

enjoined to prepare his own schemes of work, which he is to draw up with due regard to the circumstances of his district and to “ the principle of co-ordination, so that the various portions of the work shall be regarded not so much as separate subjects, but as parts of a whole linked together firmly by immediate reference to the facts and needs of the children’s daily life.” The standards are, in fact, now superseded by the schemes of work prepared by the teachers, to whose discretion are left all the educational arrangements of their schools. It is our experience that teachers are prone to include too much matter in their schemes, and that they do not pay due regard to the correlation of subjects and to the co-ordination of the work of the several classes of their schools. The syllabus, if interpreted and used as the author intended, is not, we think, overcrowded ; and its spirit is almost throughout excellent. We have again and again criticized its prescription of work in grammar and mathematical geography, and we do not withdraw any of our criticisms ; but we see no reason either for making changes in the other subjects or for curtailment of the field of material from which the teachers may select suitable matter for their schemes of work. Teachers now enjoy freedom of classification and freedom of selection and arrangement of work, and we have no desire to see them deprived of either of these privileges. What we do desire is that they should be less easy in the first and bestow more care upon correlation and co-ordination in the second.

We group the schools according to efficiency as follows : Good to very good, 49 per cent. ; satisfactory, 36 per cent. ; fair, 12 per cent. ; moderate, 3 per cent.

Our reports on the work of the secondary classes of the district high schools were last year included with the reports on the work of the standard classes, and therefore they do not appear as an appendix to this report. English is still the weak subject in these classes, and so it will remain till better work is done in Standard VI, and better work there is not practicable without improvement in that of the classes below it. At present much of the time that ought to be given to ideas, diction, and good form in sentence and paragraph arrangement is absorbed in the study of simple elements of sentence-structure that ought to be mastered in Standard V or even in Standard III and Standard IV. Quite a large proportion of the pupils that enter the secondary classes are unable to determine the parts of speech in a typical English sentence. The popular cry “ Down with grammar ” has done much harm, and made the literary treatment of English in Standard VI and the secondary classes well-nigh impossible. How a pupil can be expected to write grammatical English without knowing grammar or to compose well-arranged sentences of his own or appreciate those of others without knowing the proper methods of arrangement, we entirely fail to see. Ignorance of grammar is certainly a great hindrance to correct expression, accurate interpretation, and intelligent appreciation.

We have, &c.,
P. GOYEN,
W. S. FITZGERALD,
C. R. RICHARDSON,
C. R. BOSSENCE.

Inspectors.

The Chairman, Education Board, Otago.

SOUTHLAND.

SIR,—
Education Office, Invercargill, 3rd February, 1909.

We have the honour to present to you our report for the year ended 31st December, 1908. During the year we visited practically all the schools of the district for the purpose of examination, and paid unannounced visits to most of them. Many circumstances intervened to prevent the inspection of the remaining schools—attendance at special inquiries ordered by the Board, the absence of one Inspector on a special tour of inquiry through the education districts of the Dominion, the drafting of circulars of instruction to teachers to meet the difficulties arising from the issue of new regulations, and the initiation of the central system of examination for the proficiency certificate. With regard to the last named, it may be possible, by another year, to make arrangements whereby the presence of the Inspectors at remote small centres may be rendered unnecessary.

SUMMARY OF RESULTS FOR THE WHOLE DISTRICT.

Classes.					Number on Roll.	Present at the Annual Examination.	Average Age of the Pupils in each Class.
							Yrs. mos.
Standard VII	...	...	...	...	116	89	14 10
" VI	...	...	...	...	623	562	13 10
" V	...	...	...	...	988	934	13 0
" IV	...	...	...	...	1,160	1,107	12 2
" III	...	...	...	...	1,187	1,141	11 0
" II	...	...	...	...	1,112	1,080	9 10
" I	...	...	...	...	1,180	1,135	9 0
Preparatory	...	...	...	...	3,669	3,378	7 1
Totals	...	...	...	...	10,035	9,426	11 4*

* Mean of average age.