

irony of fate that at one and the same time we should be introducing into our schools a reformed syllabus and hosts of unqualified teachers.

We have been much struck, on sundry occasions, by the different ways in which different teachers provide for the comfort and entertainment of their pupils. We know schools, for instance, where we are sure to find cleanliness and tidiness, attractive walls, and, in cold weather, bright fires, games, hot tea for lunch, and interesting books and magazines for the pupils to look through—in short, an atmosphere of cheerful contentment. In other schools we have none of these things, but, instead, an atmosphere of cheerless monotony. We trust that teachers will seriously consider whether they are doing their best to secure the comfort and amusement of their pupils. If they do not do so they may rest assured that the children's studies suffer as a consequence. We may here interpose a *caveat* against a certain method of slate-cleaning. It is to be feared that violation of a fundamental principle of hygiene is all too prevalent in not a few schools.

We hope that the suggestion that we made last year concerning school competitions will not be lost sight of. Such competitions would, more than anything else could possibly do, exemplify educational progress and tendency in the district. We believe the time is ripe for a competitive exhibition of school-work in Invercargill, and we are sure that the teachers and the public will readily respond to any demands made on them for the purpose of furthering the project.

A few words may be said regarding prospective changes in the syllabus of primary instruction. How rapid has been the development of opinion in this direction may be judged from the fact that a proposal made at the first Conference of Inspectors, "that nature should be directly studied by the pupils," was regarded as the dream of a visionary. At the recent Conference the same proposal in a vastly more extensive form was accepted without question. But what we wish to indicate is the essence of the change, and this we shall do in a sentence or two. To speak generally, it is a change of mental attitude on the part of the teacher towards the pupil. Specifically, it is twofold. It consists, in the first place, of full recognition of the fact that a child is not merely an instrument to be operated on, but an agent capable of origination and execution. In accordance with this view, various forms of handwork are provided. In the second place, the study of nature is to become one of the vital factors in the mental development of the child. The teacher will, so to speak, become nature's high priest, interpreting to the child every-day phenomena, and leading him to interrogate nature habitually on his own account.

But let us not be misunderstood. The new syllabus is just the old with certain modifications. As the teacher's work has been, so for the most part will it continue to be. His pupils' capacities, dispositions, and temperaments will be as they have been, and he will have to deal with the same physical conditions, the same mental laws, and the same questions of right and wrong. The greater part of his time will be absorbed, as is fitting in a primary school, in an endeavour to give his pupils a speedy understanding of the keys of knowledge—reading, writing, and arithmetic. And that teacher will best serve his day and generation who imparts to them an expeditious, thorough, and comprehensive understanding of the art and principles of these same fundamental subjects.

Concerning the introduction of the new syllabus, we may further state that, with the approval of the Board, we shall for the remainder of this year continue the method of examination that has hitherto prevailed. Teachers, however, will be expected immediately after the annual visit to work on the new lines.

We have, &c.,
JAMES HENDRY, } Inspectors.
GEO. D. BRAIK, }

The Secretary, Southland Education Board.

SUMMARY OF RESULTS FOR THE WHOLE DISTRICT.

Classes.	Number on Roll.	Present at Inspector's Annual Visit.	Passed.	Average Age of Pupils in each Class.
Standard VII.	238	200	...	Yrs. mos.
" VI.	731	720	524	14 7
" V.	1,017	983	833	13 8
" IV.	1,121	1,084	927	12 10
" III.	1,172	1,144	1,010	11 10
" II.	1,060	1,028	969	10 11
" I.	1,099	1,074	1,009	9 11
Preparatory	3,150	2,945	...	8 9
Totals ...	9,588	9,178	5,272	7 1
				11 2-375*

* Mean of average age.

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