

The highest marks obtained by any one scholar at each of these schools were:—Hokitika—Upper VI., 100; VI., 93; V., 95: Ross—VI., 75: Kumara—V., 90; VI., 91: Stafford—V., 48; VI., 68; Upper VI., 80: Kanieri—V., 71. The maximum was 100 in all cases. The text-books used were—Hokitika, Balfour Stewart's "Physics Primer;" Kumara, the same; Ross, Huxley's "Introductory Primer;" Stafford, Standard V. Huxley's "Introductory Primer," Standard VI. Roscoe's "Chemistry;" Kanieri, Foster's "Physiology Primer." Many of the papers written by the scholars in the VI. and Upper VI. at Hokitika and the VI. at Kumara were really excellent, and showed a thorough comprehension of the subject.

*Object Lessons* appear on the time-tables at nearly all the Board's schools, but in only a few of them do they, in my opinion, answer the purpose for which they are prescribed by the Department. I generally found that two or three of the brightest scholars were able to describe with tolerable accuracy the different plants, animals, manufactures, &c., which had formed the subjects of these lessons; but the majority seemed to have derived little educational advantage in proportion to the time devoted to this part of the syllabus. The most satisfactory results were obtained in the First and Second Standards at the Kumara School.

*Writing* exhibits considerable improvement this year in all the standards as compared with last year, and at some schools that of the primer and first classes is really remarkably good, and quite equal to the Second Standard writing at others. This is particularly noticeable at Kumara, Stafford, Arahura Road, Upper Arahura, and Ross.

*Singing* has not gained ground in the district. Some improvement has been effected in this subject at Ross (where, indeed, it was much needed), although only half an hour per week is allotted to it; but here, as at nearly all the schools where it has been attempted, the boys are nearly silent. Kumara is the only school where the results are, in my opinion, satisfactory, the boys being exceptions to the rule as stated above, as at my request they sang without the girls, and with very fair effect. The teacher of this school has asked to be supplied with a more extended modulator, and I recommend the Board to procure a few for the use of the principal schools in the district.

*Drawing* is taught at a few schools—e.g., Kumara, Ross, Kanieri, Arahura Road. It has never been attempted at the Hokitika School; but, as it has been made a "pass" subject, it must form a part of the First Standard work during the current year. I saw some really good specimens at Kumara, some of the freehand drawings being far more difficult and elaborate than the copies given for the teachers' examination. Now that the teaching of drawing is to be made compulsory, every facility should be afforded to promote its successful treatment; and I therefore repeat a suggestion made in a former report, that sets of copies, and especially solid models, should be supplied. I think it is also desirable that drawing pencils should be placed on the list of school requisites provided by the Board. This would insure the supply of a uniformly good article at all schools alike.

*Recitation*, which is hereafter to be classed as an "extra" subject, will require more attention at some schools than it at present receives, if any marks are expected for it. At present it is entirely omitted at a few of the smaller schools. At Kanieri, where it had been a weak subject for years, a very satisfactory improvement has lately been effected.

*Sewing* is taught fairly well at all schools having female assistants. At Stafford it is very good, as it is also at Kumara, with the exception of the stitching of the Third Standard and the button-holes of the Fourth. At Hokitika it is quite as good as can reasonably be expected, considering the very little time that is bestowed upon it. Two half-hours a week, with so many scholars, and a subject which requires so much individual attention, scarcely affords time for the most meagre instruction. Under these circumstances the needlework of the three lower standards was remarkably good. The scanty time allowed for needlework may be partly due to the fact that the Hokitika School is open two and a half hours per week less than the time fixed by the Board's regulations, and actually employed at most of the Board's schools.

*Discipline*, which was not satisfactory at some schools last year, I found considerably improved, notably at Kanieri. At those schools where it has always been good the effect is manifest at the examination, for in these I have no trouble in keeping order in the absence of the teacher. A good tone is invariably characteristic of schools where the discipline is uniformly wise and firm; and the absence of the slightest appearance of any desire on the part of the scholars to copy from or to communicate with one another is a pleasing feature in such cases. But there is one school, Goldsbrough, where the reverse of this is the case, and, although I was unable to detect any individual instance, certain suspicious circumstances convinced me that copying was by no means uncommon; and the remarkable similarity of some of the paper-work left me no room to doubt that my suspicions were well founded. The results, however, on the whole, did not appear to be much affected by these manœuvres, as in most instances the copyists had outwitted themselves, and had copied chiefly incorrect answers. It will tax the teachers' powers to the utmost to eradicate this objectionable habit before the next examination. Intimately connected with the subject of discipline is the matter of supervision in the playground, and I am obliged to say that in scarcely any school is this important part of a teacher's duty properly performed. This is work which should not be left in the hands of a caretaker—it should be regarded as essential to the acquisition of such an insight into the real characters and dispositions of his scholars as the teacher can never obtain in the schoolroom alone, and which might at times furnish a valuable key to the proper method of dealing with some apparently intractable characters; it is, moreover, absolutely necessary (especially in mixed schools) to prevent abuses of all kinds in the playground. Under the new code this is a topic upon which Inspectors are directed specially to report; and, unless considerable improvement be brought about, such report will not be very satisfactory.

*Attendance*.—The irregularity of attendance which has so often been deplored in my former reports cannot be generally pleaded in extenuation of any shortcomings that may be observed in this year's results. The exceptionally fine weather which prevailed during the latter half of the year had the effect of keeping up a good attendance. The past year, moreover, has been singularly