

percentage to the amount recorded. Judging from past experience, I have no doubt that some teachers will find the relegation of formal grammar to the list of "class"-subjects a very great relief: whether it will be so to the true educationist is quite another affair,

Speaking generally, I find a tendency in teachers of small schools to pay too little attention to Standard I. and the preparatory classes. I am sure this is a mistake on many grounds. It is, to begin with, unfair to let so large a proportion (often half or more) of the scholars suffer for the benefit of the few in the upper classes: and moreover it is against the true interest of the teacher himself, whose success with the higher classes will be in direct proportion to the amount of care he has bestowed upon them in the lower ranks of the school. In the preparatory classes, that most useful table the addition table seems almost unknown, but it should certainly be thoroughly mastered before the multiplication table is thought of. It is the disuse of this important aid that causes the mischievous practice of counting with the fingers or by strokes on the slate to take the place of addition, up to the Second or even the Third Standard.

Only three of the Board's schools receive 50 per cent. (or upwards) of the possible marks for class-subjects. This may not be regarded as very satisfactory, but with three exceptions all the schools are small, with either one or two teachers; and I am not inclined to blame those who have in other respects been fairly successful for a weakness in one or two class-subjects. Of these subjects, elementary science and object-lessons were the most, and history the least, satisfactory. Some of the "additional" subjects appear to receive a fair amount of attention, though the recitation is decidedly poor throughout the district, with the exception of two or three of the largest schools. The number of pieces contained in the several reading-books suitable for recitation is not very great, but there is still some room for the display of taste and judgment in the selection, and in this respect I have often been disappointed. In the preparatory classes, where there is room for a considerable amount of recitation or repetition, and where, if carefully taught, it is so effective, it is in most schools limited to the few and inferior pieces to be found in the lower reading-books. At Picton the preparatory classes were exceptionally well trained in this respect, and I am sure the trouble taken will be amply repaid to the teacher in the next standard. In the higher classes the sense and beauty of some of the pieces are often marred not only by bad intonation, monotonous sing-song, or lack of expression, but by an invariable pause at the end of every line, which frequently obscures or destroys the meaning, when it does not make utter nonsense, of the verse.

Military drill is not attempted at any schools excepting Blenheim and Tuamarina, and at both of them very considerable proficiency has been attained—indeed, at the last-named the whole atmosphere is decidedly military throughout—and reacts upon the general order and discipline of the school. Class-drill is sufficiently attended to at the larger Board schools, but not at the smaller or at the aided schools.

Singing is taught at Blenheim Boys' and Girls' Schools by note, and some rudimentary knowledge of the theory is imparted to the scholars. Fairhill, Cullensville, and Marshlands also received marks to indicate a praiseworthy attempt to include this subject in the school course. In all these cases the old notation is used. There is very little doubt that to teach children to sing at sight the tonic sol-fa system is the most effective and the easiest method. On the other hand, what little knowledge of the theory they may pick up under the old system is always available in after years to assist them in mastering any instrument they wish to play, for which purpose the tonic sol-fa system would be comparatively useless.

Needlework receives attention at most of the schools having female teachers, but, as a rule, is not as well taught as it should be. The time begrudgingly allotted to this subject in some schools is barely sufficient for the purpose, and yet perhaps as much as a due regard for the claims of the other thirteen subjects of the syllabus will allow.

In many of the schools the intelligence of the children in the three lower standards, as tested by questions on the subject-matter of the reading-lesson, was in some respects the most promising and satisfactory feature of the examination, and made me sigh for the good time coming when the individual examination shall be a thing of the past, and the Inspector will be at liberty to estimate the value of the school work by the evidence of intellectual activity that he may succeed in eliciting from the several classes. The children in the Blenheim Boys', Renwick, Kaituna, Grovetown, Hawksbury, and Robin Hood Bay were particularly bright and intelligent in their replies, and about a third of the schools gave evidence of careful training in this direction.

Extra drawing, which has now disappeared from the list of additional subjects, was exhibited at one school only—Fairhall—and was very creditable, especially when the general proficiency of the scholars throughout the school was satisfactory evidence that nothing else had suffered through the enthusiasm of the teacher for one particular portion of the syllabus.

By the latest edition of the regulations (the fifth, if I am not mistaken) it is declared that the neglect of any one of the class-subjects in any school will be regarded as "highly censurable." Two schools that I consider among the best in the district, and equal in real educative power to any I have seen, will come under the ban of the department next year unless they mend their ways before the examination.

**BLENHEIM SCHOOLS.**—The fact that these schools contain 25 per cent. of the whole roll-number in the district would alone warrant special prominence being given to them in this report, but, unfortunately, another reason for such prominence may be discerned by reference to Table 3. For the first time for some years the boys and girls of these schools were examined in the same rooms, from the same papers, and under exactly the same conditions, but a glance at Table 3 will show with what widely different results. The total number of scholars presented was the same in both—namely, 165. Of these, eleven boys and twenty-seven girls were absent, and five boys and eleven girls were "excepted." With these deductions there remained 146 boys and 120 girls to pass or fail, the result being the failure of six boys and fifty-one girls, or 4 per cent. of the boys and 42 per cent. of the girls. Not only are the girls far behind the boys as regards educational attainments, but the