

history is entirely omitted from the course of instruction, simply because, as I have been given to understand, some of the parents object to the teaching of this subject. Although an exemption from the learning of history in certain cases is undoubtedly allowed by the Education Act, it has always appeared to me that a conscientious objection was the only one to which such exception was intended to apply. It is obvious that, if either School Committees or teachers were permitted to cut out this subject at their mere pleasure, history might in no long time drop altogether out of the school course. It seems to me that this is a matter as to which a definite rule might well be laid down by the Board for the guidance of teachers and Inspector.

It is disappointing to find that yet another year has gone by without anything effectual having been attempted to supply the dearth of books and school material which so seriously hampers teachers and scholars in this district. How grievous the evil is may be shown by a single instance: In Picton, a place in constant communication with the outer world, the scholars, on examination day, when called on to read, had to resort to the wretched expedient of passing the same tattered volume from hand to hand, the proportion of books to scholars in one class being as six to seventeen. If this is the state of things in a seaport, it may easily be conjectured how the remoter schools fare. In a by no means out-of-the-way place I have noticed that four different kinds of copy books, of the most diverse styles, were in use. Of the costliness to parents of even this insufficient and unsuitable supply I will say nothing, as that is, after all, by no means the most serious aspect of the matter. Private enterprise, it is clear, has in this case broken down utterly. The remedy, as I have more than once pointed out, is at once simple and effectual. In the neighbouring district of Nelson, for some years, every school has been amply supplied, at intervals of six months, and within a few weeks of the issue of the requisition from the School Committees, with everything applied for, at a cost of 25 per cent. below the English publishing price, without causing any loss to the Board. The machinery works with the regularity of clockwork, and easily admits of the introduction of new and improved books. It is impossible to say to what extent the poor reading and writing of which I have been so often compelled to complain is due to the poverty of the supply of the necessary implements of the teachers' craft. In this respect the Marlborough teachers are certainly sorely handicapped.

In the yearly educational stock-taking which is the main object of a report of this kind, a more prominent place has latterly been justly assigned to such weighty matters as the discipline of the schools and the behaviour of the scholars. So far as my own observation extends, both on my visits of inspection and of examination, there is little to find fault with in Marlborough, either with regard to the order maintained or the manners of the scholars. The single school that was notoriously wanting in both these respects has lately been thoroughly reformed, so that it may now be fairly affirmed that the school children throughout the district are under adequate control within the school room, obeying promptly and cheerfully all the orders given them, going through their tasks without unnecessary noise, and treating their teachers with a respectfulness that has no taint of servility. In the play ground the scholars, without being deficient in spirit, show an absence of the brutality and bullying which form so painful a feature of many schools in the Mother country. When the notorious laxity of parental control in the colonies is taken into consideration, together with the corresponding want of reverence on the part of children, it speaks well for our teachers that they have been able to achieve so much in the face of surroundings so unfavourable to the maintenance of good order. The stern discipline of the monastery or the barrack would be quite out of place in a school, and might result in crushing all the manliness out of the scholars; but there is a certain wholesome restraint, stopping far short of severity, which is the golden mean to be aimed at, and this the majority of Marlborough teachers have succeeded in fairly attaining.

The subjoined detailed account of the state of each school when it was examined is intended to supplement and make clearer the tabulated statements appended to this report.

I have, &c.,  
W. C. HODGSON, Inspector.

The Chairman, Marlborough Education Board.

SUMMARY of RESULTS for the WHOLE DISTRICT.

Standard Classes.			Presented.	Absent.	Excepted.	Failed.	Passed.	Average Age of those that passed.	
									Yrs. Mos.
S 7	...	...	8	...	...	...	...	...	...
S 6	...	...	61	4	2	23	32	8	9
S 5	...	...	118	7	7	26	78	9	11
S 4	...	...	193	15	14	25	137	10	8
S 3	...	...	218	13	17	43	145	12	...
S 2	...	...	265	9	21	14	201	13	1
S 1	...	...	206	4	11	36	175	14	1
P.	...	...	597	...	...	...	...	...	...
Totals			1,666	52	72	167	768	*	

Mean of average age, 11 years 5 months.