

of application. But I am afraid that the parent who buys the indispensable reading-book under protest will hardly invest in a dictionary. This difficulty is not the least of the teacher's troubles. In a few schools a desire to secure a due regard to stops and loudness of tone has led to an exaggeration of observance, with sometimes rather comical effect. There are also a very few cases where the tone is so low as to render the reading almost inaudible.

Writing still receives very careful attention, and in some schools reaches a high standard. The best writing, as may be expected, is in those schools in which carelessness is never permitted, whether the scholar is writing a piece of transcription at the examination, doing his daily work in copy-book or exercise-book, or writing on paper or slate an exercise of any description.

In some schools the writing in copy-books is unexceptionable; the books are clean, and are evidently carefully supervised. On the other hand, if we turn to the exercise-books, we find pages written most carelessly, without any appearance of a protest from the teacher. In some schools the composition exercises written on examination-day are a pleasure to read, excellence in writing being added to general perfection. In others—though I am glad to say these are few in number—the exercises are merely scribbled. Now, this half-and-half sort of work can never be productive of good results. If a school is to become celebrated for good writing, the slightest approach to carelessness, whether in copy-book or exercise-book, on paper or slate, must be strictly prohibited.

Arithmetic calls for little comment. The results are generally good, and, considering the proportion of the school-time devoted to the subject, they should be so. This subject is often made unnecessarily laborious through defective method; and this is an important factor in connection with the matter of time. The value of appropriate apparatus in connection with this subject appears to be seldom realised. Numeration and notation should never be taught without the material for ocular demonstration, and the same may be said of vulgar fractions and questions concerning area, &c. I hope to see the larger schools furnished with full sets of weights and measures.

Class and additional subjects do not call for special mention. They receive generally as much attention as can be expected.

Drawing is still well taught, though the amended programme is as yet only followed in a few schools, and then not completely. As far as the smaller schools are concerned, I think it would be injudicious to insist upon its strict observance at present.

A circular was issued during the year drawing attention to the opportunities offered for examination in the several branches of drawing by the Wellington Technical School.

The Greymouth District High School submitted fifteen names, including scholars and pupil-teachers, for the first grade freehand examination. The results were four passed excellent, one good, seven passed, and three failed. Encouragement will be given to other schools to follow this example, and by this means the observance of the full programme in the larger schools will be eventually secured. The instructions for the teaching of the lower standards may be best followed by the use of large drawings and charts, giving examples of the various angles and figures. Without these aids, little progress is likely to be made.

The infant classes are generally well taught, but in one or two cases it would be better if the head teacher exercised a stricter supervision of the work of his subordinate. It is certainly better to do this than to have the trouble of eradicating tendencies acquired through faulty teaching in the lower classes.

Spelling is generally a good subject, but a Sixth Standard scholar whose spelling drill is confined to the words contained in the reader leaves school with a poor and limited equipment in orthography. This is sometimes strikingly illustrated in extra examinations, such as that for the scholarship, &c., and with the pupil-teachers.

The sewing examiner reports that the work for the year has been very well done. There are one or two schools where greater attention to cleanliness is desirable; otherwise the work generally is most satisfactory. Teachers complain of the practice of keeping scholars away from these lessons, as interfering materially with results.

The head mistress of the Greymouth District High School, who had charge of the infant department, was unable to resume duty at the beginning of the year owing to ill-health. This lady had done excellent service during her occupancy of the position, by the introduction of the kindergarten system, and by general improvement in organization and method, and the loss of her services is to be regretted.

The class for higher subjects at the Greymouth District High School has done excellent work. Of a roll-number of twenty scholars of all classes, four matriculated, four passed the Civil Service examination, and one gained a junior scholarship, ranking sixth on the list for the colony. Since the opening of the school on the 1st July, 1887, there have been twelve matriculations, six Civil Service passes, two credit passes in junior scholarship examinations, and one junior scholarship gained.

On the whole, the teachers of the district deserve recognition of their efforts to maintain a good standard of efficiency; and it is to be hoped that the Board will be able to give that recognition a practical shape in the way of increase of salary, for in many cases the salaries are ridiculously disproportioned to the services rendered.

I have, &c.,

EDWARD T. ROBINSON, Inspector.

The Chairman, Education Board, Greymouth.