

by an Inspector; (5) during such two years candidate be ranked as an assistant or an assistant-in-charge; (6) in districts where persons not certificated are at present employed, such persons be allowed, say, two years to obtain certificate under existing regulations, or may avail themselves of the following suggestion; (7) in districts where assistants are not available, Boards (for a time) may employ such persons as are reported upon by an Inspector as suitable, and that they be examined in accordance with the pupil-teachers' programme, and that three satisfactory yearly reports by an Inspector be required before certificate be issued.

NOTE.—Expense of instruction to be borne by individual. Persons at present in employ (5th) be allowed to take the last two years' portion of the programme.

I have, &c.,

WILLIAM MURRAY,

Inspector.

The Inspector-General of Schools, Wellington.

WANGANUI.

Mr. VEREKER-BINDON.

SIR,—

Wanganui, 7th February, 1885.

In reply to your letter of the 6th ultimo, inviting me "to offer advice" on certain points discussed therein, I have the honour to express my views as follows:—

1. *a.) Suggestion to make History and Geography Class-Subjects.*—Both as a teacher and an Inspector I have ever found that the present class-subjects—drawing and science—were either altogether shirked or else taught in an intermittent manner; in fact, that far less attention was given to them than to the pass-subjects, and what little they did receive was given in compliance with frequent instructions of the Inspector. On my recent visits to the schools in my district I found that these two subjects were taught in only about one-sixth of the number, while mental arithmetic was neglected by some teachers. I must therefore come to the conclusion that, if the suggestion were complied with, the subjects—geography and history—would not be carefully taught. No doubt more attention would be given to them than to the present class-subjects on account of their being more within the powers of teachers; but I am inclined to think that many teachers would depend on some judicious "cramming" shortly before the examination, and on the individual brightness of a few children to satisfy the Inspector at a class examination.

1. *(b.) To make English Grammar and Composition a Class-Subject.*—The proposal seems to me absurd. I place the latter before arithmetic in importance, and even as it is now—a pass-subject—sufficient attention is not given to it. A parent may expect that his child may be at least able to write a readable letter after passing the Fourth Standard (read intelligently, say, a newspaper, and make out a bill of parcels), and yet composition is neglected by nine-tenths of the teachers I have ever come in contact with. How much less attention would be given to it if made a class-subject. I leave you to imagine from what I have above written.

2. *To leave History out of the Syllabus.*—I think history might well be struck out of the Third-Standard syllabus. I would be in favour of making history a class-subject, if the teaching of it were insured by some stricter rules than those at present in force with regard to class-subjects.

3. *Drawing.*—I am fully alive to the importance of drawing, and no doubt, if it were made a compulsory subject, the proposed method of doing so would be the best. Such a regulation would press hardly on unskilled teachers, and still more so on such as have to teach unaided the six standards. I am satisfied that satisfactory results would not be obtained in any of the small country schools. The cry everywhere at present is that the subjects are already too many. I would rather be in favour of a competent drawing-master being appointed to visit the principal schools, when teachers could be instructed as well as pupils.

4. *The Syllabus.*—There is no doubt that to cope successfully with the syllabus as at present requires a great amount of well-directed effort on behalf of both pupils and teachers; consequently, when the former attend at all irregularly, and the latter have had little experience—as will always be the case in country schools—there is a great collapse. The arithmetic in the senior standards is never quite understood in any schools, for if questions at all out of the common, or questions requiring a little thought, are given, the result is very disappointing. I would therefore be in favour of extending the work of the three higher standards over four years. In arithmetic I would have a deal of attention given to mensuration. History I would like to see abolished from the Third Standard, and more attention should, I think, be given to modern English history. In fact, I am inclined to think that we begin at the wrong end in teaching history. New Zealand history ought to be added to the syllabus. The arithmetic of the First Standard should be more difficult. What is now required can be done by children in a kind of way after a year and a half's teaching; consequently I often find teachers presenting pupils that can just add badly-formed figures, attempt the formation of the letters, and read and spell poorly. There is a tendency in this standard to subordinate everything to arithmetic, and thus, when the little required in that subject is known, to imagine the pupil "fit." A good Second-Standard pupil must have been a very well-informed First.

A really good set of "Readers" is badly wanted. The "Royal" are all very well in the junior standards, but the senior books are sadly lacking in dialogue, and, while possessing a great deal of information, have very little matter calculated to encourage good reading, while they are full of pedantic "by-words." I have introduced Macmillan's Fifth and Sixth, but a great deal of the matter is too difficult. "Readers" written for the "Home" schools will always be more or less unsuited for the colonial standards, while some of the information given will necessarily be inaccurate—e.g., that with regard to finding the points of the compass from looking at the sun.