

should have been so. The difficulties attending the teaching of a small school, unassisted, are very great, and the salary very small. It is impossible, therefore, to secure the services of trained or experienced teachers, and in the majority of cases referred to the teachers are persons who have had no previous experience in schools of any kind. I have always, however, found them painstaking, hardworking, anxious to improve, and willing to adopt any suggestions thrown out by me during my visits.

Singing is taught at a few schools, and vocal music at still fewer.

I may mention, as an interesting fact, that in only one instance have I chanced to hear a teacher endeavouring to deduce any moral principle from the lesson read by the class. I do not for a moment suppose that this is generally neglected, but I was pleased to hear an endeavour to inculcate moral precepts in connection with the ordinary work of the school. The teacher made a personal and practical application of the simple story read by the children, and questioned them in reference thereto, while the answers, though given with sufficient hesitation and variety to convince me that the matter was not "cut and dried" beforehand, showed some familiarity with this style of instruction, and an apparent appreciation of its value. The school was a small one, and the class consisted of very young children; nevertheless, I was glad to see it, and I hope it is not so uncommon in our schools as some would have us believe.

I have made some effort to abolish the filthy practice of cleaning the slates by spitting upon them, and rubbing them with the palm of the hand, the coat sleeve, or some other portion of the clothing. In a few schools the practice of making the children provide themselves with slate-rags has been introduced in consequence of my representations, and I hope this will become general.

The state of the offices is generally satisfactory. The girls' closet at Arahura Road should be surrounded by a close fence, as it is very near to the road; new closets are much needed at Stafford, and when erected should be placed in a less conspicuous position. In two instances I found the younger girls made a practice of playing in and around these buildings—a very nasty and most unwholesome proceeding. The offices at Brunnerton are very much too near each other and to the school. They should be moved as soon as possible.

I found a tendency in a few schools to neglect ventilation, arising out of the fact that in cold weather, to secure warmth at the commencement of the day, the windows are kept closed, and the air rapidly becomes vitiated. Although the change is not easily perceived by those who have been in the room from the commencement, it strikes most unmistakably upon the senses of any one entering from the fresh air.

TEACHERS' RESIDENCES.—It is repeating an oft-told story to refer to the urgent necessity for supplying these as soon as possible, but, in support of it, I may mention that at present, in three cases, the teachers are living in the school building. This is objectionable on many grounds. In one case I found outside the back door, and not more than five yards from the verandah, such things as mutton-bones, heads of red-herrings, empty sardine tins, scraps of cheese-rind, potato-peelings, and tea-leaves scattered about, whilst the verandah was ornamented with cooking utensils. At another small school under the 88th clause, the teacher had boxed in a small space in the corner of the schoolroom, which served him for a bedroom, the schoolroom itself doing duty as kitchen and larder. There was a fine leg of mutton hanging from a rafter in full view of all in the room. The school at Orwell Creek has completely outgrown the accommodation provided, and the Committee are desirous of either having a cottage built for the teacher, and thus setting free the remainder of the present building for school purposes, or of building a new school. I had a consultation with the Committee on the subject, and we went a little into the question of the cost of altering the present building, but the amount estimated as necessary to effect the proposed alterations would go far towards building a plain but more commodious schoolroom on another site, if such can be procured. The Committee intend to communicate with the Board on the subject.

SCHOOLHOUSES AND FURNITURE.—In large schools where caretakers are employed, the condition of the buildings and furniture is generally good, the rooms being clean, and the furniture generally well preserved, though there is some difference in this respect even at these schools. It is very gratifying to observe that in many of the schools not enjoying the advantages of a regular caretaker the cleanliness of the buildings and furniture is worthy of all praise. I may mention particularly the No Town, Hatter's Terrace, Donoghue's, and Blue Spur schools as instances. At the last named, the desks, although several years old, are almost if not entirely free from ink-stains; in fact, they have all the appearance of new desks. The present teacher has established a practice of making any scholar who spills ink on the desk scrape the desk clean after school hours. At the same school the boys, under the influence and direction of the teacher, have employed a portion of their play-time in improving the play-ground, and have really saved the expenditure of some amount of money. They have raked off and wheeled away all the large stones, and have wheeled in quantities of fine "tailings" to fill up hollows, and make a smooth surface. This is an example which, I think, is worthy of imitation at other schools, and merits some recognition at the hands of the Committee.

I hope my recommendation respecting the building of a new school at Goldsborough will be acted upon as soon as possible, as it is much needed. Since it has been determined to enlarge the Ross School, I venture to suggest that the school at Donoghue's be converted into a side school at Ross, and that no standard higher than the Third be attempted at Donoghue's. The pupil-teacher at the latter school could then be dispensed with, and might be transferred to the Ross School, if, as is most probable, the attendance there should increase sufficiently to justify an increase in the staff. This, I am sure, would, in the end, be more satisfactory for all parties; and, as nearly all the children at present attending the school at Donoghue's live near that school, or between it and Ross, the distance to the latter would not be excessive for children of twelve years of age, which is about the average of Fourth Standard scholars.

PUPIL-TEACHERS.—The examination of pupil-teachers was held, as in previous years, at the schools in which they are employed, and at the time of the ordinary examinations for results. This plan was introduced by me three years ago with the view of saving the pupil-teachers the trouble and expense