efficient, 97. Fair to satisfactory, 6; fair, 10; non-efficient, 16. Our troubles are chiefly to be found in the smallest schools of Grades 0 and 1. The perpetual changes of staff, the lack of competent teachers on account of the smallness of the salaries and the isolation of life, the teacher's consequent inexperience, want of scholarship or of training, as these schools too often must be managed by novices, are insuperable drawbacks to complete efficiency. The remedy is, as we have already pointed out, to have as few separate small schools as possible, and to bring together the children of two or more schools so that one may be formed sufficiently large to requite the services of a competent teacher. The increased grant made by the Department for the conveyance of children over three miles to and from school, though it does not yet err on the side of extravagance, should help to foster the system, which has done so much for rural schools in the United States and in Canada.

Except in arithmetic and in geography A, but little has yet been done to supply suitable text-books, a matter to which we last year called attention; and really good historical and geographical readers would be of great benefit to small schools. Writing and drawing books adapted to the syllabus are also required.

The table submitted shows our opinion of the quality of the work done in each of the compulsory subjects. The term used denotes a certain percentage and corresponds to the average marks for the subject of each class from Preparatory to Standard VII, which again are averaged, the higher term being used if the value of the mark is over half.

—	Excellent.	Good to Excellent.	Good.	Satisfactory to Good.	Satisfactory.	Efficient.	Fair to Satisfactory.	Fair.	Moderate to Fair.	Moderate.	Inferior to Moderate.	Inferior.	Non-efficient.	Total School.
Reading	...	...	12	15	74	101	6	6	...	...	...	...	12	113
Composition ...	...	1	21	14	46	82	9	18	2	1	...	1	31	113
Writing	...	...	20	9	57	86	12	15	...	...	...	...	27	113
Spelling	9	5	32	10	28	84	6	12	...	11	...	...	29	113
Recitation	1	...	25	13	66	105	3	5	...	...	...	...	8	113
Arithmetic	...	...	14	7	35	56	8	35	2	11	...	1	57	113
Drawing	...	...	13	9	67	89	11	11	...	1	...	...	23	112
Singing	1	3	19	12	41	76	6	16	...	1	...	1	24	100
Physical Instruction...	5	2	32	14	32	85	9	11	...	1	...	1	22	107
Geography ...	...	...	4	1	26	31	6	42	5	21	1	5	80	111
History	...	...	13	12	26	51	11	18	9	4	...	3	45	96
Model-instruction ...	...	...	3	...	107	110	1	2	...	...	...	...	3	113

ENGLISH, ETC.—Reading and Recitation, though still allowing room for improvement in the intelligent preparation of the subject-matter and in the development of a taste for literature, are usually well taught, the two Readers now in most common use being the Royal Crown and Imperial. It is a matter for regret that the Zealandia school paper, which evidently found favour with many, should have had so brief a career, as it helped to provide a variety of suitable matter and to prevent any distaste from arising through the perusal of over-conned selections. The Canterbury Inspectors suggest, as we have previously done, that for recitation the teachers should "go further afield in making selections from the best poetry available." This would naturally involve the labour of transcription, an exercise which is apt to be too much neglected, but which can be made very useful as a training in both writing and spelling. A programme for each standard, or a two-years programme for each of two successive classes combined, might be drawn up, so that no child could go through his school course without having committed to memory several of the choicest gems of English literature. In the selection of these the taste of the master would have scope, and his individuality would thus permanently impress the minds of his pupils.

Writing and dictation continue to be very satisfactory branches of English, the former showing to better advantage and the latter to rather worse than in 1904, and yet to no school have we assigned special credit for excellence of penmanship, while more receive such commendation for correct spelling than for any other subject. Word-building in conjunction with oral composition should be more systematically carried on, especially through the higher standards, and improvements in the copybooks to bring them up to date in regard to commercial forms are still needed. In the junior classes the ruling of slates should be uniform, and the writing of the teacher's copy should always exactly conform to the style of the copybook in use. The transcription presented to us should always be as prescribed in the syllabus, and contain those forms which are wanting in the copybook. We expect it to be the product of the child's latest and best effort.

Our general impression was that the exercises set for composition were better treated this year, and a close analysis of our figures for every class bears out this view, though it is only in Standard VI that a great advance has been made. The percentages give the proportion of schools in which satisfactory work was produced, the tests having been for the second time set by the Education Department: Standard VI, 72 per cent.; Standard V, 43 per cent.; Standard IV, 61 per cent.; and Standard III, 81 per cent. The figures in 1904 were—Standard VI, 43 per cent.; Standard V, 37 per cent.; Standard IV, 56 per cent.; and Standard III, 78 per cent. Standard V is still the weakest class, but it was not so much that the synthesis of sentences was faulty this time as that grammar, even only so far as it bears upon composition, has evidently been too much neglected, for the children seemed devoid of ideas upon questions that might be treated grammatically. The adverb, let alone the adverbial phrase, which was more often than not confused with the adverbial clause, was sometimes unknown. Nor was it merely the nomenclature that appalled, for when asked to pick out the words that stand for names, the names themselves were commonly given—that is, when any answers at all were attempted. Changing the expression of a paragraph from the present into the past time was also a frequent stumbling-block, and the force of prefixes was but little understood. We were, on the other hand, very pleased with the answers given to tests set by us for Standard II, which were much more searching than hitherto.

Oral composition should be universally practised, full oral answering being insisted upon in English lessons, and even more advantage would be gained by constantly using this method in history, geography, and more especially in nature-study, where the child in giving a description is forced to draw upon his own vocabulary.

NATURE-STUDY.—Though pleased with much that has been done under this head, such as the keeping of weather calendars, charts, and rain-gauges, recording thermometer and barometer readings, illustrating graphically the barometric variation, observation of plant-growth, of varieties of plants, insects, birds, and minerals, we have found the method and quality of the treatment almost as varied as the selections. Fortunately we have not met so many this year who are waiting for "books" before they begin, as even the slaves of routine are beginning to see that the children are to be encouraged to observe for themselves what is in the world immediately around them, and "lions, tigers, and elephants" are not washed up on the beach every day. Realistic teaching would, even if the unseen were dilated upon, prevent the descriptions of these creatures from playing leapfrog in the child's mind, so that we certainly do not expect to meet again—"The camel that lives in the sea, comes up to the top of the water to breathe, and has a pouch to carry its young ones in." We can sympathize with the teacher who finds such a wealth of interest in the neighbourhood that he hardly knows where to begin, but others are like the one who told us that there was nothing in her neighbourhood (a bush clearing). When we ventured to suggest the bush, we were met by the rejoinder, "Oh! There's nothing in the bush." One of her more enterprising pupils though, we found, had discovered Hymenophyllums, kidney ferns, and orchids, was familiar with the weka's eggs and chicks, with paradise ducks and flappers, though he had never found the ducks' nests, had even seen a kakapo and a kiwi, and could describe closely enough to enable us to judge that he had found the Prince of Wales feather, and not the common *Todea hymenophylloides*. Observation and description, even when applied to the most common objects, must be accurate to be of use as a foundation for future science-training. How often do we find girls and even small boys ignorant of the number of toes possessed by the barndoor fowl, while sometimes the child who can sit by the hour watching horses and cows feeding in the paddock can see no difference in the way in which they do it. The romancer, too, must be guarded against—for example, the little lad who described the tui as hanging on by one foot to the kowhai and putting nuts into its mouth with the other. The Denniston boy who told us, in his Third Standard essay, that goats ate apple-skins, potato-peelings, banana-skins, inside of jam-tins, and anything else they could pick up was evidently (under township limitations) a keen student of nature.

The training might well be more systematic. Many have undertaken this work on right lines, but the chief difficulty with the Inspector was to find out what had been done, and especially the method

pursued. Programmes should be kept by the teacher showing the subjects and their treatment, a separate list being made of those which have formed themes for written composition, every subject having been, of course, fully treated orally. Mr. Mulgan, we notice, recommends confining the year's attention to one or to a section of one of the three great divisions—the animal, vegetable, and mineral kingdoms—or to natural phenomena. Such restriction would in many cases afford ample scope and naturally lead to closer investigation, but we have to deal with all classes of children of different tastes and opportunities, and even when attending the same school coming from very different localities, and the spirit of inquiry, of noting and reasoning about what is seen, should be encouraged in every possible way, so that a general course is we consider often advisable, though it may with advantage have a bias towards specialising. We would not even discourage spontaneity.

In a district such as this how varied is the field! In one part almost every known mineral is said to have been found—a mountain of iron-ore, seams of coal, limestone caverns, and quartz reefs in full working—all in juxtaposition, parted only it may be by lovely hills or a narrow strip of dairy land. Next comes a rich agricultural valley full of beauties and wonders, where the rivers play hide and seek with the landscape, one vanishing for miles from its bed to reappear again in full flow, another rising from the level plain in one immense spring, ever clear as crystal, and with force and volume enough to move an ironclad. Again, we have a fertile plain beautifully girdled by grazing-hills, the brightest, sunniest spot in "God's own country." It is closely settled and farmed, being noted for its barley, fruit, and hops, the somber hue of the native bush having long since given way to spring's delicate green and autumn's russet and gold. Over the hills in the track of the red deer lies the great mineral belt, with its half-hidden stores of copper and chrome, a line sharply defined through the forest, scorched and barren, a scar on the country's fair brow. Westward, again, is a long narrow valley, on whose rich alluvial flats fruit predominates. There the children count raspberries by the bucket, while their owners reckon them by the ton. Close in the background stand the snow-capped ranges extending away from the bays in a wild panorama of cloud-piercing spires, densely green slopes, foaming rivers, still lakes—the haunt of black swan and shy crested grebe—gorges and cataracts, valleys (smiling but rarely), and rata-clad mountains, till within sight of the unbroken ocean. There the finest coal-fields in the colony stand at dizzy heights that look down upon the stately nikau, the clematis in its white-robed virgin glory veiling hardy birch and weeping rimu, the graceful ponga and the palm-like Indivisa, queen of mountain passes. Nor is there naught but coal below the surface. Beside the rock-bound river all along that toilsome road—begotten before engineers were, the only artery of inland traffic to connect sea with sea, yet in its wild beauty claiming to be the finest coach-drive in the colony—the children are familiar with the sluice claim, the dredge, and the miner searching for gold. On the sea-shore, where nature has been the only road-maker, they frequently see him at the life-wrecking work of beach-combing; while here and there they are being brought up within the very roar of stamper batteries. At the top of one lofty range, in winter deep buried in snow, where even a summer school is not needed, a heap of mullock, slipped from no one knows where, is, when the season permits, being passed *en masse* to the battery; and a few miles away, from a neighbouring hilltop that suns itself above the fog-banks, down 1,300 ft. from the mouth right to sea-level goes in the darkness of intense night a perpendicular shaft, forming the main artery for those twenty-seven miles of drives that constitute the richest quartz-mine in the district and in New Zealand, second only to Waihi in its output. Then, too, many of the wonders of the deep, from the whitebait to the whale, may reveal themselves to the observant eyes of some of our scholars who have never slept away from the rumble of the waves. From the windows of one school seals may be often seen basking on the rocks; on the way to another, the children's footprints cross those of the penguin, and besides hosts of more common water-fowl, that *rara avis*, the tall white crane, may occasionally be seen on the flounder-flats. Again, what a wealth of research we have in another domain of nature's working—in what we might term "geographical observation." The whole of our wild and beautiful coast, hugged and searched by the Maoris of old, is full of interest and variety. The one side has that huge bank of boulders (a bone of contention for both geologists and engineers), stretches of silver and golden sands, beautiful islets and bays in succession (each with its sand-banked lagoon) to end in a sand-guarded sea; the other has an almost harbourless shore, all nature-protected throughout by outlying rocks, from the home of the tuatara (near neighbour of Pelorus Jack) past the seal-clad Steeples to those projecting reefs on which in storm or calm the swell of the open misnamed Pacific ceaselessly dashes in geyser-like spray. Away inland near the centre of the island, at present far removed from any schoolboy's eyes, are our hot springs that, though free from thermal eruptions, should none the less for their healing power be classed among the wonders of creation. Too often may those giant workers, the silent forces of nature, labour unnoticed.

In a world so full of natural wealth and beauty there is much to attract a lad whether from the mine or the farm, the bush or the sea, the town or the orchard, the hilltop or the plain; much to interest and stir the imagination of the future scientist, artist, or poet: for if his destiny be merely the plough, the mine-truck, or the office stool, a scientific bent will always be of good value, and "a thing of beauty is a joy for ever." A close and thoughtful study of nature, too, in any of her varied moods can hardly fail to instil a feeling of reverence for the Hand that planned ere the mountains were brought forth or the valleys ran with song.

Arithmetic.—We are pleased to record a considerable improvement in this most important subject. The results obtained show that 60 per cent. of the pupils examined in Standards III to VI qualified for promotion, as against 53 per cent. in each of the two previous years. The percentage of individual passes in each of these standards for the last four years (half marks for the purpose of the estimate being taken as a pass in each case) was as follows:—

	Standard III.	Standard IV.	Standard V.	Standard VI.
1902	.. 76	64	51	55
1903	.. 74	53	37	41
1904	.. 74	61	32	44
1905	.. 78	64	54	45

The appended table shows the detailed results in this subject in all the standard classes examined during the year :—

	Standard VI.	Standard V.	Standard IV.	Standard III.	Standard II.	Standard I.
Excellent	4	15	17	24	22	6
Good to excellent	1	...	5	4	6	2
Good	8	6	9	16	18	6
Satisfactory to good	...	6	3	9	5	4
Satisfactory	9	13	20	14	18	11
Efficient	22	40	54	67	69	29
Fair to satisfactory	2	1	1	1	4	4
Fair	23	21	18	13	12	24
Moderate to fair	5	2	2	...	...	1
Moderate	15	14	5	10	3	12
Inferior to moderate...	...	...	2	...	...	2
Inferior	13	14	8	4	5	18
Non-efficient	61	52	36	28	24	61
Total standards examined ...	83	92	90	95	93	90

From the figures presented it will be seen that in Standrad VI the general result cannot yet be regarded as "satisfactory" though the work done was slightly better than that of last year. In Standard V —a class in which we noted a general failure last year—a very marked improvement has taken place, fifteen schools in this standard qualifying as " excellent." A fuller comprehension of the nature of decimals and a sounder knowledge of the elementary mensuration prescribed would do away with the chief apparent weaknesses, and go a long way towards making the work more perfect. Satisfactory work was done in Standard IV, the result being 64 per cent. as compared with 61 per cent. in 1904. In Standard III the tests set appeared to us to be somewhat simple, and good results in general were obtained. The knowledge of the composition of numbers up to 1,000,000 was in some cases defective. We would impress upon teachers the great necessity of perfecting in this standard this branch of the subject, which forms so prominent a part of the arithmetic in the first half of the child's school course. The work of Standard II was well done throughout, 81 per cent. of those examined qualifying for promotion, while twenty-two classes received the " excellent " mark. In Standard I we got comparatively a very poor result, 56 per cent. of passes—or out of ninety classes examined sixty-one ranked as non-efficient. This result, in a standard where the subject presents no great difficulties, is very disappointing, and, we venture to believe, is due to a want of appreciation of the full limits of the prescribed work, to a wrong interpretation of the syllabus, or to an inability to leave the old methods of instruction and take up the subject on modern lines of thought. We would call the attention of our teachers to the remarks we made in reporting last year on the arithmetic in the Preparatory classes, and, in dealing with numbers, would suggest the following course as the possible scope of the work in these classes in most of our schools. First year—(1) Numbers to 10 ; (2) intelligent counting ; (3) oral and written processes of addition and subtraction ; (4) application of signs + and −. Second year—(1) Numbers to 20 ; (2) oral and written addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division ; (3) Application of signs +, −, ×, ÷. Method—(1) Thorough understanding of one number before proceeding to next higher ; (2) concrete illustration ; (3) oral and written work to run on parallel lines. With systematic teaching of the subject in its early stages under some such well-defined scheme, we feel certain that a very much greater measure of success will result in Standard I.

Geography.—We confess to a feeling of disappointment in regard to the Geography in which the results show none of the expected improvement, but on the other hand class it as by far the most unsatisfactory in the syllabus. Neither the novelty nor the difficulty of the A Course, in which the child is often required to draw the right logical conclusion from his own observations (with many we fear an unattainable goal), will altogether excuse the incorrect and meagre answers submitted for our perusal. We acknowledge that oral work, especially in the lower classes, often gave the better impression ; yet, if in the course of instruction geography and composition are rightly correlated, what should prevent a Sixth or Fifth Standard boy from expressing himself clearly on paper in regard to observed natural phenomena ? In Standard IV the drawing of plans had not been sufficiently practised, and in the higher standards map-reading was a very common weakness, while ideas concerning latitude and longitude were often so hazy that we imagine that a globe or other concrete illustration could rarely, if ever, have been employed.

Drawing.—Although the majority of schools were classed as " satisfactory," the treatment of this subject left a good deal to be desired, as many schools had not undertaken the various branches necessary to a full course of work. Model-drawing still shows much weakness in many of our smaller schools. It is a matter for regret that a proper set of drawing models cannot be supplied to each school, though we are pleased to note that many teachers do their best to overcome this want by constructing models of the simpler forms. Elementary design, which is now prescribed for each standard, was per-

haps the weakest branch of the subject. In a few schools effective work was done, but in a large number the pupils seemed to lack any knowledge of the fundamental principles, their designs being for the most part a fantastic arrangement of lines and curves. Drawing from actual objects was as a rule well treated in the upper standards. Much pleasing variety can be introduced into this part of the subject by using as examples many of the objects that come up for observation in nature-study. Some schools in their handwork course have taken up free-arm drawing with a considerable amount of success. With the more general adoption of blank books, a wise step in our opinion, and the varied programme of work required, we would like to see the branch of freehand to which each drawing belongs distinctly marked in the book presented for examination, while in the case of mere copies an accompanying footnote should state whether the copy has been made from (*a*) blackboard-drawing or large wall diagram, or (*b*) from the ordinary small card.

Singing.—This subject is now attempted in the great majority of our schools, only thirteen in fact being recorded in which singing is not taught, as against twenty-seven last year and sixty-five in 1903.

History, too, was more generally taken up this year. In fifty-one schools out of ninety-six we regarded the work done as "satisfactory." In too many instances, however, the course of work set out received but meagre treatment, and we cannot report any general improvement in the subject on the new syllabus lines.

Handwork.—Various branches of handwork were taken up in thirty-nine different schools—one-third of this number being schools below Grade IV—the subjects embracing plasticine modelling, elementary physiology, swimming, brush drawing, bricklaying, and free-arm drawing. The handwork itself was usually executed in a satisfactory manner, though we would like to see in some of the divisions a fuller application wherever possible to other subjects in the school course—such, for example, as a greater use made of plasticine modelling in connection with the geography and drawing lessons. In addition to the above, the school classes in cookery have been continued at Westport, Reefton, and Toi Toi Valley; dressmaking classes have been carried on at Reefton and Westport, and woodwork at Reefton; while towards the end of the year new classes in cookery were started at Richmond and Wakefield.

During the year new regulations under the Manual and Technical Instruction Act were brought into force. So far as school classes are concerned the changes introduced seem of advantage, and consist—(1) in arranging the subjects into three divisions corresponding to three groups of the Standard classes Preparatory to Standard II, Standards III and IV, and V and above; (2) a less complex method of paying capitation by the adoption of a uniform rate for each group of classes; (3) more favourable working conditions as regards the duration of certain classes, and number of pupils that can attend; (4) special grants in aid of material are done away with—in their place advance payments may be made, while the rate of capitation for the first year of recognition of a class is higher than in subsequent years.

Fifteen schools this year have taken needlework under the regulations of the above Act.

Special classes for the training of teachers were again conducted at Nelson and Westport, and for the first time at Reefton, the subjects comprising model, brush, and blackboard drawing, plasticine modelling, woodwork, cookery, vocal music, physiography, and dressmaking. The attendance at these classes was only fair. We shall endeavour, if possible, during the coming year to arrange classes for teachers in such parts of the district as we have not yet been able to reach, though this is a difficult matter on account of the inadequate means of communication, which prevent teachers from being readily brought together.

Technical School.—Since our last report it is gratifying to be able to record the completion of the building for the Technical School in Nelson, and the establishment of classes under a most efficient staff of teachers. In all fourteen technical and nine continuation classes were in operation at the close of the year, a total of 275 students being enrolled. The satisfactory attendance of so many at the classes would seem to fully justify the setting-up of this school, and we are sure that, as time goes on, this branch of our modern educational equipment will prove of ever-increasing usefulness and benefit to the youth of the community. In this connection it seems a matter of surprise to us that nowhere in our country school districts have the local Committees seen fit to institute "continuation" classes under the Act—that is, classes in which instruction is given in the ordinary public-school subjects above Standard IV, or other subjects of general or commercial education.

Drill.—Physical instruction continues to improve and become more general, though, however, it should be universal, only five teachers failing this year to give any instruction. A notice sent out early in the year *re* the method of conducting breathing exercises has been, we find, generally acted upon—short practices being given daily and very commonly twice a day. These, if rightly supervised and faithfully performed, should prove of immense benefit in years to come, for, with our lads, chest and arms are weaker than lower limbs. Attention might now be directed to making other exercises as well, however short, as frequent as possible and to the preservation of a good carriage in the school-room.

Where such simple exercises as those detailed in the syllabus are practised, we naturally expect the children to be so familiar with them that they can go through them judging the time and without the teacher's lead.

Cadet corps or detachments have been now formed at Westport (three), Waimangaroa, Denniston, Reefton, Nelson (two), Richmond, Motueka, Wakefield, and Motupiko, and the companies in Westport and its neighbourhood have been formed into a battalion.

We have referred to new measures passed and regulations issued during the year, but by no means the least important of these is the Teachers' Superannuation Act, which indicates a decided educational advance that should confer great benefits upon the whole service. We do not approve of all its details, nor do we consider that in many cases too liberal a provision has been made, but in spite of shortcomings

the measure in being binding upon all entrants to the service, in making provision for old age, in granting immediate retirement to faithful servants who are eligible, and in its intention to keep the service in the hands of those who are full of life and energy or who retain at least sufficient vigour to carry out their arduous duties efficiently, is in the best interests of public education.

We have, &c.,
G. A. HARKNESS, M.A.,
A. CRAWFORD, B.A.,
Inspectors.

The Chairman, Nelson Education Board.

GREY.

SIR,— Education Office, Greymouth, 20th April, 1906.

I have the honour to submit a general report on the schools of the Grey Education District for the year 1905.

The number of public schools in operation at the close of the year was thirty-two. These, with the three Catholic schools, were all visited during the year, and many were inspected more than once. This was made possible by my relinquishing secretarial duties early in the year, a step which I feel sure has been for the benefit of school work generally. Besides having more time for inspection, I was able to assemble the teachers on Saturdays for some months during the year, and to have talks with them on school work generally and the new syllabus particularly. I much regret that, owing to the early resignation of my successor, I have been compelled to again temporarily undertake office work, which has prevented me from visiting the schools early in the year.

The following table gives 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	27	25	14 5
" VI	132	130	13 9
" V	120	117	13 0
" IV	195	194	11 10
" III	179	175	10 10
" II	174	171	9 10
" I	156	151	9 1
Preparatory	606	561	6 9
Totals	1,589	1,524	...

While the average for the pupils of most classes has remained stationary or decreased, that for Standard I has decreased, and now reaches the high figure of 9 years 1 month. Pupils who begin their school life between the ages of five and six, and most of them do, have to spend between three and four years before they are ready for promotion to Standard II. When it is remembered that the syllabus for Standard I is not by any means difficult, children should be ready for promotion earlier than they are. Nothing can be gained by keeping pupils an inordinate length of time in the preparatory classes.

I am pleased to be again able to state that the attendance on the date of annual visit was extremely good, in standard classes only eighteen being absent out of a roll-number of 956. On many days the weather was very stormy; indeed, in some cases the Inspector was not expected, yet every child was present. This shows that interest in education on the part of the parent is not wanting.

The one great drawback to a steady advancement in the quality of work is the continual change of teachers. There are only five schools in the district where there have not been changes in the staff during the past three years. The amending Act of last year has improved matters in connection with teachers' salaries, but as long as payment depends upon average attendance teachers cannot be blamed if they seek a change as soon as population tends to decrease.

The following is a classification of the schools: 7 good, 13 satisfactory, 8 fair, 4 weak. This is a big improvement on the classification of the previous year, and the work done throughout the schools is the best I have had. In no subject is this more noticeable than in arithmetic—not that the mark gained in many schools is a high one, but in previous years it was very low. The mental tests which have been given in every standard were much better done, though there are still many teachers who do not fully realise the value of mental arithmetic. Where a teacher has a number of classes to manage, it is, I know, almost impossible to give a great deal of time to oral work in each standard, but the teacher should strive to give as much attention as he possibly can. To quote the syllabus: "Too much emphasis cannot be laid upon the fact that success in teaching arithmetic is proportional to the attention given by the teacher to the oral work at every stage, but more especially in the early stages."

In Class P and Standard I I confined my tests to oral work, and the teachers who had been giving only blackboard and slate work were disappointed with the results obtained.

Of the English subjects, reading shows the greatest improvement. As more practice has been given through the year, this was to be expected. All standards now read at least two books, and I hope the Board will soon be able to see its way to provide extra reading-matter for all schools. As I pointed

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.

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

The Chairman, Grey Education Board.

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 Annnal 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.

In the tables furnishing detailed statements relating to each school a matter claiming attention is a deficiency in the number of half-days the schools in general have remained open during the year 1905. In only six schools has this number reached 420, which leaves an aggregate of 100 half-days devoted to vacations and holidays, a number which is equal to ten full school weeks. While a large number of schools have nearly reached that standard, it is evident in other cases that there has been considerable laxity. As was urged last year it is impossible to secure the best results unless a full school year is maintained.

The pupils attending the classes higher than the Sixth Standard included forty in the secondary class of the Hokitika District High School, and only nine in the Seventh Standard of other schools. A separate report on the examination of the former shows that the class maintained a high degree of efficiency and this is further established by the success of a number of pupils in the Matriculation and Civil Service Examinations. The pupils in Standard VII this year followed the higher course required by the new syllabus and the results were uniformly satisfactory.

The higher education of the pupils beyond the Sixth Standard has embodied technical education to a very small extent. This is confined to the connection of a few boys with a woodwork class and of girls with a cookery class. The reason for this is that the industries requiring technical training are comparatively few in Westland, and the great majority of children who remain at school after the primary course is concluded do so for the purpose of obtaining general education or more especially of securing a pass for examinations leading to appointments in the Civil Service, in the schools, or in offices connected with legal or other professions. The demand must be supplied and a technical day-school would receive hardly any support. It is hoped, however, that, now a building for the purposes of technical education has been provided, it will be possible to establish in one centre useful evening classes in connection with which effective practical instruction in science and geometrical drawing may prove of sufficient service to secure a satisfactory attendance. A suggestion has been made also to introduce, both by inclusion in the curriculum of country schools and by the institution of evening classes, practical instruction in agricultural science. The scope for this is at present not wide, but if a beginning is made the interest in this form of education will, without doubt, increase.

The Sixth Standard, which is the only class examined for a pass in all schools by the Inspector, consists of seventy-five pupils, of whom forty obtained proficiency certificates and twenty-six competency certificates, while nine failed. The percentage of those obtaining full certificates has increased to fifty-three, and the percentage of those who failed altogether is twelve. While this result may be accepted as satisfactory it is very necessary that by careful classification and intelligent adoption of good methods the pupils shall be trained in the lower classes so that they may meet the final test with confidence. One difficulty that presents itself in connection with the examination of this class is that, while on the one hand it is required that in compulsory subjects the standard shall be the same for all classes, wide latitude is allowed to the teachers in the selection of the Course A in geography. This subject receives a considerable proportion of the marks and it is not very easy to maintain uniformity of treatment without placing the candidates from some schools at an unmerited disadvantage. Any middle course is scarcely feasible. Either a more definite course should be fixed or the subject should be omitted from the list of those to which marks are alloted, while, of course, it is maintained as compulsory.

A reference to the appended table discloses that all the larger schools and the majority of those under sole teachers have presented a year's work that reaches a good standard from every point of view, and the general result shows decided improvement. This indicates on the one hand that the new syllabus allows greater opportunity to achieve success and on the other that the teachers have readily seized that opportunity. By a loyal adherence to the spirit of the new course and to the methods necessary for its preparation they have reaped the reward afforded by the increased interest and intelligence displayed by the pupils. It may be expected, further, that the conditions in this respect will continue to improve. It is pleasing, also, to find that the teachers in most cases resolutely refuse to recommend the promotion of pupils that are at all backward. It is only by maintaining in each class a high standard of work that the full benefits of the training and instruction can be received by the pupils. It is hardly to be expected that this commendation can be applied to the whole of the schools in a district where so many of the teachers in charge of small schools are without training. It has to be said, however, that the number that by persistent effort and careful instruction fail to obtain a satisfactory measure of success are few, and in some schools lying in remote parts of the district there is presented work that would be creditable in any school.

During the past year the schools, with the advantage of suitable text-books, have all adopted in entirety the course prescribed in arithmetic. The reduction in the amount required in the upper classes and the more scientific arrangement of the course for the lower classes have continued to render the subject of more value as a means of education, and have in general reduced the amount of work. The latter benefit will, however, not be fully reaped until the pupils of the present junior classes advance to the upper part of the school. The instruction of the upper classes cannot reach the highest point of effectiveness until all the pupils have received in the earlier stages a thorough grounding in study based on concrete methods, which were not so feasible under former conditions. For the same reason great responsibility lies on the teachers charged with the instruction of the junior classes. While the exercises engaged in by these should not take the form of problems they should be as far as possible based on the concrete and the pupils of all classes should be trained in the clear, oral, or written description of the process of each exercise.

The preparation of the course in English is in general very satisfactory and good progress has been made. With reference to the power of expression, both oral and written, the necessity for regular and careful training is widely recognised. The study of the technical requirements, both analytical and synthetical, have also received a pleasing amount of attention. This, under the name of grammar, has in the past suffered by the inclusion of too wide a course, and severe pruning was absolutely neces-

sary. The study of English has also gained by the insistence of the more intimate connection of grammar with constructive exercises. It must, however, be recognised by teachers that a definite amount of grammatical knowledge is absolutely necessary before the pupils can gain an ability to engage with accuracy and facility in the construction of sentences. Only experience will enable the instructors to select a course that is essential, without burdening it with what in the primary course must be regarded as superfluous. This difficulty does not appear so great as one connected with reading. The spelling of the words and sufficiently correct intonation receive proper attention, and, in the lower classes, the attention to the meaning of the words and phrases does not call for adverse criticism. In the higher classes, however, teachers find that the attainment by the scholars of the ability to define, even generally, the meaning of the terms used is very difficult. The chief reason appears to be that into the text-books are introduced many extracts from general literature that are unsuitable for minute study by children whose experience of life and appreciation of literary expression in some of its aspects is necessarily greatly limited. The study of the reading-books will be rendered easier if the lessons are taken in order of their difficulty. Thus the training of the pupils in the easier lessons will prepare the way for the more formidable exercises. There is no doubt, on the other hand, that in some schools insufficient attention is given to the ideas and their expression in reading lessons, which too often take the form of verbal recitation, without an adequate accompaniment of thought.

With reference to the remaining subjects of the syllabus, the standard of the previous years has been maintained. The schools under sole teachers have presented more than the minimum requirements in elementary science, health, and nature study, and in the larger schools these branches have been made a prominent feature of the course. In geography the A course has been based on experiment and observation to a considerable extent, and the text-books have been used to supplement such methods. The B course in geography was not taken in any school, and this and history are being taken in alternate years as reading subjects. The Board, which supplies practically all text-books not required for home lessons, will provide the geography readers necessary so that this branch may be adopted during the present year. In drawing, owing to the existence of a teachers' instruction class during the year, greater interest in geometrical drawing and its application to carton work was apparent. There is room in a number of schools, however, for more practical and thorough instruction in instrumental drawing. The most successful work in this branch has been achieved by the pupils of the Hokitika School in correlation with the woodwork class.

I have, &c.,

A. J. Morton, Inspector.

The Chairman, Westland Education Board.

NORTH CANTERBURY.

Sir,— Christchurch, 29th January, 1906.

We have the honour to submit our report on the schools of the district for the year 1905.

At the close of the last quarter the number of schools in operation under the Board's control was 210, a slight increase on that at the end of the previous year, due mainly to the opening of additional household or aided schools. The enrolment of children as shown by examination schedules was 19,590, a number slightly higher than that for 1904, and of these 18,556, or roughly 95 per cent., presented themselves on the occasion of the Inspector's visit.

The year just ended has been one of considerable anxiety for Inspectors as well as teachers. For the first time examinations were conducted on the lines of the new syllabus, and although we generally found in readiness in the larger schools all necessary exhibits, such as schemes of work and records of progress, there were regrettable instances in which teachers had not made themselves familiar with matters of very ordinary detail in the routine of their newer duties. Excuses for such omissions may be accepted once, but it is not to be expected that they can again pass current.

Examination of twelve hundred children belonging to private schools in various parts of the district from Rangiora to Ashburton kept one of our number busily occupied for some five weeks, encroaching so far upon our time that a day's leisure was practically an unknown luxury. Spare evenings became the subject of regretful recollection, but were outside the sphere of actual experience, and we were finally left without an opportunity of paying the ordinary separate inspection visit to two groups of schools—one on and around Banks Peninsula, the other comprising schools north of Waikari.

Under the new conditions examination of the largest schools can be carried out more quickly than before, but outside these the practice of testing classes by sample would merely complicate the day's arrangements, would fail to supply a reliable test of the work done, and would not be attended by any compensating economy of time. In a considerable number of schools, moreover (especially in those of the "sole charge" type), it is for the present expedient that the responsibility of classifying the children should rest with the Inspector. The teacher is in such cases freely consulted before a final judgment is formed, and may fairly be expected to accept and loyally abide by the decision arrived at. It has on occasion happened otherwise—a teacher leaving a district being tempted to abuse the privilege by making wholesale promotions of children notably unfit. Needless to say such ill-advised action does not find favour with his successor or with the officer who subsequently finds that time has been wasted and sound progress arrested.

In the temporary dearth of certificated teachers it has been found necessary to accept for the present, in a considerable number of the less lucrative positions and in the more remote schools, the services of candidates possessing only slender qualifications in the way of professional training or previous practical experience. A goodly proportion of these, whose education has been fairly liberal, whose personal influence over their pupils is sufficiently strong, and whose earnestness of purpose and diligent effort go far to compensate for other deficiencies, show themselves deserving of encouragement,

and give promise of further efficiency in the near future. There are, however, a few (among them some certificated teachers who have in recent years re-entered the service) regarding whom we have no such hope, and whose tenure of office under conditions of keener competition for employment would not be secure. The importance of gaining departmental recognition in the form of a teacher's certificate is urged upon those who have not yet qualified in this respect. Some, by private study, and by using the opportunities which Saturday classes afford, will probably find little difficulty in gaining the coveted "parchment." Others, whose education has been less liberal, might look to a period of normal-school training as their ultimate preparation for the ordeal of examination. The services rendered by the teaching staff in the bulk of the Board's schools are still worthy of warm appreciation, and we note with much satisfaction the growing tendency on the part of the State to recognise more generously than in the past the fidelity to duty and the spirit of self-sacrifice which have long animated this section of its workers.

On the forms presented herewith will be found the usual statistical information. We supplement this by adding that the number of pupils enrolled in private schools examined by us was 1,233, and that 1,074 of these were present. Of the 432 children returned as Seventh Standard pupils in the public schools, 361 belong to the various district high schools, and of these 340 were examined. Out of 1,383 pupils in Standard VI we found 1,346 in attendance. Of these 705 were awarded the proficiency certificate, 433 qualified for competency, and 208 failed to gain any certificate.

The following paragraphs bring under review in more or less detail some salient features which seem to merit special attention:—

English.—Of the subjects comprised in the "English" group, reading naturally claims first attention. On the whole the attainment in this subject may be regarded as satisfactory. In only a few schools is the quality of the reading open to serious objection through lack of fluency, while in several of the better class schools a high standard of merit is reached. In too many cases, however, it would appear as if fluency had been gained at the cost of intelligent comprehension of the language, and reading of this character has no claims to commendation. An improvement is noticeable in the direction of more intelligent treatment of the reading lesson, and a further stimulus would be given were written tests on the language and subject-matter of the reading-books more frequently employed. It is to be apprehended that many of those who have passed through our schools have failed to acquire the habit of reading, or of applying themselves to the acquisition of knowledge, unaided by their teachers. Such a defect may largely be attributed to want of self-help and self-reliance, qualities the development of which would to some extent be fostered by the silent perusal of continuous readers, by more frequent practice in the use of the dictionary, and by the more general establishment of school libraries. Owing to the recent improvements in the mechanical art of printing, and to the enterprise of various publishers, well-printed cloth-bound volumes of a wide selection of suitable authors can be procured at a cost of from 4d. to 6d. each. The introduction of such books for the purposes of silent reading, whether at school or at home, would tend to the enlargement of the pupils' vocabulary and ideas, to the acquisition of the habit of continuous reading, and to a more interesting and attractive condition of school life. In some cases the book selected as the second Reader in the upper standards has been open to objection. It should be borne in mind that a mere text-book in such a subject as history, as distinguished from an historical Reader, does not satisfy the requirements of the programme in English.

In all but a few schools the amount of poetry prescribed has been carefully memorised, and, generally speaking, a satisfactory knowledge of the language of the poems was displayed. We would repeat a suggestion made in our report of last year—viz., that teachers should not restrict their choice of poetical passages to those contained in the reading-books. In some schools the same poems are presented for repetition year after year, while a pleasing variety and freshness might be imparted by an annual change of programme, and by drawing more freely on the wealth of simple and beautiful poetry available in our national literature.

In spelling and dictation the formal tests set have generally been well satisfied. Increased attention has been given to word-building in the lower classes; in the upper classes the orthographical value of a knowledge of prefixes, suffixes, and some easy derivations might be more commonly recognised.

The quality of the slate-writing in the lower classes of most schools points to careful teaching; but to be of permanent value the instruction in this subject should include careful training in the holding of the pencil, so that a good habit may be acquired before the pupil attempts writing in copybooks. When a faulty method of holding the pen and a careless posture in the desk have become habitual at the early stages there is need of much vigilance and a steady application of will-power to remedy these defects. Good writing goes hand-in-hand with good discipline, hence the acceptance of a low standard of work in this respect is assumed to indicate some weakness of control.

Under the guidance of those teachers who have intelligently interpreted the spirit of the new syllabus a forward step has been taken in the teaching of composition. The time available for this subject is greater now than in former years, and a stimulus has thereby been imparted to its treatment, with the most satisfactory results in those schools where due appreciation has been shown of the value of the mental discipline attendant on a course of lessons on grammar in its direct bearings upon composition. At the elementary stages the claims of oral composition have received wider recognition, and the beneficial results of this preliminary training are beginning to manifest themselves in the written exercises of the middle classes. This subject shows to least advantage in the two upper standards of the less satisfactory schools in our district. We occasionally receive composition papers from pupils in Standards V and VI which, in regard to ideas and construction of sentences, show very little advance on the work of Standard IV.

The treatment of the composition lesson affords wide scope for the individuality and versatility of the teacher, and in several of the schools it has been gratifying to note the skill displayed in this direction, and the thought and judgment exercised in the selection of topics for short themes or essays.

On the other hand we occasionally find much difficulty in selecting subjects on which the upper scholars can write more than a few disconnected sentences. Such a result is all the more surprising in view of the ample material at the disposal of the resourceful teacher. We would suggest, as lines for the stronger development of this subject, practice in the analysis of the subject-matter of the poetry contained in the school readers, bringing into prominence the several word-pictures in the order of their presentment, the same to be used as material for written descriptions in the children's own language. Valuable training in observation and in concentration of thought would also be supplied by the silent reading of previously unseen passages, and by their subsequent reproduction as a test of composition.

Arithmetic.—A year's uninterrupted experience of the new conditions has served to demonstrate the value of recent changes in the arithmetic syllabus. The importance attached to more up-to-date and rational methods of teaching than those too commonly in vogue in past years has in most schools received sympathetic recognition. The immediate advantages are most apparent in the preparatory classes and in the two lowest standards. In Standard II in particular a new interest has been imparted to the subject by the substitution of easy calculations in money rules for long and uninteresting mechanical examples. The step to Standard III is thereby rendered less difficult, and, in fact, we should at this stage welcome a more stringent test, to insure the successful treatment of the Fourth Standard programme during the following year. In the higher standards we hope to find increased attention to mental arithmetic and to shorter methods of working the rules presented for the previous standards. In some schools the shortcomings in arithmetic in the upper standards are partly to be attributed to premature promotion, although a separate classification in this subject is permitted by the regulations.

Geography.—The work covered in Course A geography is being carried out in realistic fashion and with reasonable success by a majority of teachers. To a few, whose equipment is less complete and whose opportunities are more limited, the assistance and guidance of various text-books will doubtless be welcome, but their adoption will have a depreciating influence on the educative value of the training imparted. In our intercourse with teachers during the year we have been working towards a common understanding with regard to acceptable schemes for Course B in Standards III to VI. While we have freely made suggestions on such points, we are by no means wedded to a stereotyped uniformity, and we are prepared to welcome equivalent schemes constructed on lines that are not incompatible with mental growth and development.

Drawing.—Except with regard to free-arm and blackboard drawing, for which no provision has yet been made, we find that in a growing number of schools practice in drawing from real objects is steadily making headway; and, in a smaller number, efforts in the direction of original design deserve encouragement. Teachers who attach importance to the training in accuracy, to which the symmetrical copy so long held in favour readily lent itself, are trying to combine in their class work the exactness developed by the older treatment with the greater freedom and creative effort fostered by the new.

History and Civic Instruction.—The year's experience leads us to reaffirm what was said in our last report under this head. We merely extend those remarks by drawing attention to a strangely neglected field yielding fine material to amplify the ordinary history lesson. We mean the historical poem or ballad. Few seem to notice the abundance of reference available in such a piece as the "Armada," to use it as a searchlight revealing most vivid pictures of industrial, social, and civic life, or to show how it emphasizes the intensity of patriotic sentiment in Tudor England. It is assumed that such teaching would always be associated with the free use of a map, and thus, as a concomitant result, indelible impressions of many geographical features would also be secured.

Nature-study.—The inclusion of this as a fairly prominent subject in the routine of elementary schools serves as a landmark showing how far, within the last few years, we have made progress towards a better conception of the aims of education. A short retrospect will perhaps best emphasize the point. In his revised code of 1861, Mr. Robert Lowe gave hard and ruthless expression to the unfortunate recommendations of the commission appointed to effect economy in the expenditure on education in Great Britain. His scheme was simple. As the result of individual examination so much per child was paid to the school managers for all who passed a fairly easy examination in reading, writing, and arithmetic. Mr. Lowe had promised the House of Commons that he would make primary education cheaper. The code insured the fulfilment of his promise. Education was made cheaper, but at what cost in educational value it is impossible to estimate. In such a code the humanising element was not conspicuous. Education was treated as something capable of being measured, weighed, and evaluated in terms of the decimal notation; its main aim was to make the child an automaton intended only to learn, to remember, and to earn "results." We have not yet seen the last of its effects. Teachers trained under such baneful influence do not always welcome their release from its thraldom, from the vitiating tendencies of its narrow aims, and they still remain either actively hostile or passively obstructive to modern developments. The codes of later years, however, reveal a striking departure from the ideas obtaining in 1861. They freely recognise the State's responsibility for the character of its future rulers, and programmes embracing such subjects as civics, history, elementary science, geography, and nature-study provide fine material to mould and influence the youthful mind and to bring the child into that close harmony with environment which is the aim of true education.

The treatment of nature-study in our schools is fairly diversified. There are a few teachers, not very eager to free themselves from the trammels of hoary tradition, who present a programme showing little beyond the old lessons under a new name; but there are others in whose schools the developments under this head are worthy of unstinted praise. These recognise how admirably nature-study lends itself to the training of hand and eye, how it brings the child "to see the things he looks at," to acquire the habit of forming a clear mental impression which comes only as the result of close and sustained observation. But this is not all; it is only the first stage in an interesting journey. The next stage is the effort to give fitting expression to the results of observation. The modelling-board, the pencil, the brush, the pen, the free play of question and answer in the conversation lesson are each

and all media for this expression, each and all a means of deepening and strengthening the impressions already made. Thus far, however, the subject is touched only on one side, the side of mental training and discipline. The ethical side is no less important. But little reflection is needed to convince us that the capacity to love whatever is beautiful is an endowment with which every normally developed child enters life. In a majority of cases birds, trees, and flowers are probably the objects which beguile him into his first voluntary studies of nature, and in the field here offered there are endless opportunities to cultivate and develop tastes and habits which may prove a bulwark against temptation, and yield solace in the trials that await him in later years, which will enable him to find comfort and calm in

> Those dews that drench the furze,
> And all the silvery gossamers
> That twinkle into green and gold.

In some parts of the colony there is at present a movement in the direction of bringing nature-study in its economic aspect into greater prominence among the subjects taught. We freely acknowledge the importance of agriculture as a national industry, and we do not ignore the close correlation existing among all branches of knowledge, but we do think that effort and time will be largely wasted in the attempt to superimpose upon the routine of the elementary school any technical agricultural instruction worthy of the name. The unity of nature is the aspect most prominent in early life, and an attempt to present it to young children as a series of thought-tight compartments will only result in their coming to regard the study as a set task. The immature brain will become a modified lumber-room for technicalities which on occasion may be repeated in a more or less parrot-like fashion, but which will find no permanent lodgment in the mind of the child who is the victim of a well-meant attempt. The primary school is not the place for technical instruction, nor have its senior pupils attained such an age as will enable them to specialise with profit. Its function is to bestow a general training and to cultivate such mental alertness as will enable its deserving pupils to proceed, if so desired, to the more advanced work of a secondary school, where a further course of two or three years may enable them to take up work on special technical lines at the age of sixteen or seventeen—the lowest limit approved by the best authorities. The nature-study lesson will, necessarily, to some extent take cognisance of the economic bearing of simple facts observable in plant and animal life. In this direction, and in the encouragement of cottage-gardening as its ancillary occupation, we are convinced the primary school will render most effective service.

Physical Instruction and Drill.—In practically all the schools of the district these subjects are receiving attention, and it is gratifying to find an increasing number of teachers who supplement the ordinary club, wand, and dumb-bell exercises with others in which at frequent and regular intervals practice in deep-breathing is given. The cadet movement has now found permanent acceptance in this as in other districts, and we are glad to note that Colonel Loveday has recorded his satisfaction with the efficiency of the various corps. Between this efficiency and the discipline of the schools the connection is very intimate indeed. The huge attendance at the yearly display given in Lancaster Park by the Public Schools Amateur Athletic Association is an excellent indication of the interest taken by the public in this department of training. The general attractiveness of the items in the day's programme, the precision which marks every movement, and the effectiveness of the massed displays speak eloquently of the time and pains which members of the various teaching-staffs (the ladies especially) have devoted to the preparation of their squads. The smoothness and punctuality apparent in the unbroken succession of events bear equally emphatic testimony to the forethought and organising capacity of the officials concerned.

District High Schools.—In the district high schools, nine of which are now in operation, the only new development during the year has been the equipment of that at Christchurch West with a laboratory and workshop. These adjuncts were very necessary, but as they had not been provided at the date of our annual visit they cannot at present form the subject of further reference. In these schools as a whole sound work is being done with a substantial proportion of pupils, the majority of whom, however, are not pursuing their studies with a view to preparing for further examination. We think the steadying effect of working towards a definite end should not lightly be disregarded, but even so we recognise the value of the service rendered in prolonging the school career at a period when discipline is much needed, and in sending forth into the community a leavening element in which new interests and broader sympathies have been awakened, and the mental horizon has been correspondingly widened. From these and from other secondary schools recruits to the service have now begun to appear in the ranks of our pupil-teachers, and we hope to meet with further accessions from the same sources.

General.—Recent experience has impressed us with the necessity for defining our attitude towards some miscellaneous matters which have been regarded with indifference by a few teachers. Our estimate of the general efficiency of a school, and the mark assigned for order, tone, and discipline will be subject to modification, favourable or otherwise, by the care bestowed upon preparation of schemes of work, the attention given to progress examinations, the preservation of records, acquaintance with the syllabus and regulations generally, and the condition of school grounds, buildings, &c., so far as the teacher's responsibility therefor may reasonably extend. We are much pleased to notice the increasing number of school gardens, and are keenly alive to the far-reaching influences which a little effort in such direction may tend to cultivate.

We have, &c.,

W. J. Anderson, LL.D.,
Thomas Ritchie, B.A.
T. S. Foster, M.A.
} Inspectors.

The Chairman, North Canterbury Education Board.

SUMMARY OF RESULTS FOR THE WHOLE DISTRICT.

Classes.	Number on Roll.	Present at Inspector's Annual Visit.	Average Age of Pupils in each Class.
			Yrs. mos.
Standard VII	432	374	14 7
" VI	1,383	1,346	13 9
" V	2,025	1,966	12 11
" IV	2,322	2,266	12 1
" III	2,551	2,470	11 0
" II	2,398	2,316	10 0
" I	2,249	2,177	8 11
Preparatory	6,230	5,641	7 0
Totals	19,590	18,556	11 3*

* Mean of average age.

SOUTH CANTERBURY.

SIR,— Timaru, 31st March, 1906.

We have the honour to present our annual report on the schools of South Canterbury District for the year 1905.

The number of schools in operation at the end of the year was seventy-four, the same as last year, but three small schools will shortly be added to the list. With the exception of the small school at Totara Valley, all the schools were examined during the second half of the year, and visits were also paid to nearly all the schools in the earlier part of the year.

The examination of the Roman Catholic schools took place at the usual time. The five schools have a roll-number of 554 pupils, of whom 491 were present at our annual visit. Of the forty-five pupils examined in the Sixth Standard twenty-five obtained certificates of proficiency, and nine obtained certificates of competency. These schools are conducted with very fair efficiency, and have been favourably reported on for order, discipline, and tone.

The examination of pupil-teachers was held in July. This was a less onerous undertaking than it was a few years ago, owing in the first place to the smaller number of pupil-teachers now employed, and in the second place to the fact that so many of those employed had already qualified for examinations of a higher grade. An entrance examination of those desiring to become pupil-teachers was held in December. Nine candidates—one boy and eight girls—presented themselves, and five passed. Eight pupil-teachers who had spent their period of service under this Board have proceeded to the Christchurch Training-college. In former years they would have continued in South Canterbury as assistants or as teachers in charge of small country schools, but of necessity only very partially equipped for efficient service in such positions. It should be of the highest advantage to themselves and to the country that instead of this they are now to undergo a period of special professional training, and our hope is that they may return to our district on the completion of their course well equipped for useful service, and with high ideals of their honourable calling. Three others that have not been pupil-teachers enter the Training-college from South Canterbury as scholarship holders—one who is a graduate of the University of New Zealand, one who has passed the first section of the B.A. degree, and one who obtained a place in the credit list of the University Junior Scholarship Examination.

This year, for the first time, candidates for the Board's Senior Scholarships took the examination conducted by the Education Department, a departure from our former practice which has the recommendation of lessening the number of examinations that pupils at this stage are compelled to undergo.

The Education Department's examination of candidates for Junior National Scholarships was held in December at suitable centres in all the education districts. One scholarship is offered for competition yearly to pupils in this district who fulfil the required conditions as to age, income of parents, &c., and ten candidates presented themselves for examination. To satisfy the requirements of the examination a candidate must receive 50 per cent. of the obtainable marks, and it is highly satisfactory to record that eight of the ten succeeded in doing so.

The higher work of the district high schools at Waimate, Temuka, Geraldine, and Pleasant Point was examined at the time of our annual visit to these schools, and special reports on the work were submitted to the Board. From these reports it will be seen that the four schools had a roll-number of 130 pupils in Standard VII, of whom 116 were present for examination. The rest of the pupils of Standard VII, to the number of forty-four, were distributed over twenty-two schools, and of these forty-four pupils twenty-nine were present at our visit, the percentage of absentees being out of all proportion to that in other classes. Most of those that faced the examiner to be tested on the work professed for the year showed that they had made good use of their time; but the large number of absentees seemed to argue an indifference to the opportunities for advancement afforded by this extra year's schooling, and should be fairly reckoned an unfavourable sign of the tone of the schools that contributed their quota of absentees.

The following is a summary of results for the whole district:—

Classes.	Number on Roll.	Present at Inspector's Annual Visit.	Average Age of Pupils in each Class.
			Yrs. mos.
Standard VII	174	145	15 0
" VI	384	378	13 8
" V	558	536	12 9
" IV	586	571	11 10
" III	605	584	11 0
" II	618	602	9 11
" I	591	574	8 10
Preparatory	1,565	1,439	7 0
Totals	5,081	4,829	11 3*

* Mean of average age.

Comparing this return with that of last year we note an increase of ninety-five in the roll-number of the Preparatory class, Standards I, II, III, and VII, and a decrease of eighty-seven in Standards IV, V, and VI, the net gain being only eight over the total roll-number for 1904. The attendance at the Inspectors' annual visit was 95 per cent. of the number on the roll, and 97·1 per cent. of those in Standards I to VI. The average age remains the same in Standards IV, V, and VI; it is lower by one month in Standard VII, and it has risen one month in the Preparatory class and in Standards I and II, and three months in Standards III.

It has been frequently remarked how keen an interest the general public take in matters relating to the management of our schools, and in view of this widespread interest it is well to point out again that the question of the fitness of pupils for promotion to a higher class is now determined by the periodical examinations held by the head teacher. In accordance with the regulations not fewer than three of these periodical examinations of the classes shall be held during the year on the schemes of work drawn up by the head teacher for all the classes in his school; and a record of the nature and results of these examinations must be kept for the information of the Inspector when he pays his annual visit. In general the promotion of a pupil to a higher class will take effect immediately after the Inspectors' examination of the school, but the promotion of a pupil of exceptional ability need not be delayed till that occasion. What the teacher has specially to guard against is not the keeping-back of bright pupils, but undue haste in promoting the unfit to the detriment of the pupils so promoted, and of the other members of the class on whom they act as a drag. The Inspector at his annual visit satisfies himself of the general efficiency of the instruction given in the school, and examines candidates for certificates of competency and certificates of proficiency.

We had only three claimants to be examined for certificates of competency in Standard V; two were pupils under fourteen years of age whose parents wished to obtain for them certificates of exemption from further school attendance, and one was a pupil wishing to enter a secondary school. In each case the necessary certificate was gained. Of the 378 Standard VI pupils present at the Inspectors' annual visit, forty-eight obtained certificates of competency and thereby became eligible for employment in certain branches of the public service. Of the others, 235 gained certificates of proficiency. This certificate entitles the holder to a free place at a district high school until he has reached his seventeenth birthday, or, with certain restrictions, to a free place for two years at a secondary school. Under the latest regulations respecting free places in secondary schools and district high schools, the treatment is more liberal than formerly in the case of a pupil who, being over fourteen years of age on the 1st December preceding the date of his admission to a secondary school, has obtained a certificate of proficiency. Once admitted to the secondary school he is assured of free tuition for two years or of such part of two years as brings him to his seventeenth birthday, no junior free place being tenable in any case after the holder has reached that age. Let it not be forgotten, however, that the clause of the regulations which defines the standard of attainment for a certificate of proficiency has been amended with a view to raising the standard, and thus enabling a clearer distinction to be drawn between the certificate of competency and the certificate of proficiency. To gain the latter a pupil will henceforth require to obtain at least 40 per cent. of the possible marks in English (including not less than 40 per cent. in reading and composition respectively); to obtain at least 40 per cent. of the possible marks in arithmetic; to obtain at least 60 per cent. of the possible aggregate marks in the following compulsory subjects—viz., English (reading, spelling, writing, and composition), arithmetic, geography, and drawing; and to satisfy the Inspector that he has received sufficient instruction in the other compulsory subjects. In consequence of the raising of the standard of attainment which this amendment is intended to bring into operation in the examination of Standard VI pupils, it is safe to predict that a considerable reduction may be expected in the number of those gaining certificates of proficiency with the privileges pertaining thereto. The certificate of proficiency will be a "merit" certificate, the certificate of competency a "pass" in Standard VI.

In our brief estimate of the efficiency of each school we have classed them as follows: Good to very good, fifteen schools with 2,403 pupils; satisfactory, thirty schools with 1,840 pupils; fair, fourteen schools with 516 pupils; inferior to moderate, fourteen schools with 322 pupils. In only four schools of this last group, which must be considered as "weak," were the teachers in charge of their schools from the time of our previous annual visit, and therefore responsible for the year's work. In their case it was mainly owing to their own shortcomings that their schools were placed in the lowest class. The other ten schools of the "weak" group had many difficulties to contend with, the con-

tinuity of the instruction being broken through cessation of attendance for periods varying from weeks in some cases to months in others, and from the employment of temporary teachers whose interest in the children could not be expected to be as intense as is deemed necessary in the case of those that hold permanent appointments.

Taking the schools and the subjects in bulk as we have done in this general estimate, and comparing the results with our last year's record, we must say that the schools as a whole have barely maintained their position. That is not to say that the teachers as a body have not worked as faithfully as before—indeed, it is safe to say that most of them never worked harder—but it was their first attempt to grapple with the new syllabus, and they were feeling their way towards a reasonable fulfilment of its requirements, some upborne by eager enthusiasm and confidence, others weighed down by sad doubts and misgivings. The experience gained during the past year should lighten the burden and make for improvement and progress.

A review of the marks awarded for reading shows that this subject is generally good in the larger schools. The pupils read with fluency and clearness, and in many cases with pleasing expression. This last quality, which is the best measure of the reader's intelligence and of his appreciation of the underlying thought of the passage he is reading, is still too often wanting. In many instances its place is taken by an exaggerated modulation and inflection attained after frequent and painful repetition of the same lesson till each pupil has caught the trick of rising and falling after the teacher's pattern, which may have been very good as expressing the teacher's interpretation, but becomes stilted and artificial when repeated by the pupils. It is a thin veneer that, under the fire of a brief oral test in comprehension, blisters and cracks, exposing the plain deal beneath. Children should not be taken through the same lesson over and over again in a finicking pursuit of elusive niceties of inflection, grasping at the shadow while the substance is let go. It is not in this way that teachers will be able to carry out the purpose of cultivating in the pupils the habit of reading, and a taste for good literature. Nor will he accomplish much in this direction by that most wretched of all school devices, namely, simultaneous reading, the sure destroyer of taste in and for reading. In the small schools, with a few bright exceptions, reading is for the most part marked "fair to satisfactory," a state of things that should not continue now that the range of subjects in these schools has been materially lessened under the new syllabus.

In the majority of our schools the teaching of composition has been carried on with zest and freshness of treatment. Teachers have been driven by the spirit of inquiry that is stirring the minds of all at the present time to doubt the efficacy of their former methods, and in their doubts and difficulties have been on the outlook for help from all available sources. During our visits we did what we could to assist those that were seeking for the light, and by the giving of special lessons and of advice as to suitable text-books have endeavoured to lead the way towards improvement. So far the progress made has not been of any special moment; but there is abundant promise of success in what has been achieved in many of the junior classes. After a brief conversation about some object, or incident, or picture, children of the Second Standard have written exercises that for freedom from errors and ease of diction put to shame the cramped and laboured efforts of pupils of the higher standards. In a number of schools a scrutiny of the composition exercises that have been marked by the teachers reveals a carelessness in the correction of errors and a leniency of criticism of faulty construction that go far to account for the miserable productions frequently handed in for our perusal at examinations. If teachers would rightly appraise the value of oral composition, on which so much stress is laid in the syllabus, and would insist on good oral answering in every lesson that is given, they would be going a long way towards training their pupils in the correct and ready use of their mother-tongue, both in speech and in writing.

In most of the schools the style of the writing is the vertical, and wherever this system is carefully taught most satisfactory results are produced. That the results are not so good in many schools as they ought to be is not the fault of the system, but of the teaching. In this system, as in any other that may be adopted, there must be intelligent direction of the pupils as to the posture they assume and the mode of holding the pen, and unremitting care must be exercised in the supervision of the work in copy-books and exercises, for without these precautions no school handwriting will ever be good. If bad writing is general in a school, it is a sure indication of weakness of discipline, and it would be well for a good many of our teachers to recognise what this means in their case.

In twenty-one schools spelling was "good to excellent," in thirty-two it was "fair to satisfactory," and in the rest it was "weak." Whether one's school is to take its place in the highest class for this subject, or in the lowest, is simply a matter of painstaking effort from day to day, or the reverse. Though not gifted with any high degree of teaching-skill, one does not need to despair of seeing his pupils give a good account of themselves in spelling-tests taken from the reading-books they have used, and it is on such a test that the spelling of a school is to a large extent judged. In the syllabus prominence is given to word-building as a means of teaching spelling in all the standards, and to make such lessons attractive and successful calls for skilful treatment. Regular practice in this, with wider reading on the part of the pupils, should be of service in saving them from the pitfalls that beset the steps of the unwary. In the ordinary business of life the bad speller will receive little sympathy. It has been remarked with truth that "spelling is a branch of knowledge of which the possession procures no credit, but the want entails disgrace."

Twenty schools have been written down as "weak" in arithmetic, and fourteen as "good to very good." "Fair" and "satisfactory," in about equal proportions, denote the state of the rest. In all the standards there is plenty of room for improvement in this subject, the successful treatment of which must always be regarded as evidence that the teaching has been systematic and skilful, and the discipline effective. A closer study of the requirements of the syllabus and of the methods outlined therein is strongly recommended to every one whose reputation as a teacher of arithmetic is still in the making.

In most schools the drawing lessons have been made much more interesting than in the past by the introduction of the practice of drawing from actual objects of a simple kind, and by correlating the freehand drawing with the instruction in nature-study. Blank books of large size should always

be used, and the pupils should be encouraged to boldness of outline and breadth of treatment in their freehand exercises. Some very fine drawing with instruments was shown by pupils of the woodwork classes.

Singing was well taught in all the large schools, and in several of the small schools it was tuneful and pleasant. Most of the singing is learnt by ear, and it is a matter of regret that all but a few of the pupils that pass from our schools carry with them no power of reading simple tunes at sight. In nine small schools no singing was professed.

The physical instruction of the children is carried on in all the schools with a varying measure of success. The cadets make an excellent show on parade, and it is a pleasure to watch their dexterity in the manual exercises, and the intelligence and precision of their movements in company drill and in skirmishing.

In more than half the schools needlework is "good to excellent," and in the remainder it is generally "satisfactory." In one country school where the girls earned the highest award for sewing, the boys also are initiated into the mysteries of patching tweeds, sewing on buttons, and darning stockings, some kindly folk in the neighbourhood, with an utilitarian bent, giving annual prizes to the boys that show themselves most expert in such work.

Some form of handwork was taken up in thirty-eight schools, the favourite exercises being plasticine modelling and paper-folding in the lower classes, and brushwork in the upper. As a result of the instruction given by Mr. Isaac at the summer class for teachers, more time will be given to carton-work during the present year. At the Timaru public schools and at the Waimate and Temuka District High Schools classes in cookery and woodwork were most successfully conducted; and in several schools instruction in swimming was given.

To satisfy the requirements in history the pupils have used historical Readers, the reading being supplemented by explanations and questions on the subject-matter. The history lesson, dealt with in this way, is one of the compulsory subjects, and may be taken in alternate years with the geography of Course B, geographical Readers being used for this course and the reading-lessons being fully explained as in the case of the historical Readers. In a very few schools history was taken as one of the additional subjects. Where this was none the teachers gave special lessons in accordance with a definite scheme prepared for the classes, and dealt with the subject in a fuller manner than is expected from those that made use of the historical Readers only.

A great deal of attention has been devoted to the group of subjects that comprises geography (Course A), elementary science, and nature-study. These all have the common aim of developing in the children accuracy of observation, a love for investigation, and the power of reasoning and coming to right conclusions. When conducted on right methods the lessons will also prove valuable as a means of increasing the children's store of knowledge, of inspiring them with a new delight in things around them, and of giving them facility in expressing their thoughts in speech and in writing. Not all the teachers have had the special training in scientific method that would fit them for immediate success in their efforts, but it is gratifying to report that all are fully alive to the importance of better equipment for this work, and in dealing with it are showing a fine enthusiasm that is already making itself felt among the children. It is hoped that the lectures in physical geography given by Dr. Marshall at the summer classes, the attendance at which bore splendid testimony to the zeal of the teachers, will be of great service to them, and through them to the children.

The past year has been made memorable by the passing of the Teachers' Superannuation Act, This measure, with the accompanying increase of salaries, will give fresh heart to those engaged in an arduous profession, the members of which as a body are doing faithful service to the state.

We have, &c.,

JAMES GIBSON GOW, M.A.,
A. BELL, M.A.,
} Inspectors.

The Chairman, South Canterbury Board of Education.

OTAGO.

SIR,— Education Office, 9th March, 1906.

We have the honour to present our general report for the year 1905.

The following table shows for each class and for each district the number of pupils on the roll, the number present at the annual visit, and the average age of each class :—

Classes.	Number on Roll.		Present at Annual Visit.		Average Age of Pupils in each Class.	
	1904.	1905.	1904.	1905.	1904.	1905.
					Yrs. mos.	Yrs. mos.
Standard VII ...	396	405	358	366	15 5	15 0
" VI ...	1,468	1,420	1,446	1,382	13 9	13 9
" V ...	2,062	2,076	2,002	2,027	12 10	12 10
" IV ...	2,369	2,357	2,309	2,293	12 0	12 0
" III ...	2,441	2,421	2,383	2,361	10 11	11 0
" II ...	2,303	2,289	2,264	2,241	9 11	9 11
" I ...	2,285	2,240	2,246	2,178	8 11	8 11
Preparatory ...	6,314	6,372	5,799	5,902	6 10	6 11
Totals ..	19,638	19,580	18,807	18,750	11 3*	11 3*

* Mean of average age.

This table shows a slight increase in three and a slight decrease in five classes, and a decrease of fifty-eight in the roll-number of the whole district.

We group the schools according to efficiency as follows: Good to very good, 45 per cent.; satisfactory, 42 per cent.; fair, 10 per cent.; weak or very weak, 3 per cent. The percentages in the second and fourth groups are the same as those of last year; that of the third group has decreased by 3, and the group "good to very good" has increased by 3 per cent. This is a very satisfactory result.

The following statement shows efficiency marks in subjects: Compulsory subjects—Reading, satisfactory; composition, fair; spelling, good; writing, good; recitation, satisfactory; mean of English, satisfactory; arithmetic, satisfactory; drawing, good; singing, satisfactory; physical instruction, good; geography, fair; history, satisfactory; mean of compulsory subjects, satisfactory. Additional subjects—Nature-study and science, satisfactory; handwook, good; geography, satisfactory; history, satisfactory; needlework, excellent; mean of additional subjects, good.

The results compare very favourably with those of last year's report, for they show increased efficiency in seven subjects and diminished efficiency in only one, compulsory geography, much of the work of which is new to the teachers and difficult for the pupils. The improvement lies mainly with the lower standards, the work of which, though wide in range, is in a large measure mechanical, and of course makes less demand on intelligence and reasoned methods than that of the classes above them, mathematical geography excepted, and here much of the work prescribed is, we think, beyond the grasp of children of thirteen or fourteen years of age. English and arithmetic are the subjects in which Standards IV, V, and VI were weakest; and in Standards V and VI the work frequently suffered from defect of thoroughness of preparation in Standard IV. Thoroughness of preparation in the classes below it is a *sine qua non* for efficiency in Standard VI, and defect of thoroughness of preparation there is precisely what makes high achievement so difficult here. The low standard set by the Department for the certificate of proficiency is in no small measure responsible for the inadequate preparation for promotion to Standard VI, for it seems to be held that capacity to win the low percentage of marks considered by the Department as a sufficient passport to the secondary schools ought to be regarded as a sufficient passport for promotion from one class to the next above it. The holder of a certificate of proficiency is naturally regarded as the finished product of our schools, and we fear that by this time teachers of secondary schools have formed a very unfavourable opinion of no small portion of this product. Near the end of the examinations the results of which are now under review, the Department raised the standard for this certificate; we hope therefore to see a general levelling-up of the work of the senior classes. One thing more is necessary, namely, the abolition of the age-limit for free places; for, so long as this remains, there will be a strong temptation to undue haste in promotion. It is our opinion that every child whose parents are willing to keep him for two years at a secondary school, and who proves his fitness to profit by the instruction given there, should be accorded the privilege of participation in such instruction.

The mark "good" for physical instruction is due to the high quality of the military drill of the larger schools—that is, to work done by the boys. With much of the work done by the girls we were very unfavourably impressed. It is, we think, certain that the girls, especially those of the senior classes, are not receiving such training as is necessary for the harmonious development of their physical powers; and, even where due attention is given to physical exercises, the effect of it is often neutralised by the bad postures the pupils are allowed to assume while doing the rest of their school work. We have frequently urged the necessity for systematic daily breathing-exercises, and are glad to see that the Commission recently appointed to judge the character of the physical instruction given in some of the northern districts emphasizes the value of these exercises.

Naturally, the schools, and even the classes of the same school, differ a good deal in efficiency; but the majority of them rank as high as could be reasonably expected in the circumstances in which they are conducted. The chief unfavourable circumstances are five in number: (1) classes too big for the powers of one teacher, (2) employment of unclassified teachers, (3) too frequent change of teachers, (4) irregularity of attendance, (5) premature promotion.

The question of the number of children that can be educated (we do no say "taught") by one teacher is a very important one, and one that has not been duly considered by those who have the ordering thereof—that is, those who control the public purse, not the officials of the Education Department. It is all very well on paper to take the number of teachers and pupil-teachers, divide this into the average attendance of the colony, and say: Average number of pupils per teacher=31·3; but, when the question is worked out from the facts as they exist in the class-rooms, the answer tells another story.

In 30 per cent. of the schools of the colony the average attendance was in 1904 under twenty-one in 50 per cent. it was under thirty-one, and in 80 per cent. under seventy-one. In the rest the average ranged from seventy-one to 750, and it is in these that the average number of pupils per teacher is so greatly in excess of the number given by the Department, and of what is required for all-round first-class efficiency. The average attendance of the 351 schools to which reference is here made was 75,779, and the number of adult teachers allowed by the regulation 1,269; the average number of pupils per teacher was therefore about sixty. The average attendance was to the roll-number as 85 to 100, hence the average number of pupils on the roll per teacher was about seventy. Any one who will take the trouble to visit our large schools, whether in Dunedin or elsewhere, will find that these figures are in substantial agreement with the facts. He will find most of the assistants teaching enormous classes, a small proportion of the pupil-teachers doing routine work under assistants, but the bulk of them helping the mistress in the infant-room, the very place where youth and inexperience should find no place on the teaching-staff. If all the pupil-teachers were employed with the mistress, there is not in Dunedin an infant department but would be inadequately staffed for the kinds of work such departments are now, and rightly, expected to do. Unfortunately, the new regulations for the employment of pupil-teachers will aggravate the evil, for under them a large proportion of pupil-teachers will serve two

years instead of four as heretofore, and will leave for the Training-college just when they are beginning to be useful as effective members of the teaching-staff. In our opinion the order should be reversed: these young people should first go to the Training-college and then such of them as prove worthy should be employed for two years as junior teachers in the large schools. This would, we consider, be an immense gain both to them and to the teaching-power of the schools. Moreover, it would cost the country very little more than the present unsatisfactory system, which is entirely indefensible except on the score of economy; and, since economy here is highly detrimental to efficiency, it is indefensible even on that score.

We return to the size of the classes. The following table gives for each grade of school from Grade 6 to Grade 21 the average number of pupils per teacher, two pupil-teachers being reckoned as equal to one adult teacher, which is, of course, a greatly exaggerated estimate of pupil-teacher efficiency:—

Grade.	Number of Pupils in Average Attendance per Teacher.	Number of Pupils on Roll per Teacher.
6	39	46
7	41	48
8	44	51
9	42	49
10	45	53
11	47	56
12	47	56
13	47	56
14	50	59
15	49	58
16	52	61
17	50	59
18	53	62
19	52	61
20	53	62
21	53	62

In every grade the head teacher is here reckoned as a class teacher. In the higher grades he is not and cannot be a class teacher. In the lower grades the pupils taught by one teacher comprise two or more classes.

Of course, it seldom happens that all the pupils of a class are present; but, in the large schools with which we are here dealing, the excess of the attendance over the mean is frequently very considerable. It is in them that the average is most affected by bad weather; for, the majority of the pupils living at no great distance from the school, the attendance, though greatly reduced on wet days, seldom falls low enough to come within the scope of the regulation that makes a *non-dies* of every school-day on which the attendance is less than half the roll-number. It is obvious therefore that, within the grades here enumerated, the classes are too large for efficient work of the kind planned in present-day courses of instruction and study. If the research method is to be adopted in every branch of study, and it ought to be, the sooner we realise the conditions under which it can be profitably used the better for education; and one of the conditions is that every teacher shall have a class of such size as will enable him so to individualise as to be able to train his pupils to study on their own account and thus to acquire habits of self-help and self-reliance, so that when they leave school they shall be possessed by the feeling that given a good book they can dig the heart out of it for themselves. Children taught *en masse* leave without the power and even without the desire to help themselves; they therefore leave without what it is the chief function of their school life to give, preparation for self-education. The teacher has so much to do that he has not time to train them to think.

As we are shortly to have four training-colleges at work, the necessity for employing unclassified teachers ought soon to disappear.

Irregularity of attendance is, if we may judge from experience, likely to remain. If the absentees were always the same individuals, teachers could order their teaching for the pupils who are habitually present, and treat the rest as a tail of laggards that must spend a second year in the class; but unfortunately it is now Tom, Harry, and Jane, and now Jack, Jim, and Maggie, and so on through a large proportion of the class, who are absent from this or that day's teaching; and, to the great retardation and detriment of the work, the unfortuante teacher has, through the cycle of the year and with much vexation of spirit, to repeat to-day and to-morrow what he taught yesterday and the day before. When will parents realise how much the success and sunniness of their children's school life lie with them, and what their hearty co-operation and sympathy mean to the life of an earnest teacher?

Premature promotion must be laid partly at the doors of parents and partly at the doors of teachers, many of whom are not strong enough to resist the importunate demands of unreasonable parents, who, no matter what the character of the attendance, expect to see their children advanced a class every year; and what they expect they too often get.

For some years the Department has issued for the middle and higher standards test-cards in arithmetic, and to these it has, since the advent of the new syllabus, added test-cards in composition. The former are generally well drawn as far as they go, but the latter are, in our opinion, very faulty in what they suggest as right lines of study and deficient as tests of rational teaching of sentence-forms—that is, teaching that connects accurate observation of appropriately selected forms with accurate reasoning about the forms, and that trains the pupils to discover for themselves those idioms of sentence-structure which are to expression almost what the multiplication table is to arithmetic, to express them accurately, to use them in their own composition, and to see them or the breach of them in that of others. They

are, we think, not suitably graded, those for Standard III being such as a well-taught Standard II could answer, and those for Standard V differing little in difficulty and scope from those of Standard IV. The examples given for analysis and synthesis vary greatly in difficulty and scope within the cards for the same standard, and are not so chosen as to exemplify important points in prose composition. Few of them are selected with due regard to the following important considerations: (1) That a sentence being the verbal expression of a mental image its form cannot be profitably studied if the image of the thing symbolised by the form cannot be mentally realised; and (2) that the form of a sentence being determined partly by the matter expressed by it and partly by the forms of the sentences between which it is placed, the sentences given for analysis and synthesis should be given in their context or should contain within themselves the materials from which the pupils can realise the mental images of which the sentences are the verbal expression. To divorce mental processes from words and thought from the symbols and grouping of symbols that give it best expression does not seem to us the right way either to teach composition or to cultivate appreciation of composition. The latter, though generally disregarded in discussions on the teaching of composition, is of as much importance as the former, for upon it depends a reader's power to discriminate between the good form and the bad of the books with which publishers are flooding the reading world. Fortunately most of us can do our life-work without much power of original composition; for nine-tenths of us it is sufficient to be able to state accurately and concisely what we see and feel, to tell a straight tale in a straightforward way; but few of us can read wisely without some training in literary appreciation, and that is an unworhty conception of composition which does not include such training.

The *pièce de résistance* of the new syllabus is its insistence on the employment of the method of research in geography and the elements of science, and we are glad to say that most of our teachers have done their best to comply with the exacting demands of this method. Owing, however, to the enormous sizes of the classes of our large schools, the difficulties are very great. We have encouraged abundance of outdoor observational work; but we feel that the field-work of a class of fifty or sixty cannot by one teacher be made a conspicuous success, and this is the experience of those who have tried it. Undoubtedly the method is right, and we must continue to use it, hoping always that the Legislature will ultimately provide the means with which to render it less difficult of application and more fruitful in good results. In the meantime we cannot praise too highly the efforts teachers are making to qualify themselves to realise the aim set before them.

Handwork is practised in most of the larger and in a considerable number of the smaller schools. It is liked by the children, and would be by the teachers if their classes could be reduced to manageable size, say, to thirty pupils at most for this kind of work. It is work that grows upon pupils and teachers, and the pity is that it should have to be carried on under circumstances so chilling to enthusiasm. Since the issue of the revised regulations for manual and technical instruction, we have inaugurated in the city and suburbs and some of the larger towns classes for physical measurements, and added largely to the number of country schools giving instruction and practice in elementary agriculture, departments of work which, if we may judge from experience, are going to prove highly successful. Gardening, including the study of plant and insect life, has for some years been a conspicuous feature in the work of some of our country schools, and the results given below*, besides being interesting in themselves,

* Results of Crops grown in a School Garden. 1904.—Potatoes; soil virgin; no manure. For heaviest crop at one root and heaviest potato, see plot 16.

Plot.	Kind.	Rate in Tons of Yield per Acre.	Observations.	Plot.	Kind.	Rate in Tons of Yield per Acre.	Observations.
1	Sutton's Abundance ..	34·165	..	12	Blue Skerry ..	15·298	..
2	Sutton's Dwarf Early	13·563	Very early.	13	Barr's Early ..	15·464	..
3	Sutton's Supreme ..	33·251	..	14	Champion	20·861	Imported last season.
4	British Queen ..	10·728	..				
5	Up-to-date	14·900	..	15	Skerry	14·817	Imported last season.
6	Magnum Bonum ..	15·298	..				
7	Hampshire Abundance	20·354	..	16	Up-to-date	21·152	Planted 29th Nov Heaviest crop a one root, 11½ lb. heaviest potato, 1 lb. 12 oz.
8	Kind not known ..	19·555	Poor sample.				
9	Derwent	6·353	Very poor sample.				
10	Findlay's Bruce ..	22·216	..				
11	Peach Blossom ..	13·038	..				

The following crops had a dressing of bone-dust at the rate of 3 cwt. per acre, and also a dressing of farm-yard manure:—

Plot.	Kind.	Rate in Tons of Roots per Acre.	Rate in Tons of Tops per Acre.	Plot.	Kind.	Rate in Tons of Roots per Acre.	Rate in Tons of Tops per Acre.
17	Parsnips	15·978	..	23	† Mangolds—Golden Tankard	..	..
18	Carrot—Altringham ..	8·317	..		Turnips—		
19	* Carrot—White Belgian ..	5·991	..	24	Swede (Elephant) ..	43·764	15·565
20	Artichokes	10·642	..	25	Swede (Champion) ..	31·375	12·803
21	Mangolds—Long Red ..	18·391	14·106	26	Purple-top Yellow ..	14·101	8·891
22	Mangolds—Orange Globe ..	22·877	10·042	27	Green-top Yellow ..	17·028	11·573

* A large proportion ran to seed. † Choked by plants on each side.

The soil is of good quality, and the aspect most favourable—a steep northern slope. It would be invidious to name the school, for several others did work of similar kind but of less range and completeness. The results were worked out by the pupils under the supervision of their teacher.

show that the economic side of the work is not disregarded. Research of this kind is of great educational value, for it embraces the cardinal principles of the methods of science: (1) a statement of the purpose for which the experiments are performed, here to test the capacity of the soil for the growth of selected plants under certain conditions, and (2) the systematic observation and reasoning that come from measurement and record. It is a training in observation, in reasoning, in arithmetic, sometimes in drawing, and always in composition of the most useful kind, namely, the accurate expression of personal experience, an exercise that is of incomparably greater practical value than essay-writing about nothing in particular. We have nothing but praise for the enthusiasm with which our country teachers have entered upon this department of work.

At present every application for the establishment of a handwork class has to be referred to Wellington for sanction. This causes what seems to us unnecessary correspondence and delay. The Board is in a better position to judge as to the suitableness of any kind of work for a particular school and locality than is the Department, and ought, we think, to be invested with power to say yea or nay to every application for the establishment of a class.

Before closing our report of this class of work, we wish to say that in our opinion the district is inadequately provided with means for instruction in manual and technical work. In 1903 one of our number wrote for the information of the Board an account of what had been done in some of the northern districts, and by implication suggested what should be done here. Since then a good deal has been achieved in the direction suggested; but we are still working with an inadequate equipment of kitchens and workshops, and are still without a day technical school for the city and suburbs, and without a trained director of technical instruction.

Our reports on the work of Standard VII in the district high schools are given elsewhere. Most of these schools are situated in farming districts, and therefore they ought to specialise in work that has direct bearing on agriculture. This they could do without over-pressure, for elementary agriculture is now included among the subjects for the Civil Service examinations. Algebra is taught in all the district high schools; and, whether the pupils are or are not preparing for the Civil Service or the Matriculation Examination, they are made to work through the intricacies of addition, subtraction, multiplication, division, and factorising of long complex literal quantities, with the result that those who leave at the end of a year or so, leave without having learnt to use algebra as a means of generalising their arithmetical practice and of solving problems the solution of which is difficult and cumbrous by arithmetical methods. In our opinion only those pupils who enter the secondary department with the view of passing examinations in which such work is set should be required to take in face the examples given in the earlier chapters of the text-books; the rest should learn addition, subtraction, multiplication, division, and factorising as far as, but no farther than, these operations are necessary for the solution of simple equations, the only part of the subject that is of value to the majority of those who enter upon secondary work in the district high schools.

There was a Standard VII class in seventy other schools, but the pupils of thirteen of these were absent on examination day. The following shows our estimate of the efficiency of the instruction in the remaining schools: Very good, 7; good, 23; satisfactory, 21; fair, 5; weak, 1. The labourer is worthy of his hire, and the teacher of a small school who gives satisfactory instruction to this class is worthy of extra remuneration for the extra work the instruction entails. This we have urged again and again, but so far in vain.

School decoration makes little headway. In Dunedin there is only one school (Albany Street) in which it has been seriously attempted. Dunedin Committees deserve great praise for the excellent work they have done in fencing, asphalting, planting, and building. There yet remain two other things for them to do: (1) the decoration of the school walls, and (2) the formation of school libraries. Good pictures can now be obtained cheaply, and £5 or £6 will purchase one hundred dainty little volumes of classical English literature. It would be a real pleasure to us to assist in the selection of pictures and books.

We have, &c.,
P. Goyen,
W. S. Fitzgerald,
C. R. Richardson,
C. R. Bossence,
Inspectors.

The Secretary, Otago Education Board.

SOUTHLAND.

Sir,— Education Office, Invercargill, 3rd January, 1906.

We have the honour to present our annual report for the year ended the 31st December, 1905.

Though there remains much to be done, the year has been unquestionably a year of progress. The introduction of newer subjects, methods, and aims into educational work has produced, so to speak, a renaissance in the educational world, the influence of which has permeated in liberal measure our primary schools. We may, in a single sentence, indicate three of the many features which struck us during the year as being favourable and progressive. First, there is the reasonable and intelligent manner in which the great majority of the teachers, freed from the tutelage—bondage some would prefer to call it—of the annual individual pass examination group, classify and promote their pupils; second, there is the resourceful interest teachers have shown in correlating subjects and combining classes for the purpose of instruction; and thirdly, there is the sympathy engendered between teacher and pupil in their mutual study of natural phenomena and natural objects, animate and inanimate.

It has hitherto been our custom, in these reports, to venture some criticism on the method of instruction and the quality of the results in respect of individual subjects, and, though this procedure is less appropriate now than formerly, we shall, for the sake of the less experienced teachers, continue it on the present occasion.

Concerning reading, we note that, while the teaching of the mechanical parts of the subject has greatly improved in recent years, especially in the larger schools where pupils, for the most part, are at once at home in reading books previously unseen, still the reading lesson as such, instead of being instinct with interest and illuminative power, is very often a most monotonous affair. This can only be because the educative value of the reading lesson is not fully understood. By some teachers the truth has not been learned, by others it has been forgotten, that, as an educative factor, the reading lesson is supreme.

The struggle to maintain and improve the quality of handwriting continues, not altogether without success. In a number of schools the home exercises are of a highly creditable description, clear, bold, and well-proportioned writing being accompanied by a moderate amount of ornamental work. Teachers might to a greater extent encourage pupils to apply the principles acquired in the design lessons to the production of ornamental work in their exercise-books. As children are taught, or, at any rate, ought to be taught, the principles of handwriting for seven years or so before they reach Standard VI, it seems hardly necessary that the set writing lesson should be continued in that class. It would be more to the purpose, surely, for the pupils to devote themselves, through the mediums of transcription, dictation, paraphrasing, or note-taking, to the production of ease, speed, and legibility.

There has been in one respect a great improvement in the quality of the composition exercises. In previous years these exercises were to a large extent faultless in form and grammar. But in the degree to which they were faultless, they were very often also lifeless. This defect has been largely remedied by the selection of nature subjects for composition, and one feels while reading th exercises that the thoughts expressed by the pupils have a lively and assertive existence in their minds. In our last annual report we noted the extent to which oral composition is encouraged in American schools. We have not noticed that the hint thrown out has been to any extent fruitful. Oral composition stands in the same relation to written, as mental arithmetic to sum-working; it is the immediate, practical, and indispensable phase of the subject.

The Department's tests in arithmetic were by the majority of teachers considered reasonable, and in many of the schools really good work was done. In their treatment of this subject teachers would do well to keep three aims constantly in mind—(1) how to make numbers live; (2) how to make the few essential principles part and parcel of the pupils' mental furniture; and (3) how to secure the shortest methods compatible with absolute clearness. To these three aims we may add the oft-repeated appropriate means—(1) a combination of fingers (for handling and measuring), figures, and objects during the early stages; (2) the use of short numbers at all stages save the highest, and, at all stages, mental arithmetic and talks about principles.

Many of the teachers have made an honest attempt to understand and to cover the requirements in drawing. What with freehand drawing and model-drawing, memory drawing and object-drawing, practical geometry and descriptive geometry, the teacher's outlook in this subject is surely extensive enough to satisfy the most ambitious. There is, we are convinced, only one way to overtake the drawing syllabus, even approximately, and that is to map out a complete course extending from the Preparatory to the Sixth Class in such a way as to show what is to be done, how it is to be done, and how the various branches of drawing are to be correlated with each other as well as with the other parts of school-work.

Genuine interest was taken in the prescribed course of physical geography, and few now regret the radical change that has been made in the geography course. Discarding text-books as the chief medium of instruction, the teacher now brings his pupils face to face with the workings of nature, leads him to seek for causes and to judge effects. The pupils, on their part, rooted and ground in experience, in all that makes their immediate environment interesting and intelligible, are reasonably prepared to study from map and printed page the geographical conditions of other lands. To be perfectly frank we should say that the text-book has not been entirely discarded. Judiciously used it may perhaps be to some extent permissible, or even advisable. Injudiciously used it will certainly frustrate the intention of the syllabus.

At not a few schools splendid work was done in nature-study. Fortunate indeed are the pupils of such schools, for they have the opportunity of acquiring a taste for a study that will not only sharpen their wits but also prove a life-long solace and pleasure. As for elementary science, it has fared very much as in previous years—*i.e.*, badly. Now that the Department makes liberal grants of material and apparatus to schools doing the right kind of work, we feel confident that a large number of our teachers will see to it that their pupils enjoy the advantages of a really first-hand training in scientific methods.

In the great majority of our schools more or less handwork is done. That it is an essential complement to the other parts of the primary curriculum is now generally recognised. Its effectiveness as an instrument of training varies much in different classes, departments, and schools. In rare cases it stands as a detached subject, in most cases it is to some extent correlated with the rest of the schoolwork, while in yet others the correlation is complete. That the subject has been so rapidly and so widely recognised in our schools is due partly to the desire on the part of the teachers to bring their work up-to-date, and partly to the unflagging zeal of Mr. McCaw.

Physical instruction has been regularly given at all schools during the year, the amount and quality being in most cases satisfactory. We expect the pupils of every school, boys and girls alike, not merely to go through the extension exercises, but also to form fours, and to march in fours, twos, and file. Acting on a hint we threw out last year, a number of teachers correlated the lessons on health, as far as possible, with physical instruction. Mention of the subject

of health, by the way, brings to our mind the fact that some teachers gave the matter but scant consideration. We hold that in every school a three-years course should be prepared and given, setting out the essentials of the subject so far as these are comprehensible to primary-school pupils. We trust that the Board will institute early this year a course of physical training for pupil-teachers on Saturdays, so that Mr. Hanna's services may be fully utilised.

It remains to add that military drill has been well taught in schools in which, by parliamentary enactment, it is bound to be taught, and that the various cadet corps in new districts have advanced in strength and efficiency.

It will be seen from the reports presented that the district high schools are serving a useful purpose in affording to the young people of the localities in which they are situated satisfactory tuition in secondary subjects. The more liberal provision made by the Department for the working of these schools will still further enhance their usefulness. The courses of study have hitherto been unquestionably too bookish, but, with the liberal supplies of apparatus and material they are now receiving, there should be no further complaint on that score.

Special classes for teachers were again conducted, the most numerously attended being Mr. G. M. Thomson's botany classes at Gore and Invercargill. The teachers took a lively and sustained interest in the lessons, and were not slow to turn the work done, as disciples of Mr. Thomson, to practical account in the schools. We should greatly like to see Dr. Marshall, of Otago University, invited to deliver courses in geology. Such courses would be immensely beneficial to the teachers, and through them to the pupils of the district.

Teachers are inclined, with some show of reason, perhaps, to grumble at the increasing number of returns that have to be sent to the office. It should be remembered, however, that the multiplication of returns is a necessary concomitant of the increasing complexity in school organization and administration. But apart from the usefulness of returns to the teachers themselves, and to the authority requiring them, their preparation accustoms teachers to habits of promptitude, accuracy, and investigation, which imply not altogether unnecessary forms of business training. If the making-out of returns imposes a burden on teachers, the holding of examinations often impose a much greater burden. We have come to the conclusion, as a result of observation, that teachers burden themselves with examination overmuch. As a rule they know the standing of every pupil in a class perfectly well, and a minimum of examination should enable them to classify and award marks. There is no educative virtue in examination; it is at best a rough-and-ready measure of the effectiveness of education.

We suggested last year that after the quarterly or other term examinations the schools might be closed for a day or two, to give the pupils a rest and enable the teachers to prepare for the work of the next term. We are sorry that so few of the Committees saw fit to adopt the suggestion. There can be no doubt whatever that the arrangement would be distinctly beneficial to the schools. The abandonment of harvest holidays, even in districts in which the children have neither art nor part in harvesting operations, seems to be past praying for. The children are kept at home during the finest part of the year, but by-and-by they shall have to face bad weather and bad roads, and the teachers shall have to face bad attendances.

Aside of the question whether the course of education in our schools is in all respects the best possible, we may state that we believe the educational outlook, so far as our primary schools are concerned, is distinctly encouraging. In our last annual report we were inclined to be pessimistic, but, in view of all circumstances, we now modify the opinion we then held. The teachers have responded willingly and effectively to the claims of the newer subjects and the newer methods. The extent to which they have done so indeed affords proof, if proof were needed, that in the teaching profession in this district a fossilised element hardly exists. The uncertificated teachers too, to say the least, have done exceedingly useful work, very often in circumstances anything but favourable. We could name some of these teachers whom we should rejoice to see in possession of the Department's hall-mark, and we trust they will make an effort to secure it. Looking still further ahead, we note that the profession will presently be leavened by graduates of the Training College, whither some of our young teachers have already gone. It is difficult to realise what this implies. It implies that for the first time in the colony's history its schools will be taught by teachers who have received a rigorous and specialised training for the work of teaching; that the time is within measurable distance when the college-product will carry to the utmost bounds of the district the best methods of teaching and of managing children; that it will be impossible for children to leave school without having, with their own hands, performed experiments in general science and elementary agriculture; that, in short, we are approaching a time when the school will become, to an extent which it has never before been, a centre of illumination.

In conclusion, we may say that, in common with all who have the interests of education at heart, we hail with feelings of relief and thankfulness the increase in the teachers' salaries, and the institution of a superannuation fund.

We are, &c.,

JAMES HENDRY.
GEO. D. BRAIK.

The Secretary, Education Board.

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