

Mr. SMITH.—Does not make any remark on the graduation of the syllabus.

Mr. PETRIE.—Suggests several alterations in details, and one or two in matters of principle. He says that the gravest fault of the syllabus is that it suits large schools only, and that it ought to discourage the undue multiplication of classes to be taught separately. Mr. Petrie's suggestions can hardly be summarized without being spoilt. (See his letter on page 20.)

Mr. TAYLOR.—Does not suggest any change besides those already mentioned.

Mr. GOYEN.—Proposes that easy arithmetical problems be made compulsory for Standard III.; that science and object lessons be placed in the same category with geography and history; and that greater precautions be taken to secure that children understand what they read.

Mr. LEE.—Thinks existing standards might be recast with some advantage; that Standards III. and IV. could be modified so as to give an easier graduation. There should also be a seventh standard. Passes should be classified as "strong" or "weak."

Mr. GAMMELL.—Suggests many alterations in matters of detail. (See Mr. Gammell's proposed alterations in the standards, page 23.)

SUMMARY—(Approximately Correct).

I. No alterations suggested	...	...	...	...	4
II. One or two small changes suggested (technical detail)	...	...	...	...	3
III. Several changes suggested (technical detail)	...	...	...	...	3
IV. Numerous changes proposed (principle and technical detail)	...	...	...	...	4
V. Proposal that the syllabus be based on an altogether different principle	...	...	...	...	1

No. 6.

REPLIES FROM THE INSPECTORS OF SCHOOLS.

AUCKLAND.

1.—Mr. O'SULLIVAN.

SIR,—

Auckland, 11th February, 1885.

In reply to your circular, dated the 6th ultimo, on the subject of the Standards, I have the honour to state—

1. That I particularly object to geography being made a class-subject. I do not advise that history should be made one; but I would not object to this being done in Standards III. and IV., if the subject be retained in Standard III. (See *post*.) To make grammar and composition a class-subject would, in my opinion, be ruinous to the tone and efficiency of the schools. It would be sinking to the Home standard. There, as we find from certain recent imports, a man may get armed with a certificate of competency as a teacher, and yet be unable to write a note in tolerably decent Third-Standard English. It is not, perhaps, wonderful that the suggestion to leave out composition should be made when it is seen that at the teachers' examination no composition exercise is set for Class E, and that in many districts no composition is required at the scholarships' examination. Here we consider that no pupil should be allowed to pass Standard IV. unless he can write a creditable letter. If there is to be no composition, to teach technical grammar is but to inflict meaningless torture upon children. If composition is to be made light of, I strongly recommend that the teaching of its handmaid—technical grammar—be done away with. There can be little doubt that, under the circumstances stated ("if a pass were given for the three Rs alone," &c.), "the instruction given in the schools would tend to the minimum required for a pass."

2. The law should be carried out at all hazards. A deep wound is given to a community when those in authority set an example of law-breaking.

3. I approve of the suggestions made in the last section of this clause.

4. I recommend that history be not required in Standard III.

I consider that the standards have worked well on the whole. If a cast-iron, mechanical administration of them is adopted, such as giving a pass for the standard for a certain number of passes in subjects, no matter what these subjects may be, difficulties will occur. Here we rarely pluck a pupil who passes in grammar or composition, arithmetic, and writing; and we will not pass one who fails in these subjects.

I have, &c.,

R. J. O'SULLIVAN,
Inspector of Schools.

The Inspector-General of Schools, Wellington.

2. Mr. GOODWIN.

SIR,—

Board of Education, Auckland, 9th February, 1885.

I have the honour to reply to your letter of the 6th January inviting remarks on the distribution of the standard subjects.

History and Geography.—I should strongly object to these being made class-subjects; if taught at all they should, in my opinion, retain their places among those in which a "pass" is required. I think, however, that history might be removed altogether from the list of subjects required to be taught in Standard III. In that standard, history, except in the larger schools, is seldom properly taught; very few teachers seem to be able to give a good oral lesson in history, and the result of a year's work is, in too many cases, not a "bird's-eye view" of the subject, but the recapitulation of a list of mere names of events. The period before the Conquest might, I think, be added to the work now demanded from Standard IV. without pressing too heavily on the pupils.

Grammar and Composition.—I can see no advantage in changing the existing method of examination in these subjects.