

fore it would be hopeless to look for any of those qualities in him which are essential to true greatness in the individual, and which, in the mass, go to build up the fabric of national greatness. Life is regarded as something out of which the utmost possible amount of pleasure—or what passes for pleasure—is to be extracted, and not associated with innumerable duties to be performed to others, in the faithful and loyal performance of which each of us should and might find the greatest happiness, as well as—in the gratitude inspired and the good diffused—his highest and best reward.”

There can be but little doubt that these words indicate truly the tendencies of the youth of New Zealand, as well as of the youth of Australia. I do not propose to discuss from what these tendencies have sprung. They have their roots in the colonial social system. I believe the public schools can do something to check their growth: they certainly should not be made a means to stimulate it. They are made a means to stimulate it when the pupils are allowed to rule the school. It is true that people are becoming half awake to this danger. We do not of late find so much maudlin sympathy for the sorrows of young culprits who have been treated in some measure according to their deserts. But the fact remains that many teachers are afraid to punish their pupils, and think themselves obliged to pamper them. Parents have complained to me of this. Assistant-teachers have complained to me that head-teachers will not punish pupils sent up for insubordination, for fear of hurting their popularity. I have known pupils guilty of truant-playing and lying taken back without punishment, from a like motive. Then teachers find that it is expected of them to provide adulation for children that have done the simplest duty: if a school has been examined in the standards, the certificates obtained by those who have passed the simple test cannot be given out quietly—they must be distributed with a flourish of trumpets. People are got together, speeches are made, and the pupils are puffed up with injudicious praise. Then entertainments are given to raise money for prizes, which are bestowed with more praise and more manufacture of conceit. Further, teachers try to attract and keep pupils by, from time to time, bribing them with sweetmeats and feasts. It seems to me monstrous that public schools, which should be distinguished by honest work alone, are allowed to reproduce these worst features of private schools. This is what is happening. The evil has increased, is increasing, and ought to be stamped out. There is another point of no slight importance—the wrong done to the teacher who will not stoop to fawn. All this rewarding, pampering, and praising is wrong. Besides generating conceit and appealing to low motives, it further unfits a child for the future by giving him a false idea of life. We are not invariably rewarded and praised for our good deeds. We frequently suffer from our evil deeds; we no less frequently suffer for our good ones. Boys and girls should be trained to work for the reason that it is right to work, and for no lower motive. They should be taught to walk in quiet paths, and should be relegated to their proper and natural position of insignificance. Teachers should awake to the degradation of the position they assume, and to the vital injury they are doing to their pupils and to the country. Boards and Committees, parents and the Press, and every good citizen, should be aiding and assisting the teachers to fight against this system of truckling to pupils, which is fast producing a despotism of children which must become a danger to the State.

I have, &c.,

RICHARD J. O'SULLIVAN.

The Chairman of the Board of Education, Auckland.

TARANAKI.

SIR,—

New Plymouth, 31st December, 1880.

Notwithstanding the total absence of thoroughly trained teachers in this district, I am glad to report the spread of a uniform and carefully-practised system of teaching through the schools.

Now that the training school for teachers at Dunedin is open to all comers, I think it would be advisable that the Board should for the future adopt, as a general rule, that no teacher should be appointed even temporarily to any school unless he has gained a year's experience in a training school, or in some large school conducted by an efficiently trained teacher. I think that it operates prejudicially on the pupils that an untrained teacher should learn the duties of his profession while in sole charge of a school, the more so as such teachers are very apt to teach effectually only those subjects which are favourite studies. Some teachers improve themselves by study during their leisure hours, and consequently become more efficient instructors. I wish I could say this is a general practice, but it never will be so long as some of your teachers have to walk or ride to and fro (even as much as ten miles a day) from New Plymouth to their schools in the country.

I regret to state that the pupils now attending your schools are almost wholly changed from those who were attending last year: I imagine almost to the extent of 70 per cent. have left, and their places taken by children who have never been classed in any school. This state of things has been brought about by the removal of families to bush farms, the state of the labour market, and losses on the sales of farm produce, especially grass-seed. Many promising young people under fourteen years of age I looked forward to meeting again with pleasure, have been taken to farm-work and other services just as their minds were beginning to open and take an interest in what they were being taught. The only satisfactory facts to set against this is the greatly-increased number of pupils attending most of your schools and increased regularity of attendance.

What I have now stated seems to indicate the great necessity for all your teachers residing in their respective districts, and their being induced to keep night schools. My work of examination has also been increased by the pupils having been placed by the teachers in the different standards, and having to test their arrangement before I could begin my examinations.

I have adapted my examinations as closely as possible to the requirements of the Government standards. I prepared a double series of questions in writing on the following subjects: Arithmetic (including mental arithmetic), geography, grammar, composition, and history for the pupils in the Third, Fourth, and Fifth Standards, and required the answers to be given in writing. The result showed singularly the idiosyncracies of the teachers, the consequence of irregularity of attendance, and the want of interest in education on the part of the parents. The children leave school at such an early