

schools would do much to improve the teaching of the subject. To teachers who desire to become acquainted with a better handling of it I can recommend the "Principles of Agriculture," by W T Lawrence, published at 10d by Messrs. W and R. Chambers. It is somewhat surcharged with chemical lore—clearly stated, indeed—but is otherwise an excellent elementary textbook, and well up to date. For some reason or other the biological aspects of agricultural knowledge, though more interesting and intelligible than the chemical, are less dwelt on.

Singing is often very fairly taught, but the practice of it is too much confined to the formal lessons given once or twice a week. More or less singing should form part of the daily routine of school work. A verse or two of a favourite song, sung just before or after morning and afternoon intervals, would help greatly to relieve the monotony of the routine of lessons. And in the preparatory classes singing might well be introduced with even greater freedom. Marching into and out of school to the accompaniment of song seems to find no favour with us. Somehow, singing seems to be done under compulsion as it were, and not from delight in it as a joyous and cheering exercise.

Before closing this report, I must record my appreciation of the valuable service rendered to the Board by Mr James Grierson, who acted for a large part of the year as temporary Inspector. He discharged his duties with conscientious care, and did much to infuse an intelligent spirit into the work of the schools which he visited.

I have, &c.,
D PETRIE, M.A., Chief Inspector.

The Chairman, Education Board, Auckland.

TARANAKI.

SIR,— Education Office, New Plymouth, 5th February, 1895.
I have the honour to submit my report on the schools of the district for the year ending the 31st December, 1894.

The schools were inspected, and all were examined, excepting those opened for the first time during the year, and the school at Tarata, at which there was no attendance owing to the bad weather on the examination day. The schools whose returns were not shown in my last report were examined in the first half of the past year. In future the annual examinations of those schools will have to be made in that part of the year, and it is not unlikely their number may be added to.

The following summary shows the results of the examinations for the whole district :—

Standard Classes.	Presented.	Present.	Passed.	Average Age of those that passed.
				Yrs. mos.
Above Standard VI.	5			
Standard VI.	72	70	37	14 1
" V	210	199	69	13 7
" IV	365	342	177	12 11
" III.	523	504	316	12 0
" II.	517	491	429	10 7
" I.	502	479	417	9 10
Preparatory	1,331			
Totals	3,525	2,085	1,445	12 2*

* Mean of average age.

In the schools examined, 2,194 were presented in the standards. Of this number, 109 were absent on the day of examination, and 1,445 qualified for promotion. Comparing these numbers with last year's, the passes show a slight decrease of 1½ per cent. The attendance is 2 per cent. higher. There being no returns from the schools not examined last year, the presented number in the standards appears to be unusually greater. The large increase, also, of the number of pupils on the school registers, which at December reached 3,637—an increase of 279 on the previous year—will explain the difference in the totals of both years. The mean of average age is higher by one month, this is, however, the consequence of the higher average age in Standard I. The bad roads and wet weather are doubtless accountable in a great measure for the high average age in some schools. At the same time there are cases in which the parents are blamable for much of the irregularity of attendance in this class.

As a whole, the examination results for the year are satisfactory. In a few subjects there has been a tendency to drift, but I fear the foolish notions of some teachers who rely on their ability to prepare their pupils for all the likely ruts the Inspector may take have had more to do with the teachers' want of success than they imagine.

Recent admissions and irregularity of attendance are the reasons given by teachers for the non-presentation in Standard I. of two-thirds of the pupils over eight years of age in Class P. I am satisfied the reasons assigned by the teachers are satisfactory. At a small school I found sixteen excused as not sufficiently advanced, but the teacher's written statement, which I quote, speaks for itself. English is spoken here only in school, and even then only during the lessons, so that during nineteen hours out of the twenty-four only the mother-tongue of the several nationalities is in use."