

employment of an additional teacher would supply the deficiency in the most satisfactory way. Failing that, an arrangement might be made to have French taught by a native of France, an arrangement which, considering how rarely correct pronunciation is acquired by English teachers of the French language, has much to recommend it.

With the exception that the Lady Principal has not sufficient opportunity to observe and guide the work of the other teachers, the staff at present engaged is adequate to the number of pupils, and a larger number could be very well taught without increasing the number of the classes. There are at present 99 names on the roll, and the average attendance for the few weeks of this term has been 84—a low average, as the result of much wet weather.

I made inquiry as to the principle of classification, and learned that, after the Christmas recess, an examination extending over two weeks was held, and that the pupils were thereupon divided into classes according to their attainments in the ordinary branches of an English education, a separate classification being adopted for arithmetic, algebra, and geometry, in which subjects great differences were observed between pupils who were nearly on a level as to English.

The tone of the school as to manners, cheerfulness, obedience, and honor, is, so far as I could ascertain, satisfactory, except that I saw instances of "copying" during an arithmetic lesson. I am afraid that it is useless to trust to a sense of honor on this point. On another point very high ground is taken, which I fear will prove to be a mistake. I refer to the absence of any system of marks to indicate diligence, accuracy, and progress. The Lady Principal holds that the pupils can be trained to do their duty and their work for the sake of work and duty. It seems to me that young persons require some standard by which they may measure their own diligence and success, and that much good is likely to result from the weekly publication in a school of a list showing for each class the order of merit for the week, as ascertained by marks.

The distribution of the work, as between the different teachers, is, I think, judiciously ordered. The relation of each teacher to some one class is closer than her relation to other classes, but not so as to confine her to one class. A teacher who has special qualifications for imparting instruction in a given subject removes from class to class during the day to teach that subject.

I am satisfied that, though the present standard of attainment is low, this is to be accounted for by the necessity of laying a good foundation where it has not before been laid, and that the present staff is quite competent to do much higher work when the pupils are ready for it. I notice that English grammar is taught with constant reference to its logical basis. The arithmetic is being very thoroughly and intelligently done. Even in the junior Latin class the translation and composition are both done *vivâ voce*. This, of course, requires a more ready command of vocabulary and grammar than is necessary for the production of written exercises, and has the advantage of bringing sight, hearing, and speech to bear all at once upon the task. I listened with very great satisfaction to an admirable lesson in algebra, far above the ordinary style of school work. Reading is carefully taught throughout the school, but I am not sure that the necessity of careful preparation on the part of a teacher for a reading lesson in a junior class is sufficiently recognized. Very great care appears to be taken in the correction of exercises.

The school premises are very commodious, well warmed, and well ventilated. The upper sashes of all the windows ought to be made to open. The curtain which separates the two class-rooms on the ground-floor should be replaced by a wooden partition. At present the confusion of sounds is such as to render it almost impossible to teach two classes with only the curtain between them, and one class is frequently removed to the entrance-hall for the sake of quietness. I noticed that on one day the temperature of the rooms was a little too high, and on another day not quite high enough, but I attribute the irregularity to defective management of the hot-water apparatus, and not to faulty construction. In all other respects the building is everything that could be desired, except that in any future extension it would be well to arrange for rooms for pianoforte practice at a greater distance from the class-rooms. A room in the custodian's house suffices for the present as a place of retirement for luncheon, whence the pupils return at their pleasure to a class-room appropriated to their use during the mid-day recess, one of the teachers being always in the building. I am not quite satisfied with the amount of supervision thus secured, but I was assured that it was found to be sufficient.

I noticed that the supply of wall-maps was very scanty, but I am told that this is owing to delay in the executing of an order.

I have, &c.,

W. JAS. HABENS,
Inspector-General.

The Hon. the Minister of Education.

OTAGO BOYS' AND GIRLS' HIGH SCHOOLS.

EXTRACT FROM THE EDUCATION BOARD'S REPORT FOR 1877.

THE greatest number in attendance at the Boys' High School for the year was 191. About the middle of the year the Board, at the Rector's earnest request, relieved him of the duty of conducting the boarding establishment, and granted him, in lieu of the residence he previously had, a liberal rent allowance. Arrangements were made with Mr. G. M. Thomson, Science Master at the High School, to conduct the boarding establishment on the account and at the risk of the Board, and with reduced charges for boarders. Soon after these arrangements had been made, the Rector, on the 18th August, tendered his resignation to the Board, which was accepted. The Rector's resignation was followed by circumstances which led to the appointment of a Royal Commission of Inquiry, whose report has been duly laid before His Excellency the Governor. In accordance with a recommendation contained in the Board's last report, the Assembly had meanwhile passed an Act transferring the management of the High Schools from the Board of Education to a Board of Governors, to be appointed early in the year 1878, and consequently the Board did not take steps to fill up the vacant Rectorship, but left the selection and appointment to be made by the Board of Governors succeeding to the management of the schools.