

1882.
NEW ZEALAND.

EDUCATION.

REPORTS OF INSPECTORS OF SCHOOLS.

[In Continuation of E.—1B, 1881.]

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

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

TARANAKI.

SIR,—

New Plymouth, 31st December, 1881.

I have the honor to transmit my annual report of the Board's schools for the year ending this day, together with record of passes.

A summary of the detailed record of passes shows the following results (omitting presentations in preparatory standards): Number of pupils on the rolls, 30th September last, 1,643; working average, 30th September last, 1,170; presented for examination, 818; passed into higher standards, 539; percentage on the whole, 65. Presented in Standard I., 215; passed, 151: in Standard II., 219; passed, 163: in Standard III., 216; passed, 126: in Standard IV., 71; passed, 49: in Standard V., 41; passed, 24: in Standard VI., 6; passed, 2.

These results are by no means satisfactory, nor what I hoped for. The causes are not far to seek—viz., the neglect of parents; great irregularity of attendance; the continual changes in the individuals in the school; the admission of a large proportion of children who have never been classed in any public school; as regards the town of New Plymouth, the want of police surveillance of the streets during school hours; and the pressing necessity for child-labour in the bush districts.

A large proportion of your teachers have been working conscientiously during the past year.

I must refer you to my last year's report as to the cause of the low state of the Lower Egmont and Smart Road Schools. If it were possible to stamp out the discordance which exists in the Kent Road and Albert Road Districts, and the settlers would combine for the common good, most beneficial results would ensue. The state of the Norfolk Road, Midhirst, and Stratford Schools has been most unsatisfactory: I hope, however, that the new arrangements and an active Committee will restore them to order. I regret that some suggestions contained in my last report for the guidance of the teachers have been unheeded, simply because the Inspectors' Reports have only recently been circulated.

Notwithstanding the time I have been compelled to devote to the re-arrangement of the town schools and those in the eleventh district, I have been able to visit all the schools twice in the year prior to the examinations, and am glad to report that, with a few exceptions, the discipline, order, and condition of the schools are satisfactory. Reading is improving, but I have in some cases remarked strongly on the very objectionable practice of letting the pupils read books quite beyond their comprehension; consequently their reading was mere sound, without an idea attached. The study of the reading-lesson beforehand has rarely been enforced as it should have been, and, though the writing from dictation was generally good, I found the meanings of the words unknown in some cases. A somewhat similar fault is to be found in the teaching of arithmetic. In some schools I found pupils pushed on into the higher rules, but, when tested by examination, I found great deficiency in a knowledge of numeration and notation, and power of thinking out a question even in the simpler rules. Writing has improved generally throughout the schools, but is still far from being what I wish. Geography is in a far more satisfactory state in all the schools. The copies of maps and those drawn from memory were often very good. Drawing (free-hand) is taught by those teachers who have learnt it; otherwise it is confined, especially in the half-time schools, to drawing maps. Music is taught on the Tonic Sol-Fa system by those teachers who have learnt it. In other schools it is taught by the ear only. The little that is taught has done great good in improving the quality of tone in reading and recitation. Gruff rusticity of voice is slowly disappearing.

Desk-drill has been carried out in almost all the schools very satisfactorily; it has only failed in one or two of the schools in the eleventh district. The Courtenay Street School is a model which all the teachers might copy with advantage in their schools. The drill of the boys in the play-ground or unfrequented streets in town has been well carried out, so far that their manners, language, and conduct appear to me to be improved.

The Chairman of the Board of Education.

WM. M. CROMPTON,

Inspector.