These facts present the barest information as to the actual condition of education in the district. Standard VII class shows an actual falling-off in numbers; but this is balanced by the satisfactory increase that has taken place in Standard VI. Generally it may be remarked that very little change has taken place in the classification as shown in the return for 1904, and this, I think, must be set down as showing a satisfactory working-condition in the schools of the district. These results, except in the Sixth and Seventh Standard classes, are summarised from the promotions made by the teachers, and they show the wisdom of intrusting teachers with increased responsibilities in the examination, classification, and promotion of their pupils. Responsibility tends to train the judgment, and so far as the larger schools are concerned I have no occasion to direct attention to improper classification under the regulations. It is mainly in the small schools where weaknesses are met with, where most of the teachers are untrained and unclassed, and where the tendency exists to over-classification. In such schools it often becomes necessary to regulate the classification in the interests of children and teachers. The next examination in the district is to be synchronous, for all schools and for all classes. Regulation 26, it appears, enables this to be done; and, with the approval of the Board and the united support of the teachers, the plan is to be adopted in December next, when all class-promotions will take place other than those made in accordance with Regulation 4 of the instructions dealing with the examination of schools. My own examinations will not be less formal than heretofore, but they will be directed to a different end than the mere pass. The quarterly tests set by the headmaster will be studied and the pupils' papers examined. The work prepared under Regulation 5 will be revised, and in the larger schools opportunity will be given for class-teachers to set certain questions bearing on the syllabus they have been preparing.

The Syllabus.—With reference to the subjects of instruction, there appears to be a general feeling among teachers that the syllabus contains too much to hope for thoroughness in the various subjects. The subjects of instruction are undoubtedly too many, but I am inclined to think that teachers mistake the intention of the regulations. No doubt the syllabus in subjects like geography, history, and nature-study presents a formidable amount of work to be prepared, but the work to be done covers a term of years, and teachers may select a course for themselves, so long as it is based on the syllabus. The discretionary power that constitutes the real strength of the regulations appears to frighten most of the teachers who have been so long spoon-fed, and told what to do and what to leave undone, that their own individuality has almost been lost by the lack of use. The present is a time of transition. The schools are passing from the old to the new, and the teachers who anticipate to-morrow and bestir themselves betimes will find mere bands of elastic binding the regulations that have been issued for their general guidance, and suggestion. What is to be feared is the lack of thoroughness under the regulations that are pressing children into the scholarship examinations, and thence into the district high schools and secondary schools at too early an age. There is no doubt that pupils can be prepared at thirteen to pass the bare requirements as set forth for Standard VI, but there is a lack of that thoroughness which is indispensable to those children whose school life will close under ordinary circumstances after passing the Standard VI examination. It seems to me that the tendency is to foster the leaving period at too early an age, but at the expense of thoroughness and against the future well-being of the children. The economic aspect as it affects labour appears to have been altogether overlooked.

Essential Subjects.—Reading and writing do not receive the attention formerly given to them in the schools. Intelligent class-reading is seldom heard, and some urge that in the case of writing the typewriter will soon be in general use, and that handwriting will hardly be required. But, whatever new methods may come into vogue, it is certain that thoroughness will be necessary. Notwithstanding the growing use of the typewriter, reading and writing will be necessary for the individual in his dealings with his fellows, and in the early stages of a pupil's training they should be thoroughly prepared. The new method of teaching in English has many advantages, and I am inclined to think that there is evidence of more freedom in the compositions of senior pupils. Much less formalism is apparent, and the tendency is to deal with a much wider range of subjects. Geography in its physical aspect is receiving much more rational treatment in the schools. The work is practical, and much of it is based on actual observation. Scheme A is a form of nature-study that deserves to be promoted, but it is curious that so many teachers having once learned how to carry out an experiment fail to repeat it or even encourage their pupils to do so. Thus many schools obtained a year or so ago a thermometer, a mercurial barometer, and a rain-gauge, and records were taken twice a day for some time after the instruments were obtained, but the interest in several schools has died away. Children can be trained to experiment of their own accord by merely arousing their curiosity in the measurement of heat as applied to life—the life of a plant equally with that of an animal—and if their attention was called to the absence of growth, to the partial disappearance of flowers in winter, and to the effects of cold and heat upon themselves, suggestions would be available whereby other experiments might be made, keeping the barometer, thermometer, and rain-gauge equally under notice. The power to do something is a great factor in the upbringing of children, and experimental science, or the art of doing something in order to bring about a certain result, should be kept steadily in view by every teacher.

Science-work.—Instruction under the manual and technical regulations of the Act has made satisfactory progress. Cooking-classes and dressmaking-classes for girls, and woodwork-classes for boys, have been established at Napier, Hastings, and Gisborne; and for dressmaking only, in Taradale, Waipawa, and Waipukurau. The employment of special instructors in the subjects named is working well, and the classes will be extended to include Dannevirke, Woodville, and other places as soon as the necessary arrangements can be made. Of the three kinds of classes named, dressmaking has hitherto been the most popular, as the mothers of the girls appeared to realise at once the practical advantages to be derived from this form of instruction. The country schools in some cases are receiving instruction in elementary agriculture from some of the more experienced teachers, but it is hoped that the benefits will be much widened now that there is an instructor available qualified to deal in a practical manner with this subject. As an example of the kind of work being done in the