

and pass with ease, otherwise the work of the next standard will be found very difficult. In the Second Standard I generally found, on the whole, the best results, except when the children were very young, as was not unfrequently the case. In some schools, however, geography was neglected, and in several writing and transcription on slates, especially the latter, mere scribbling being often indulged in. In Standard III. two-thirds of the passes were very weak. History, arithmetic, spelling, and composition were generally bad. It would appear as if the last subject was altogether neglected in some schools. The slate-work in geography and history was, as a rule, disgracefully done. If bad spelling, writing, and faulty arrangement on slates were not allowed throughout the school-year, they would not be found on examination-day. In Standard IV., arithmetic, geography, composition, and history were the worst-prepared subjects. Few could make out correctly a simple bill of parcels or write a readable letter. Many of the passes were weak. In the Fifth and Sixth Standards failure in grammar, composition, and arithmetic was very common. Geography in the Sixth Standard was generally well known. It will be seen that the percentage of passes is highest in the Sixth Standard, but, except at a few schools—notably, Wanganui Boys', Wanganui Girls', Hawera, Aramoho, Manaia, and Upper Tutaenui, all but the last of which received the most difficult cards—the passes were bad. Indeed, the percentage would be diminished nearly one-half if I had not passed pupils with failures in two subjects when their work in the remaining subjects was very fair. In future I will lay great stress on the importance of composition in the higher three standards; and failure of whatever kind in arithmetic and grammar and composition, or serious failure in one of these subjects, will constitute failure for a standard.

To what, then, is this poor result due? Over-classification is undoubtedly responsible for several failures in the higher standards, and has arisen partly from the practice of passing those that obtained 50 per cent. of the obtainable marks. This practice I do not countenance at all. A Fifth Standard pupil might utterly fail in, say, arithmetic and grammar and composition, and yet obtain over 50 or even over 60 per cent. of the total marks; yet surely he is not fit to pass into the Sixth Standard. Also, too early presentation in the First Standard, to which I have already referred, has left its mark. Again, no doubt the results of several schools would have been better were it not for the deficiencies of the teachers themselves, natural under the circumstances, and referred to before under the heading of "Teachers." If more method were observed in the general management of the schools, and more attention given to the sequence of the lessons in the various subjects, failure at examinations would be fewer. He who talks to his pupils of the rivers of Asia to-day and the mountains of Africa to-morrow cannot expect to make many lasting impressions. But the bugbear of the district, and perhaps I might say of the system, is *cram*, as shown in all subjects, all standards, and the majority of schools; and, as my cards were drawn up with a view to discourage this horrible practice, the consequent results were in many cases disastrous, and would have been more so without the frequent explanation given. Pupils are forced like so many hot-house plants. Books—mere analyses of the subjects upon which they treat—are put into their hands, when the black-board and chalk, map, or chart ought to be their only books, so to speak. They are encouraged to commit everything to memory without in the least understanding what they are about, or at best they are only *told* some explanation. Strange as it may appear, a want of acquaintance with the syllabus on the part of several teachers was responsible for many failures in the standards.

READING.—This important subject does not, I am afraid, receive from a large number of teachers the attention that it deserves. I obtained the best reading, as a rule, from the Second and Third Standards, and the worst from the First and Fourth, while that of the Fifth and Sixth was often very mediocre. In the First Standard I examined many pupils that could not read a line, and as in general they were very young I do not know why they were presented—unless, indeed, it was because of the outside pressure before mentioned, or because of the idea some teachers evidently have that all subjects, especially in the lower standards, are subordinate to arithmetic. At one school, after vainly endeavouring to get some ten children to read and spell, the pupil-teacher in charge of the class informed me that she had not thought reading was of much importance, and that I should find the arithmetic good. [This is a notable instance of the folly of head teachers neglecting the organization of their schools and the overlooking of the work of their subordinates.] Some junior classes read the words very distinctly, but one by one, in a monotonous manner, without any expression, evidently as they were taught. The little book called "The Standards" is very plain upon this point: "The reading is to be intelligent. A monotonous utterance of the words in the order in which they appear on the printed page is not reading, &c." Other junior classes, again, read with expression, but too fast, and consequently inaccurately. In the higher standards a large number of pupils found a difficulty in reading the words of the text, and understood little about the passages. There is no doubt in my mind that the Fifth and Sixth Royal Readers are very unsuitable books. They contain few extracts affording scope for cultivated reading, and little or no dialogue, while they teem with pedantic words. Certainly they supply a great deal of useful information; but something more is wanting in a good text-book. The reading in the senior classes of the Wanganui town schools was poor, considering the advantages they have; that at Hawera, Upper Tutaenui, and Bulls was generally very good. At Halcombe, although the majority of the pupils in the First and Second Standards were Germans, they read excellently, a large proportion obtaining full marks; while at Wanganui the juniors read with taste. The most prominent defects noticeable in the reading of the schools were indistinct utterance, slurring of allied sounds, omission of final "g" (runnin(g)) and "d," dropping the voice at commas, substituting the past participle of a verb for the past tense, making the verb and its subject disagree in number, and omission or misplacing of the aspirate. Most of these defects can be cured by mechanical work; but intelligent reading necessitates a comprehension of the meaning of the passage read. Undoubtedly, then, the lesson ought first to be prepared and explained. The pupils should be given a good model; praise should be bestowed on those that best reproduce the teacher's style; and the black-board should be freely used for corrections, which should be made after the pupil has