

In the former class of school the most important subjects—more especially reading—suffer materially, while the veriest smattering of some of the extra subjects is obtained. I also pointed out that I considered drawing should be made a class subject, at all events, in the higher three standards. Of this I am now more than ever convinced. According to the present syllabus drawing will be a pass subject this year in Standard IV.; and if the full requirements—drawing to scale and geometrical drawing, in addition to freehand drawing in a book authorised by the Minister—are insisted upon, there is no doubt in my mind but that the majority of pupils in country schools will fail in the subject, unless, indeed, Inspectors disregard the regulations by granting a pass to pupils that have met the requirements in freehand only. It is not at all likely that the majority of parents will supply their children with the instruments necessary for geometrical drawing; and if pupils have not done this work, are they to be denied passes in their standards? Let me not be misunderstood in this matter. There are many educational advantages attached to the practice of drawing—amongst others, accuracy in observing and thinking is promoted, the graphic memory is improved, the imagination is exercised, and the inventive power afforded scope; it combines training of the mind, the eye, and the hand—so the subject should be kept in the syllabus, but, for some years to come, when perhaps all our teachers will be able to teach it, as a class subject. Some models and casts are needed in each school. *History*.—The teaching of history as a formal subject in Standard III. might well be abolished, and its place taken by the reading of an historical reader. *Elementary Science*.—Johnston's "Catechism of Agricultural Chemistry" does not appear to me to be a suitable book, though no doubt pupils will be highly delighted if some of the experiments treated therein are shown to them. What is wanted is a text book dealing particularly with the kinds of soil, minerals, &c., found in New Zealand.

*Registers*, as a rule, are neatly and correctly kept. Occasionally I found that the attendances were not added daily, as required by law. The attendance of pupils, I believe, has improved somewhat in regularity, but there is still a great deal of unpunctuality. Many pupils who, according to the registers, have attended fairly regularly, have nevertheless missed many lessons during the year through coming to school late or through leaving early. The general habit of allowing late-comers to go straight to their seats on arrival, without questioning them, is a bad one. When late-comers are led to be ashamed of being seen by their teacher and their punctual schoolfellows, unpunctuality will cease. Time-tables should not be departed from shortly before the examination for the purpose of "cramming" some particular subject. The benefit of such forced instruction will not last.

*Board's Regulations*.—The regulation with regard to reporting at once to the Board the absences, arrivals, or departures of teachers is more honoured in the breach than in the observance. Frequently, too, I found that the fact of no school being held on a particular day was not reported to the Board. Some teachers make a practice of taking longer midsummer holidays than those authorised.

*Discipline*.—Upon the whole teachers are to be congratulated upon the general government of their schools. Really bad conduct, in so far as I am aware, is almost unknown, though I have noticed one or two cases, which, sad to say, and strange though it may appear, were due to parental prompting. In many schools the manners of the pupils are very pleasing, in very few are they bad.

Before closing this report I should like to remark upon the very great dissimilarity in the quality of the work at one school and at another. Sometimes the difference is to be seen in all classes and subjects, sometimes in one or two subjects or in one or two classes. At one school grammar is bad and arithmetic excellent, while at the neighbouring school the positions are reversed. At Whenuakura all the pupils in the Fourth Standard worked and proved on paper every sum in arithmetic (six), while at some other schools the pupils in the same standard failed utterly in the same sums. At Terrace End a large first division of the preparatory class wrote on slates all the tables to twelve times, and the second division wrote to seven times; but at some schools the pupils in Standard I. were not quite at home with five times. At Aramoho all the pupils in Standard I. (twenty-five) made the possible number of passes in subjects (125), and in Standard II. 187 passes in subjects were made out of a possible 190. In grammar also the attainments were very dissimilar at different schools. One day, perhaps, I thought that an examination card in arithmetic or in grammar was too difficult, so poorly were the questions answered; but the following day this idea was dispelled, owing to the same card being easily "cleared" by the majority of pupils at another school. Again, the time taken over the work at examination varied considerably. In some schools the whole morning was spent at arithmetic, while at others not only this subject but also geography, and sometimes dictation, were finished in the same length of time. It appears to me that the Teachers' Association might help in a large measure to do away with this unequal state of things. Cannot teachers at their meetings compare their methods of handling the various subjects, and try honestly to help each other? I regret that no attempt has yet been made to start a teachers' library. In conclusion I am glad to be able to say that the number of weak schools diminishes yearly, and that the number of strong passes increases.

I have, &c.,

W. H. VEREKER-BINDON, M.A., Inspector.

The Chairman, Board of Education, Wanganui.

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WELLINGTON.

SIR,—

Wellington, 27th February, 1889.

I have the honour to present my fifteenth annual report on the working condition of the primary State schools in the Wellington District.

Seventy-one schools have been examined, representing 10,008 children. Of this number on the books, 6,641 were presented for examination in standards, and 5,431 passed. The percentage of passes on the number presented is 86·4.