

unless these children are to be allowed to go out into the world with a very small modicum of learning, their early training must not be left entirely in the hands of pupil-teachers or unskilled assistants.

I do not intend in this report to make any remarks on the manner in which the essential subjects prescribed by the regulations are taught, beyond stating that, generally speaking, too much dependence is placed on text-books, and too little on incisive oral teaching. It appears to me that a very considerable amount of time is wasted in committing to memory mere lists of names, dates, &c. I found children fail to answer the simplest questions on the geography and history of New Zealand, who were, so the teachers informed me, quite capable of naming in their proper order the capes of North and South America and the battles fought between English and French from 1066 to 1485.

Elementary science is intelligently taught in at least twenty schools in my district, and the papers handed in by the pupils, particularly at Akaroa, Tai Tapu, Lincoln, Springston, Sydenham, Gloucester Street, Gebbie's Valley, Opawa, and Heathcote Lower, showed a very fair knowledge of the year's programme. While I have lost no opportunity of encouraging teachers to acquire such a knowledge of this branch of instruction as would justify them in teaching it, I have, at the same time, never failed to point out that a mere rote-learning of a few chapters of a science primer by their pupils was not of the slightest use, and that time so spent was wasted. Although object-lessons are part of the course of instruction, they have not been given in all schools. When properly given, they are very valuable in training the observing and reasoning faculties, and I know no lessons capable of being made more interesting to children. There is a want of system in the arrangement of the lessons, and in many schools the same unvarying round of subjects is used. In one or two instances I saw that a plan of a series of lessons on some subject had been made. I am sure that, if this method of arrangement were more generally followed, good results would follow. Singing and drawing were not more generally taught than last year. Except in four schools, due provision was made for the teaching of sewing. All things considered, very fair discipline is maintained, and, in a great measure, without resorting to corporal punishment.

As a body, the teachers are very anxious about the success of their pupils, and spare neither time nor trouble to produce satisfactory results. So far as I am capable of judging, it is more often want of skill than the want of will that causes failure. Shortly after the appointment of the present principal of the Normal School, I incidentally heard that it was intended to set apart a room in that building as a "model country school." I hope this matter has not been lost sight of, as I am convinced that the establishment of such a school would be of the greatest benefit, not only to the students, or at least to those of them who intend to seek employment in small schools, but also to those teachers already so employed who have not had the advantage of any special training for their work. Should such a school be established, there are very few untrained teachers in my district who would not gladly avail themselves of the opportunity of attending it; and I have not the slightest doubt that the experience gained by such attendance for even a month would be of more real assistance to them in the discharge of their duties than two years' lecturing on school management.

The Chairman,
North Canterbury Board of Education.

I have, &c.,
W. L. EDGE,
Inspector.

Results of Examinations in Standards, 1880, in Mr. Edge's district.

	Number.		Presented.	Passed.
Scholars on roll	7,847	Standard VI.	63	32
Present at examination	6,318	" V.	211	104
Presented in standards	3,828	" IV.	547	255
Passed as presented	2,463	" III.	882	424
Percentage	64	" II.	1,084	787
		" I.	1,041	861

AVERAGE AGE PER STANDARD PASSED.

	General Averages.		General Averages.
Standard VI.	14.0	Standard III.	11.2
" V.	13.0	" II.	9.7
" IV.	12.3	" I.	8.3

3. Mr. WALKER'S REPORT ON DRILL.

SIR,—

Christchurch, 16th February, 1881.

I have the honor to submit, for the information of the Board, the following general report referring to military drill, gymnastics, &c., as taught at the public schools in Canterbury, for the year ending the 31st December, 1880:—

INSTRUCTION CLASSES.—During the year 1,081 squads have been present for instruction, which has, in some cases, included—For boys, military drill, gymnastics on fixed apparatus, fencing, boxing, and Indian clubs; for girls, drill, calisthenics, and deportment.

Boys.—The result of the instruction in drill during the year is in many cases very satisfactory, and the help given by the male teachers between my visits has exceeded that of any previous year. The placing of drill on the list of regular school-work has no doubt given an extra impetus to this matter.

GIRLS.—The girls continue to evidence pleasure in their work, and, in the cases where help is cheerfully given between my visits, results are very satisfactory and of a permanent character.

GYMNASTIC COMPETITION.—The competition was omitted this year owing to the allowance for prizes not being voted. I would respectfully ask the permission of the Board to arrange for a competition at the end of or during the year 1881. Prizes to be awarded to junior male teachers for drill and gymnastics, to lady teachers for the greatest improvement effected in any class of girls. The drill instructor paying special visits to any school wishing to compete. Boys' competition to be in gymnastics only.