

thickness, as advised by Mr. Gladman and others, is what is wanted to make this subject the satisfactory one it ought to be. Attention to the position of the scholar while writing, the manner of holding the pen, and keeping the copy-book clean, are points which teachers must not overlook.

In arithmetic the pass results were wrecked by the defective manner in which notation had been taught. The local value of a figure in the work of the First Standard had either never been, or but scantily, touched upon. In three-fourths of the schools examined this was incontrovertibly shown, and I attribute the many failures in the Second and Third Standards to the want of such teaching. Repeatedly the whole class failed to put down the addition sum or the multiplication one correctly. Of the work done by the higher standards no very creditable account can be given. Generally inaccurate in working, faulty in method, or the question never attempted, were the common causes of failure. Altogether, the teaching of the subject is inefficient, and not practical. Too much time has been wasted on abstract work, and an insufficient number of examples wrought in each rule. Plenty of short easy questions, with abundance of black-board illustration of principles, in each class, will undoubtedly bring facility and accuracy.

The grammar instruction in the Third Standard is decidedly improved. Teachers have kept to the four parts of speech required, with, to some extent, very fair success. At any rate the lottery-box style of attempting all has nearly disappeared. I dare say at next inspection a more intelligent comprehension of these and their definitions will be forthcoming. Very little was expected from the higher standards, as the syllabus programme had been ignored, and past effort confined to routine parsing, with no perception of the relation of words in a sentence. No graduated or systematic course of exercises in composition had been given, consequently the few sentences on familiar subjects asked for were poorly answered. In too many cases neither capitals nor stops were used.

In the larger schools geography, especially that of New Zealand, was creditably answered, but generally throughout the district the subject is feebly understood, particularly in the Second Standard, where much unskilful treatment or neglect has led to many failures. The outline sketch-maps were, to a great degree, sorry attempts.

The pass failures in the higher standards are certainly due in a great measure to the inefficient and omitted instruction of this subject, as well as grammar.

I was compelled to abandon my examination in history, as in former years little had been done towards the introduction of the subject, and the results obtained where it was prepared were so indifferent.

In most of the schools where female teachers are employed sewing is taught very successfully. Excellent work, even in the preparatory classes, was sent in for the sewing examination. The failures were more the result of inattention to the standard requirements than to imperfect workmanship.

Desk-drill is fairly satisfactory. Were class-drill and the extension exercises more generally practised, less noise and better order would ensue when scholars are either entering or leaving their rooms. The usual salute should be insisted upon, instead of the mere wave of the hand into which it has fallen. At four of the schools the scholars were put through several company movements.

Beyond singing and the usual exercise-book work no extra subject was undertaken, excepting at Egmont Village, where a scientific subject, extending through a series of lessons, well illustrated by experiments, was taken up. The singing taught by ear, where heard, was fair. At Bell Block the sol-fa system has been introduced recently. Of the exercise-books I cannot report favourably, save in a few schools. Your teachers fail to make good use of what is a really valuable aid. The books are sometimes carelessly corrected, and the quality of the work accepted often very discreditable. A few models from time to time, with proper regard to neatness, would materially help progress.

With the improved classification, little difficulty should now be met with in the preparation for next year's examination; and I am sure, with an enforced attendance fixed at 66 per cent., it will be either the result of gross carelessness or incompetency if teachers fail to pass a reasonable percentage of their scholars.

A good deal of the interest taken by School Committees is evident in the many alterations and improvements about the school buildings, as well as by the attendance of members during my visits and examinations.

In conclusion, while I have directed your attention to the unfortunate condition of the instruction in your schools, I would now respectfully urge you to continue, as far as your available funds will allow, to improve the position and the efficiency of your teachers. Future success depends entirely upon the staff in your employ. If your schools are placed in the hands of incompetent persons efficient results cannot be expected from them. I am well aware that the wants of the district are many, and that for several years at least every care will be required to meet your annual expenditure. Yet, assuredly, by the lessened expenses which cannot but result from the adopted amalgamation of schools in fixed centres, the Board will find itself in a far better position to aid its small schools, and assist in the course already indicated.

I have, &c.,

The Chairman, Education Board.

WILLIAM MURRAY, Inspector.

#### WANGANUI.

SIR,—

Wanganui, March, 1885.

I have the honour to submit my first report on primary education in the Wanganui District.

I may preface my remarks by saying that I was appointed by your Board to my present position towards the end of the year 1883, but, owing to a severe illness, was unable to commence my duties until the beginning of last March. The loss of the first two months of the year I could not well afford, for there was a large amount of office-work to be done—including the completion of the sta-