

1881.
NEW ZEALAND.

EDUCATION: REPORTS OF INSPECTORS OF SCHOOLS.

[In Continuation of H.—1r., 1880.]

Presented to both Houses of the General Assembly by Command of His Excellency.

[It has not been thought necessary in all cases to print the tables and those portions of the Inspectors' reports that relate only to particular schools.]

AUCKLAND.

SIR,—

Auckland, March, 1881.

I have the honor to submit this report for the year ended the 31st December, 1880.

The number of primary schools in the education district, and the attendance of pupils, are shown in the following table:—

Quarter ending	Number of Schools.	Roll Number.			Average Attendance.		
		M.	F.	Total.	M.	F.	Total.
March 31	203	7,670	6,883	14,553	6,042	5,328	11,370.
June 30	206	7,786	7,062	14,848	6,119	5,321	11,440
September 30	205	7,751	7,070	14,821	5,931	5,212	11,143
December 31	208	7,787	7,152	14,939	6,245	5,594	11,830

The training of teachers has been carried on up to the 31st December last, in the manner I have so often described, viz., by means of evening and Saturday classes for young teachers and probationers, and by correspondence between the master of the training classes and country teachers; together with practice in the ordinary work of the schools. Probationers, as I have before explained, are persons whom the Board consider likely to make useful teachers, but who have little or no experience in teaching. Some of these probationers, as might be expected, have been failures, and, after a fair trial, their services have had to be dispensed with. It is very satisfactory to be able to state that many of them have become admirable teachers. Some of the best schools in the district are taught by these young men and women, without any long training, but formed on the methods of instruction and discipline which the Board here have long since adopted. Of course in these cases a natural aptitude for teaching was there; without this, all the training in the world will not bring efficiency.

The Board have appointed Mr. McArthur as Principal of the Training School, which, it is to be hoped, will be in operation ere long. It is proposed to continue, as far as possible, instruction to teachers not actual students in the school. The regulations under which it is proposed to work have been forwarded to the Minister of Education for approval. Mr. McArthur and myself consider that there is a tendency in these institutions to become in a great measure merely superior schools. We think that what should be aimed at is to fit the students for their career by practice and instruction in the art of teaching, and by earnestly promoting their general culture and enlightenment. A teacher whose knowledge is narrowed to school-books and school-methods is by no means a desirable citizen of a state: it may not be going too far to call him a mischievous one. Narrowness is contagious, and narrowness is one of the noxious growths of colonial society. From it come hasty, violent judgments, formed without inquiry or balancing of arguments, and that presumptuous ignorance which rushes in where knowledge and experience fear to tread. It is not wise to train men and women merely calculated to spread this type of character. What should be aimed at is to produce men and women, who, to use the language of Carlyle, "Value knowledge, possess some, and what is better and rarer, are open minded for more."

No junior teacher is now employed in the district of a less age than fifteen years. The Board are desirous to make the lowest limit sixteen, but they think it judicious to hasten slowly. I hope before long they will be able to raise the limit, and also to make passing in the Sixth Standard a condition of employment. The many advantages to be gained from this I dwelt on in my last year's report: the main one being the saving of young teachers from the double strain of teaching and learning. I am glad to be able to report that the number of short absences from duty of junior teachers has very much lessened. Until means were taken to winnow them, their absences were fast becoming an abuse. This