

new one is attacked, the trouble and worry to a teacher are reduced to a minimum. A very good plan, followed by successful teachers I know, in introducing a new problem, is to confine the numbers used to factors and multiples in the easiest columns of the multiplication table. The question is written on the blackboard, carefully explained, and worked out. In each subsequent question the numbers are slowly increased until the principle is grasped by the class, when a slate is substituted by the teacher for the blackboard, and a few more worked along with the class, assistance or guidance by reference to the examples on the blackboard being given only when required. Both grammar and composition have met with better treatment than formerly. More intelligence is now sought for in the instruction, and very rarely are papers seen similar to those of past years. The work in composition has been greatly aided by the use of Park's excellent Composition Exercise Books. I am confident that, with fair handling and practice, a good grounding in the art must follow. Several teachers have already expressed to me their surprise and satisfaction with the results after a short use of these books. Geography is now the lowest in the scale of percentages. The subject suffers from the want of that interesting and general information which should be the aim of every teacher to supply. Mere repetition of names without such facts as awaken an intelligent interest will never make it the popular study it can be made. Map-drawing from memory is not insisted upon to any extent; at the Central School, however, much taste and care were observed in the maps, of a useful kind, done throughout the year.

CLASS SUBJECTS.—Drawing was confined to the freehand required for the standards. I was therefore unable to award class marks beyond Standard III. In some schools the teaching had been fairly successful. The work done by the senior standards was treated as extra drawing, and marked under additional subjects. History in Standard III. seems to be gaining in popularity by the introduction of the Royal Story Book, as it certainly was well answered, and appeared to have been suitably prepared. Less was attempted in the other standards; but the examination, which was conducted orally, either by the teacher or myself, afforded evidence of no want of careful instruction. About a third of the schools had prepared elementary science. The want of apparatus is a great hindrance, and until the Board is in a position to provide such I am afraid very little science teaching will be done. The cost of the apparatus cannot be undertaken by the teachers unless they be supplied at an easy rate. Object lessons were insisted upon in all schools; but, in many heard, the want of the knowledge and the needful preparation to put the information simply and clearly before the class were very apparent.

ADDITIONAL SUBJECTS.—The Ladies' Sewing Committee has expressed much satisfaction with the needlework for the year. The requirements are now generally known, and with the recent appointments made, all the schools will in future be represented. Instructions have been issued requiring specimens of knitting, in addition to the needlework, from Standard II. upwards. Very little attention is given to singing, as most of the teachers are unable to give instruction in the subject. Excepting at the Central School, where there is a well-drilled cadet corps, and at two or three others, drill instruction is confined to the ordinary desk or floor drill. The other subjects receive attention with more or less success.

For the past three years I have looked forward to this year's work as the crucial test of the capabilities of the teaching power of the district: the results are neither a surprise nor a disappointment to me. If the district is to take an honourable position, and the instruction be intelligent and efficient, the teacher's experience and training must be seen to. It is useless to expect returns from persons, however well-intentioned in effort or conscientious in discharge of duty they may be: their pupils suffer through their inexperience, and much valuable time is lost. But much of the inefficiency in the district has been removed, and from the steadily increasing numbers of well-conducted schools, I can with all confidence assure the Board of better things than have been realised in the past. At any rate, though the district may not take a high place in the returns of class and additional subjects, its position will in the coming year be materially improved amongst the list of districts in the pass returns.

I have, &c.,

The Chairman, Board of Education, Taranaki.

WILLIAM MURRAY, Inspector.

WANGANUI.

SIR,—

Education Board Office, Wanganui, 15th February, 1887.

I have the honour to submit my report on primary education in the Wanganui District for the year ended the 31st December, 1886.

WORK OF THE YEAR.—During the year I paid 151 visits to various schools, eighty-two being for the purpose of inspection, and sixty-nine for that of examination. The inspection visits were paid chiefly between February and August. At these visits everything in connection with the organization of the schools and with the buildings was looked into and reported upon; but I paid especial attention to the treatment of reading in the lower classes, and in many log books I wrote a good deal upon the methods recommended to be employed in teaching this most important subject. I am glad to be able to state that the examination in standards showed that teachers materially benefited by the suggestions given. During the last week of June I examined thirty-one pupil-teachers for promotion and eight candidates, and in the following month I reported fully to the Board upon the results. I may here state that the weakest points were—in arithmetic, practical work, explanation of four simple rules and of vulgar and decimal fractions, and mensuration; in grammar, want of thorough knowledge of the sentence and of the verb; in geography, ignorance of mathematical and physical geography and of the features of the map of the North Island. The work, however, was better than that of last year. Many pupil-teachers, too, have considerably improved in their style of giving lessons; and some handle, and do very good work with, large classes. At the same time with the pupil-teachers eight candidates were examined for three senior