

1883.
NEW ZEALAND.

EDUCATION.
REPORTS OF INSPECTORS OF SCHOOLS.

[In Continuation of E.—1B., 1882.]

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.]

AUCKLAND.

SIR,—

Auckland, March, 1883.

I have the honour to submit this report for the year ended 31st December, 1882. The number of primary schools in the education district and the attendance of pupils are given in the following table:—

Quarter ending	No. of Schools.	Roll Number.			Average Attendance.		
		M.	F.	Total.	M.	F.	Total.
March 31	211	8,429	7,825	16,254	6,658	6,038	12,696
June 30	213	8,498	7,829	16,327	6,313	5 657	11,970
September 30	211	8,353	7,676	16,029	6,129	5,457	11,586
December 31	209	8,304	7,797	16,101	6,595	6,046	12,641

The attendance was injuriously affected by the sickness which was prevalent during a great part of the year. The question of the age of candidates for scholarships has come before the Board on several occasions. I append various reports I have written on the subject in accordance with the instructions of the Board. It seems plain that the idea of making boys begin the study of the classics very early arose from the notion that it was necessary to make learners spend a great number of years in the study of Greek and Latin. This notion has now been given up by the most enlightened authorities on the subject. Three or four years are now found enough for the work to which eight or more were formerly given. On this point the writings of Mr. Fitch, Mr. D'Arcy Thompson, and many others may be consulted. See Fitch's "Lectures on Teaching," chapter viii., and Thompson's "Day-dreams of a Schoolmaster."* It seems to me plain that, if the years devoted to the study of the classics can be shortened, the assumed necessity for beginning to study them at an early age disappears, and with it the assumed necessity for maiming the course of primary instruction. We need not quote Professor Huxley to prove that primary subjects are seldom, if ever, taught well in secondary schools.

The report of the Principal of the Training College will show the nature of the work done in the College by means of it during the past year. It will be seen that the influence of the College is not confined within its walls, but extends itself very much further.

* The following is from the *Saturday Review*, 10th February last: "With respect to the folly of causing boys at such an early age to go through competitive examinations, the *Lancet* says, 'There can be no room to question the extreme peril of "overwork" to children and youth with undeveloped brains. The excessive use of an immature organ arrests its development by diverting the energy which should be appropriated to its growth, and consuming it in work.' And Dr. Crichton Browne says yet more emphatically: 'By submitting little boys of twelve or thirteen to competitive examination in the first decade of life, European infants would be put to shame by negro infants, or even by the progeny of the Australian aborigines. And the same biological law holds good amongst individuals of the same race, those of greater mass and complexity being slower in reaching maturity than those of simpler and feebler mental structure. The premature activity of the brain exhausts its strength or sets up bodily degeneration.'" This is a significant commentary on certain recommendations recently made to the Board.