

not to expressions; the former would include both. (2.) That easy problems in arithmetic be made compulsory in Standard III. (3.) That science and object-lessons be placed in the same category with geography and history, and be examined in and reported on as suggested above.

Absence from Dunedin on a long country tour of inspection has prevented my replying earlier to your circular.

I have, &c.,

P. GOYEN,

The Inspector-General of Schools, Wellington.

Inspector of Schools.

WELLINGTON.

Mr. LEE.

SIR,—

Wellington, 30th January, 1885.

Replying to your circular letter of the 9th instant, I do not deem it necessary here to give reasons for the suggestions I am about to make. They are for the most part the result of experience and observation.

1 and 2. I do not approve of any proposal to make history and geography wholly class-subjects, but I think too much importance is at present attached to history as a part of the curriculum of elementary schools. History might be excluded from the schedule of subjects for Standard III. and made a class-subject. In the other standards I recommend that history be associated with geography, and form one schedule-subject. In practice three questions might be set in geography and two in history, and three good answers should be expected for a pass. In the Second Standard geography might, without any loss, be made a class-subject. English grammar, with composition, should certainly be retained as a schedule-subject.

3. I strongly approve of the recommendation of the Royal Commission on Technical Education that drawing be associated with writing as a compulsory schedule-subject, and I should much like to see the suggestion acted upon in New Zealand. Further, I think it is undesirable to take years in making so good a change. The change could be made at once in all standards, if the syllabus prescribed be easy at first, increasing in its demands year by year.

4. In other subjects I think the existing standards might be recast with some advantage. Standards III. to VI. should be modified so as to give an easier gradation, and, in my opinion, a Seventh Standard is desirable. In the highest standard bad failure in arithmetic or grammar should be a bar to a pass in that standard. I can also commend the English plan, already adopted by me in this district, of marking every pass in a standard "strong" or "weak."

I would further suggest that experimental science should in some way be made a compulsory subject of instruction in all schools with not less than one hundred children on the books, and that the subjects to be taught should be fully and clearly defined by syllabus for each standard in which it is taught; such syllabus being issued year by year or from time to time. I think an annual examination of the upper work in science and drawing, simultaneously held throughout the colony, would give an impetus to the teaching of the subjects. Certificates for pass examinations should be given. I should hail with satisfaction any encouragement given by the State to the work of technical education in the larger centres of population in the colony. The foundation of such work should, I think, be laid in the upper stratum of the State schools. It should, in my opinion, be the duty of an expert appointed to the office to conduct classes for artisans, classes in secondary schools, and classes in primary schools. No boy can be considered fit to enter on the duties of life who has not received practical instruction in some such subjects as the following: (1.) Practical plain carpentry; (2.) modelling in clay, paper, wax, or wood; (3.) working in metals; (4.) the use of a lathe and a fret-saw; (5.) the principles of mechanics and the construction of mechanical models; (6.) elementary chemical laboratory practice.

I have, &c.,

The Inspector-General of Schools.

ROBERT LEE.

SOUTHLAND.

Mr. GAMMELL.

SIR,—

Education Office, Invercargill, 23rd February, 1885.

I have the honour to acknowledge your letter of the 6th ultimo, inviting Inspectors' remarks on the syllabus of education.

1. *On the suggestion that History and Geography should be made Class-Subjects.*—As you are doubtless aware, the course of instruction in our schools is influenced very much by the circumstance that an annual examination of the school is made by the Inspector. Teachers and scholars alike work for this examination. The intelligence and the memory of the scholar are put under a strain in order to prepare for it, and the teacher who applies the strain feels his own powers taxed heavily in the process. Hence, I believe, arises the demand which is now so clamorous for a modification of the syllabus by the exclusion of geography and history from pass-subjects. It is not that the programme of education is a bad one, or that it is too comprehensive, though both these assertions are often made; but it is that all which the child has learnt during the space of a whole year has, on a certain day, to be brought to a focus and subjected to the scrutiny of the Inspector. The process of education has degenerated, under the examination-system, to a course of cramming under high pressure; and it is from this oppressive evil really that all parties are now seeking relief. I think it is impossible to deny that the evil exists, and that it is a very burdensome one; it is an evil, in my judgment, necessarily bound up with the examination-system, which will always exist, more or less, as long as the system of testing the efficiency of a school by the rude ordeal of a stranger's examination lasts. In the present state of English public opinion on the question of education it is perhaps impossible to change the system and remove the evil altogether; but much may be done to mitigate it. We may, in thought, divide our subjects of instruction into two classes—those in which the intelligence or reasoning faculty is chiefly exercised, and those in which the memory is the