

to do, and that the mental work required of them is insidiously undermining their physique. Such statements are, I believe, wholly devoid of foundation. The pupils are, as a rule, remarkably rosy and robust. Even in the largest schools, where a great many pairs of lungs are cooped up within the walls of a moderate sized room, the general healthy appearance of the children is very striking. The school hours rarely exceed five. Add to this an hour and a half of home study, and the total time pupils devote to their education is by no means excessive. In most schools on the Continent of Europe the more advanced pupils are in the schoolroom for as many hours as the total of school and home work here amounts to. If there is scope for play and games, the school children of Otago have abundance of time to devote to them. If in some cases the physique of public school pupils is not what it might be, I believe that other causes than the time and attention given to their education can be readily assigned. One of the most pleasing features of the Otago schools is the excellent behaviour of the pupils. In this respect the schools now stand on a much higher level than they occupied when I first came into contact with them. No feature in connection with the schools reflects greater credit on the teachers than this. During the examinations the children have done their work honestly, and in general with satisfactory care and attention. Rarely has there been occasion to complain of copying and other offences of that class.

Singing is taught in all the larger and in a considerable number of the smaller schools. In several of the larger ones the older pupils sing with great correctness and expression. It is to be regretted that the subject is not taught more widely, for when well handled it exercises an admirable influence on the pupils, an influence that every teacher would do well to have at his command.

In connection with the Board's scholarship scheme, I am happy to be able to record that four of the holders of senior scholarships have lately gained junior scholarships at the University of New Zealand, being the only competitors from Otago who attained to that distinction. They have all attended the Dunedin High Schools for several years.

The Secretary, Education Board.

I have, &c.,

DONALD PETRIE, M.A., Inspector.

2. MR. TAYLOR'S REPORT.

SIR,—

Dunedin, 14th February, 1883.

I have the honour to submit my report for the year ended 31st December, 1882. The number of schools examined by me was fifty-two. I also assisted Mr. Petrie with the examination of nineteen of the larger schools, and made forty-five visits of inspection. The districts to which my attention was directed were not quite the same as those of former years. I examined a number of schools in Vincent County which used to be taken by Mr. Petrie, who, instead, examined a corresponding number in the Tapanui and Clutha districts; while Mr. Goyen examined the schools in the Peninsula and Taieri Counties, formerly taken by me. The examinations have been conducted, with the exception of one or two slight changes, on the same lines as before, and in accordance with the regulations of the Education Department. If the requirements of the standards are of a burdensome and exacting nature it should be manifest that the Inspectors cannot be held responsible for them. Their duty is to see that the regulations are carried into effect, whatever hardships may be entailed on themselves or others.

The buildings, except in a few instances, were well suited to their purpose—commodious, well furnished, and in a state of good preservation. The exceptions were in the localities of least importance, where the Board would not be warranted in incurring any considerable expense, on account of the small number of pupils attending school. The playgrounds, though generally limited in extent, and not naturally very suitable on account of unevenness of surface, have, as a rule, received considerable attention from Committees in the way of levelling, fencing, and, in a number of cases, surrounding them with belts of trees and shrubs, which in a short time will afford excellent shelter and shade, and add greatly to the appearance of many treeless districts in Otago. Any assistance granted by the Board to such Committees as show a disposition to exercise themselves in thus beautifying and improving its property would be money well spent. Teachers would readily give their sympathy and co-operation to Committees in work of this kind, and would induce their pupils to take a pride and pleasure in their surroundings, and so free them in some measure from the senseless and destructive larrikin spirit so prevalent in some quarters.

CLASSIFICATION.—Classification is very much determined by the programme of instruction and the annual examinations. The only difficulty in connection with it is to be found in schools with but one teacher, having all the standards represented and a number of infants besides. The tendency is to subdivide the latter into three or four groups, and so to fritter away valuable time with nine or ten classes. In schools of this kind the infant classes ought not to exceed in number two at the most. It will be found that eight classes are more than one teacher can satisfactorily deal with.

TIME-TABLES.—The framing of a time-table, when a teacher has only one or two classes in hand, is comparatively an easy matter; but it is quite the opposite when one teacher has in charge seven or eight classes. Then, it requires some skill, careful consideration, and repeated experiment to construct a time-table that shall meet the requirements of the syllabus, and do justice to every class and branch of school work. Though neglect is not to be passed over, yet some leniency and assistance have to be accorded to the inexperienced whose time-tables are not satisfactorily arranged, and not always adapted to the changing circumstances of their schools.

DISCIPLINE.—The first requisites of good discipline are efficient order and control, and these are found existing in the great majority of the schools. There are a few, however, in which the government is weak, and, as a consequence, the pupils are noisy, idle, disrespectful, and backward with their work. The following notes, taken on inspection days, will give some idea of the condition of such schools: (1.) "The boys especially do not manifest a good spirit. They are disrespectful, are given to talking and idling away their time, and become sullen when reproved." (2.) "The teacher allows talking. His pupils are given to tittering and giggling. Tone unsatisfactory." (3.) "The control is