

The various head-teachers under whom the past students of the college are now engaged have reported most favourably on their zeal and teaching capabilities. This I consider satisfactory, for, although the work of a normal school should include the attainment of certain branches of a higher education, its first duty is to fit its students for the profession of teaching, and to enable them to understand the principles which lie at the root of their practice, and thus render their work a labour of love.

The Saturday classes have been numerous attended during the year, the total average attendance of the last term being 195. The staff engaged at these classes, in addition to the Principal, included Mr. Trevithick, drawing master, Mr. Cranwell, singing master, Captain Mahon, drill instructor, and Mr. Gifford, assistant in the training college. To these gentlemen I here tender my sincere thanks for their hearty support in all the classes. Those who attend the Saturday classes are either pupil-teachers, uncertificated teachers, or certificated teachers. As our supply of teachers is drawn chiefly from pupil-teachers, who are more likely to become useful in their profession than those who begin later in life, it is to the pupil-teachers that the most time is given. They receive instruction on two afternoons in each week, besides on Saturday mornings, thus getting six hours' tuition weekly. As all have passed the Sixth Standard or an equivalent before they are employed, this should be sufficient for their needs. The small proportion of male pupil-teachers suggests the idea that there must be something which prevents a larger number of boys who have passed the Sixth Standard becoming teachers. The cause, whatever it may be, is worthy of the Board's attention.

The classes held for the uncertificated and certificated teachers have been attended by town and country teachers. At all classes the attention is good, but I fear that even yet some teachers consider regular attendance and good attention all that is necessary to obtain a certificate. These two elements are necessary, but there is still another essential element of success—regular private study. A short time devoted regularly to the subjects required will effect a greater amount of good than will spasmodic spurts of energy followed by long periods of repose.

The certificated teachers attend the classes on school management, singing, drawing, and drill. Several have qualified themselves to teach singing and drawing in the schools, and have therefore obtained exemption from these classes. It should be the aim of every teacher to become qualified to teach all the subjects included in the programme of instruction.

The correspondence with those uncertificated teachers in the country schools who cannot attend the Saturday classes has been continued throughout the year, the number in correspondence being about seventy. The work is very heavy, but, in many instances, yields good fruit. Thus the active business of the college in all its branches of students' classes, Saturday classes, and correspondence extended during the year to more than 300 teachers.

The Auckland University College opened during the year, but owing to the late period at which lectures began, and to the fact that they were delivered in the evening, the students were unable to avail themselves of its advantages. I hope that during the present session many will attend and profit by the lectures. The attendance of teachers at University College classes will form a strong link between higher education and the primary system, and every fair means should be used to strengthen this link, and thus form a bond of sympathy between the various branches of education.

An attempt has been made to establish in our schools the kindergarten system. While I yield to no one in my opinion of that system for teaching the young, and while I admit the ability of the teacher engaged in the work, I am persuaded that it can never become part of a national system, because of its expense. What is wanted for our youngest scholars is a system which will embody the principles of kindergarten without incurring the expense necessary to fully carry out that system. The attempt has been made elsewhere, and has been abandoned after a trial of two years.

I cannot close this report without testifying to the great advantage which is gained in possessing a uniform system of drill in the schools. All the teachers learn the same system, and thus discipline, without which no good school can exist, is largely aided by the uniformity of drill.

I have, &c.,

The Chairman, Education Board.

A. McARTHUR, M.A., LL.B., Principal.

WELLINGTON

SIR,—

Normal School, March, 1884.

I have the honour to submit my fourth annual report on the work of the Normal School. Though much that I hoped to see accomplished remains undone at the close of the year, the retrospect furnishes some solid grounds of congratulation, and the outlook is encouraging.

As the private classes were discontinued in January, we have been able this year to devote our whole attention to our proper work—the training of professional students.

NUMBER OF STUDENTS.—The number of these, compared with those of 1882, stands thus:—

	Males.	Females.	Total.
1882	2	16	18
1883	2	17	19

But this does not represent the number benefited by the institution. Thirty students have been in attendance, of whom ten have left in the course of the year for school work, and one has been obliged, through failure of eyesight, to take prolonged rest. [She has however since resumed her studies.]

CLASSIFICATION OF STUDENTS.—Of the nineteen students on the roll (December, 1883), fifteen are maintained by Education Boards, and four bear the expenses of their own training. Seven of the nineteen come from other districts, viz., four from Hawke's Bay, two from Nelson, and one from Taranaki. Of the total number, thirteen are ex-pupil-teachers: nine of these were in the service of the Wellington Board, although only five of them completed their apprenticeship.