

to Standard III. However, these text-books do not at present exist, and in their place, I am sorry to say, many teachers have fallen back upon the pernicious system of giving long lists, to be learnt by heart, of what they call "leading events," very often mainly consisting of battles which, indeed, can scarcely be logically called "events," but should rather be termed "incidents." Though ready to grant that the system recommended in "The Standards" would be a great improvement upon that which obtains at present; yet, were these text-books, as proposed, procurable to-morrow, I would rather put them into the hands of the Fourth than in those of the Third Standard, upon the plea that the too tender faculties and yet-to-be-developed minds of the last-named have already as much work to do as at their early age can fairly be expected of them.

3. Touching the proposal to make drawing compulsory and to incorporate it with writing as one subject, the advisability of such a step depends very much upon what is the intention of the State in making it. If the intention is the cultivation of, and the training in, drawing as particularly applied to mechanics, or the work of those technically designated as draughtsmen—such being principally found in cities and centres of population—the application of the regulation should, I think, be confined to those places, and might, probably with advantage, be gradually introduced in the manner as suggested by yourself. But in the purely country districts (I refer particularly to the Province of Auckland), where the children rarely remain at school after having passed the Fourth Standard, and where my experience leads me to believe the imposition of such a regulation would be eminently distasteful to the parents, I think to insist upon its adoption would be injudicious. If, on the other hand, the State is desirous of going beyond what I have above indicated, and, passing by the utilitarian view of the question, would aim at creating a race of artists—I use the word "artist" in its popular and highest acceptation—then, the artist, to be successful, requiring genius, and genius being innate and not to be created by men's hands, the result, I fear, would be but an increase of work without any material advantage to the pupil. Thus, I think, with respect to the country schools, that to incorporate drawing with the compulsory subject writing would tend to press unduly upon children whose time for study is already circumscribed by reason of the large amount of hard manual labour required from them, both morning and evening, in consequence of the necessities of their parents.

4. As to the graduation of the syllabus, on the whole the subjects have been fairly distributed. Were it contemplated to make any changes, my experience would lead me to suggest the following: In Standard I., arithmetic—addition of four columns instead of three; multiplication of numbers not exceeding 999 by any number not exceeding 12; subtraction sums of not more than three figures in each line, in no case the lower figure to be greater than the one immediately above it. Geography (knowledge of the meaning of a map, and of the easier geographical definitions) to be made a class-subject.

My reason for suggesting the above is, that I have found the step from the First to the Second Standard to be too wide; not that the arithmetic in the Second is too much, but that that in the First is too easy. Children in Standard I., although they may fail in reading, spelling, or writing, hardly ever fail in arithmetic. Indeed our second primer classes are generally able to do the First-Standard arithmetic. In Standard II. I have frequently found children fail in geography who fail in nothing else; I have therefore thought it better to break the ice with this subject in Standard I. Teachers generally complain that the Third is the most difficult of the standards; this is certainly borne out by the fact that the percentage of passes in this standard is lower than any other. This would be remedied by doing away with the history, as I previously suggested. *Re* Standard IV.: "Simple proportion" might, I think, be introduced with advantage. This is not a hard standard to pass, and it would be a great assistance to Standard V., who are generally very weak in "compound proportion."

Before closing I will take this opportunity of pointing out that the teachers have great difficulty in carrying out the direction of the late Order in Council which permits of the re-examination of children in the standard last passed, provided that they have been sent back to that standard a clear three months before the day of examination. Parents object to, as they say, having their children "put back," and further complain of the expense entailed by the purchase of the extra books necessitated by the measure.

I fear I may have too liberally interpreted your invitation to offer any remarks upon the points discussed in your letter; if so, I can but plead, in extenuation, my own sincere interest in the subject under discussion, and my great desire to make myself intelligible.

I have, &c.,

PONSONBY PEACOCKE,

Inspector of Schools.

The Inspector-General of Schools, Wellington.

4. MR. FIDLER.

SIR,—

Education Office, Auckland, 16th February, 1885.

In reply to your letter of the 6th January, I beg to submit the following views for your consideration:—

1. Assuming that the department wishes geography and history to be taught, it expects these subjects to be taught efficiently throughout the colony, and to get them taught efficiently, in my opinion, they must be made pass-subjects, or, if they be made class-subjects, a bonus must be granted for passes in class-subjects. I believe, however, they will be best taught by being made pass-subjects—excepting only the history of Standard III., *re* which point see my answer to IV.; and on these grounds:—

(a.) Those who wish geography and history to be made class-subjects say that, provided a youth passes in the more important subjects—reading, writing, arithmetic, grammar, and composition—he should not be kept back for want of knowledge of geography and history, and that therefore there should be no examination of individuals in these subjects. The inference is wrong. Though no