

It will be remembered that in my last report I referred to the improved results of several schools as the outcome of a preparation extending over two years, likewise to the conviction that a corresponding success would not be attained in the then coming year. If Table 2, column 3, be examined it will be observed that there is nearly one-fourth of the presented number attending thirteen schools, which have returned upwards of 61 per cent. of failures, or, in the more familiar terms, 38 per cent. of passes on the number examined in standards, exclusive of the absentees and the excepted. As now computed the latter is 20 per cent. It is evident, therefore, that passes cannot be looked for in the allowed time from some of the teachers in your employ, although the revision of the syllabus has done much towards lessening the difficulty towards a pass. Practically the returns for the year have been reduced by the schools alluded to, and it appears to me better, as there are so many difficulties which time alone will reform, to accept the present outlook than to seek by hasty action a very doubtful remedy. Already changes in the teaching power of several of these have taken place, so that a more hopeful organization, with better efficiency, can safely be expected from them. The percentages on "Class Subjects and Additional Marks" are 34·8 and 32·9 respectively. Only eight schools in the district—Bell Block, Central, Fitzroy, Rahotu, Inglewood, Tikorangi, Waitara East, and Waiongona Schools—are deserving of honourable mention for their work in class subjects, while similar mention may be given to Waitara East, Central, Fitzroy, Waiongona, Bell Block, Inglewood, Rahotu, Egmont Village, Frankley Road, and West Infants' Schools for the positions they take for additional marks.

The percentage of marks for the year is 58, a percentage slightly under last year's return. Fourteen schools, however, have made from 60 to 69 per cent., the "percentage of failures" for the same being 22; thus showing that the work asked for can be well met when schools are efficiently conducted.

**PREPARATORY CLASS.**—But little practical teaching enters into the instruction of this class. Without any code or suggestive syllabus, which should provide for an accurate groundwork in the rudiments of instruction in the principal subjects, much of the teaching is theoretical and misdirected. It seems to me that until such provision is authorised the work and its inspection cannot be satisfactorily dealt with either by teacher or inspector. Many teachers display a sad want of acquaintance with what may be expected from children; hence it is not an unusual occurrence to hear lessons given without any effort to excite their interest or curiosity. Suitable games, marching, and other exercises, along with the wonderful power of song, ought to take a fair share of the day's occupation; the schoolroom also, by a little exertion, might be made to brighten school life by its attractive and cheerful appearance, instead of the time-discoloured walls repeating the discomfort seen in the restlessness of the little ones. The best classes are usually in the large schools; still, there are two or three of these where there is a great lack of methods and training to good habits.

**PASS SUBJECTS.**—I have come to the decision that the only way to raise the style of reading is to mark it less leniently than has been done. It appears that to some minds the syllabus is fairly met when the mechanical difficulty is overcome. Articulation, enunciation, attention to pauses, do receive a great deal of attention, but little or any attempt is given to express the sense or the spirit of what is read. Emphasis, save in a very few schools, seems to be altogether forgotten, and it is no unusual event to take the reading throughout a school without a single instance of any approach to expression. My remarks refer chiefly to the senior standards; still, in training the younger children it is preferable to encourage an emphasized style, somewhat overdone, which will in time tone down as they acquire a readier grasp of the subject matter. Questions on the ideas and sentiments, word and phrase meanings of the lessons read were generally answered, especially in the larger schools, with intelligence and vigour. Spelling and dictation continue to be moderately well taught. The tests were fairly exacting, and covered the year's work. Writing steadily improves: this subject in a very good proportion of the schools is rapidly taking a good position. To prevent any misunderstanding at examination, a printed list of the copy books to be used in each standard was issued early in the year. The marks were awarded on a page written during the examination. The slate writing of the First and Second Standards was in some instances marked heavily through the carelessness of the teacher not having seen to the ruling of the slates. In several schools much painstaking effort had been given to this writing, and I cannot but award the first place to the excellent specimens of the Preparatory Third of the Central School at Courtenay Street. The drawing of the First Standard has not been severely dealt with, except in cases where the work either had been neglected or was bad. Where failure in any other subject had occurred, a pass was usually given if the drawing showed anything like promise. On the whole the results were hopeful, and, though I look for much up-hill work in the treatment of the subject as year by year the extra standard is added on, I do not foresee any great embarrassment with the freehand portion. The best papers in arithmetic were those done by Standard III., in which standard many made the maximum marks. Where the teaching was satisfactory the pupils of Standard V. made excellent marks; most of the papers, however, showed much faulty preparation and weak instruction in principles that led to frequent misunderstanding even in the easiest questions. In Standard IV. the commercial questions and problems, especially the first, had been too much restricted to the ordinary tests in compound multiplication. Questions introducing easy fractional parts ought to be largely used, and this work supplemented by simple tests of a like character in mental arithmetic, which is lamentably weak in many schools. A great portion of the examination in Standard I. was done mentally. I regret to say that the altered syllabus seemed to be but poorly understood by some teachers, as I was occasionally unable to get from the class the names of the current coins and their value, or the relative lengths of the foot and the yard drawn approximately on the blackboard. The teaching of subtraction appeared to be the weakest part of the examination in Standard II. I should like to call attention to the method of teaching problems as given in Ricks's Pupil-teacher's Arithmetic, or Mr. Inspector Goyen's text-books. The arrangement in either is excellent, can be easily followed in any standard, and, with careful revision of each group as a