

I. and II. belonging to Longmans' series are read with appreciation and interest, the result in those classes being generally very good. In Standards III. to VI. a mistake in pronunciation seldom occurred, and in many cases the result of questioning upon the subject-matter was very satisfactory. Defects in style and expression are still to be remedied, passages which give opportunity for the expression of the various emotions being too often read monotonously. This, I believe, often results from nervousness or diffidence on the part of the scholar. The extension of the practice of illustrative reading by the teacher would be productive of good. I would again recommend the encouragement of class criticism in connection with emphasis and style. Recitation, which should be a valuable aid to the reading, is generally made mere memory-work: though there is certainly a process of improvement going on, it is extremely slow. It is often too evident that the scholars know little of the spirit and meaning of the lines they repeat.

WRITING.—Since the introduction of the "New Zealand" and "Southern Cross" copybooks this subject has steadily improved. A more scientific treatment of the subject is also apparent, black-board lessons being given more frequently. In the writing of the special passages given for results there is seldom much fault to be found, but in the papers for other subjects careless writing is too often exhibited. It may be as well for teachers to know that where this discrepancy is found to exist a fine is inflicted varying from five to ten marks. The schools in which the writing was notably deficient corresponded with those in which my injunction that Standards II. and III. should not be allowed to write excepting between lines had been disregarded.

ARITHMETIC.—Though showing a falling-off in percentage of passes, the work is generally well done. Carelessness in the reading of the questions set is responsible for many errors, and scholars are too easily tripped by a slight deviation from the straightforward fashion of putting a question. In Standards II. and III. this is often noticeable in subtraction, it being a common occurrence to find scholars attempting to take the greater quantity from the lesser. The processes of working are often unnecessarily cumbrous. In the working of problems the wrong rules are often applied, this resulting, I believe, more from careless reading of the question than from want of knowledge. In Standard IV. want of knowledge of tables was sometimes noticeable in the working of reduction. Standards V. and VI. did very good work, but in all classes I should like to see problems more often attempted.

DICTATION AND SPELLING.—The results are extremely good. My practice is to allow the teachers to read the paragraph for dictation, and give out the words for spelling. In one or two cases I noticed a tendency to abuse this concession by giving a pronounced hint concerning punctuation.

GRAMMAR AND COMPOSITION.—This subject shows considerable falling-off from the standards of 1890, and in no subject is there so much variation. Some schools do very good work throughout, composition being excellently done. In others all branches of the subject show great weakness. Where analysis has been introduced at an earlier stage than is prescribed by the regulations, the good effect is clearly apparent. The imperfections in composition are still too numerous—the omission of capital letters where required and introduction where unnecessary, the absence of punctuation, mistakes in spelling, the use of altogether irrelevant words, obscurity of expression, and bad writing. Leaving out about six of the schools, the remainder are open to the charge of imperfection in this subject. Many failures have only just been prevented by the work in grammar. The new regulations will operate beneficially in this respect, grammar becoming a class-subject in all classes excepting the Fourth.

GEOGRAPHY.—In the majority of the schools the maps from memory were very well done. Physical and mathematical geography are still poorly done in Standards V. and VI. The teaching of local geography is considerably neglected. Very little effort appears to be made to render this subject interesting. The connection of places with historical events, the productions of a country and its commerce, the narratives of travellers, may all be made useful auxiliaries in geographical teaching, and give life to a lesson such as cannot exist in a bare enumeration of places with their positions.

DRAWING.—This subject still shows fair results. Our young teachers not having the advantages enjoyed in larger districts in the matters of instruction and training, we can hardly expect results equal to those obtained elsewhere; but the subject is very fairly taught, and in a few schools some very good extra work is produced.

In class-subjects, history and geography show a slight falling-off. Improvement is perceptible in elementary science and object-lessons.

In additional subjects, recitation, singing, and subject-matter show improvement; drill and needlework a small diminution of efficiency.

In the matters of discipline and behaviour there is seldom cause for complaint; a crowded condition of the schoolroom being generally answerable for such slight deficiencies as are discoverable. Pleasant features are the eagerness of the scholars to be present on the day of examination, their clean and tidy appearance, and the wholesome and cleanly condition of the schoolroom, the latter being often tastefully decorated with ferns and flowers.

The class for higher subjects at the Greymouth District High School is still progressing satisfactorily. Three scholars matriculated, and one passed the junior scholarship examination with credit after three years' tuition.

Excellent results have followed from the establishment of the carpentry class at the Greymouth District High School, under Mr. Arnott, who supervises and instructs free of charge. Some of the work performed by the boys is deserving of high commendation. I hope to see the requirements of the girls in the matter of technical education receive consideration.

On the whole, I have reason to congratulate the Board on the satisfactory condition of its schools.

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The Chairman, Education Board, Greymouth.

EDWARD T. ROBINSON, Inspector