

of a turbulent law-defying element, from the encouragement given to insubordination by parents of pupils, and others who ought to be more alive to the danger of their conduct. This danger still exists. Often, when a teacher inflicts a well-deserved and not immoderate punishment, he is assailed by letters in the Press. He is perhaps summoned to Court, and numbers of people, including the police, busy themselves to procure his conviction. If he escapes a direct fine, he is most likely left to pay his own costs, amounting to some pounds. In fact, nothing can exceed the tenderness of all the world for the real culprit, who most likely did not get half his deserts, and their virtuous indignation at the cruelty of a man who has not shrunk from doing an unpleasant duty. Is it wonderful that teachers shrink from inflicting punishment? Is it surprising that what is called larrikinism grows apace where so many act as if it was their special vocation to encourage it? Public and Press, magistrates and police, will have to put forth all their strength if this evil growth is to be stopped. I feel that I should be neglecting my duty if I did not speak what I know on this matter—one of vital interest to the community.

I have, &c.,

R. J. O'SULLIVAN,

Inspector.

The Chairman, Board of Education, Auckland.

TARANAKI.

ALTHOUGH scarcely six months have elapsed since the visit of the Organizing Inspector, Mr. Pope, the results of that visit already visible are most satisfactory. Parents, children, teachers, and others are now aware that the Government and the Board are determined that education shall be efficient and sound, and not a varnish. I am glad to report that generally throughout the district the attendance, with a few exceptions, has been more regular and punctual. Nevertheless I was, in a few cases, displeased to find pupils whose names were given in as candidates for examinations absent themselves altogether, or partially, on the days I appointed for that purpose.

The registers and returns have been better kept and made than heretofore. There is, however, in some cases room for improvement. Drill and singing have in many cases been introduced very hopelessly. Sewing has not been introduced in the manner I wished: it is strange the mothers will not take the trouble to give their daughters work to do in school, preferring, it seems, to get it done by machine.

I have visited all the schools twice, and some more frequently, since June last. The only school not strictly examined is the Huirangi School, which has been, from many causes known to the Board, closed for some months. At a recent visit, for the purpose of instructing a new and inexperienced teacher, I was glad to find the pupils had not lost much, and there was great promise of this school maintaining its high position under the new mistress.

The issue of good-conduct certificates by the Government, and of certificates of merit to each pupil who passes a standard, is having a beneficial effect.

[The rest of the report relates to individual schools.]

WM. M. CROMPTON,

Inspector.

WANGANUI.

SIR,—

Education Board Office, 25th February, 1880.

I have the honor to present my first general report on the state of education, under the new standards, in the schools under inspection in my district, for the year ending 31st December, 1879. Through the introduction of "The Education Act, 1877," and the various arrangements consequent upon it, great and important changes have taken place.

As one of the changes effected, we have now a uniform set of standards for all the schools in the colony, and so far well. But, in my view, until we have something like uniformity in the conducting of examinations by the several Inspectors, we shall not be able to form a fair and impartial estimate of the state of education in the various educational districts of the land. However, the field of the new standards is much too wide. It makes, as it seems to me, much too heavy demands both upon teachers and scholars, in order to secure a pass. I can say emphatically, from long and successful experience in working standards in Scotland, that the New Zealand ones are more rigorous in their demands than ever any of the Scotch standards were. Had the Scotch standards been as exacting as those of this country are, I could not have passed 99 per cent. in the essential subjects, as I invariably did. The school which I conducted was the largest in Edinburgh, the average attendance being about 1,200, and every child qualified by attendance was presented.

The Act, moreover, has created a greater and more widely-spread interest in the education of the young. In this district such has undoubtedly been the case, and consequently the number of scholars has been greatly increased, and the number of the schools largely added to, for whose inspection you hold me responsible.

At the outset, I have to report that, with the view of discouraging neither the teachers nor the scholars by expecting so much from them at first as is demanded in the new standards, I determined, throughout my examinations, to work the standards gradually and cautiously. It appeared to me almost impossible, all at once, properly to work the subjects to be learned under the new standards into the school course. Besides, I felt I was heavily handicapped by having seventeen schools in charge of either inexperienced or uncertified teachers. The modification determined upon was the following: If a scholar showed strength in a majority of the required subjects of the Third or of any of the three upper standards, I did not pluck him, although in one or two subjects he might show such weakness as to render him not entitled to a pass. I may add that the examinations were conducted throughout on one uniform plan. The members of the First, Second, and Third Standards were examined orally; and the members of the Fourth, Fifth, and Sixth Standards were examined, as far as possible, by means of written papers, which I received and valued at home.