

It is necessary to say a word or two with regard to the ventilation of schools. The object of the teacher should be to have the air in the schoolroom as pure as possible *without dangerous draughts*. The teacher should every day note the state of the atmosphere, and arrange the opening of the doors and windows accordingly. Sufficient use is not made of the opening of doors for the purposes of ventilation. Many teachers are given too much to the opening of the lower window-sashes during school hours. A most essential point is that when the pupils enter the schoolroom they shall enter a room in which the air is pure, not a room in which it was pure yesterday or last week. It is not easy to get rid of foul air, it takes many hours of open windows and doors to rid a school of it. I must say that nothing like the attention it deserves is given to this point, a point of the gravest importance.

A practice has been begun in some places which I feel bound to notice. Committees, and, indeed, sometimes outsiders, occasionally undertake to examine the schools. Now, the law lays down what examinations shall be held, and by whom. To hold examinations otherwise is to transgress the law. Besides, it is evident that amateur examiners will often set up a different standard of excellence from that set up by the authorized examiners. Thus confusion is produced in the minds of the pupils and teacher, and singleness of aim is destroyed. I have no doubt, however, that the Committees and others referred to are actuated by good intentions.

A few years ago what I must call a morbid feeling prevailed as to the punishment of children in public schools. Teachers were subjected to a sort of reign of terror. This tyranny, though by no means dead, has somewhat slumbered for some time back. It now shows signs of reawakening. It may be well I should repeat the words I felt obliged to use in my report for the year 1879. But, first, I would point out that instances of undue severity on the part of teachers are very rare, and are easily dealt with, but that the doctrine of the divine right of children to freedom from punishment is fraught with danger to the State. "In my last report I called the attention of the Board to the danger that existed of a turbulent law-defying element, from the encouragement given to insubordination by parents of pupils, and others who ought to be more alive to the danger of their conduct. This danger still exists. Often, when a teacher inflicts a well-deserved and not immoderate punishment, he is assailed by letters in the Press. He is perhaps summoned to Court, and numbers of people, including the police, busy themselves to procure his conviction. If he escapes a direct fine, he is most likely left to pay his own costs, amounting to some pounds. In fact, nothing can exceed the tenderness of all the world for the real culprit, who most likely did not get half his deserts, and their horrified indignation at the cruelty of a man who has not shrunk from doing an unpleasant duty. Is it wonderful that teachers shrink from inflicting punishment? Is it surprising that what is called *larrikinism* grows apace, where so many act as if it was their special vocation to encourage it? I feel that I should be neglecting my duty if I did not speak what I know on this matter,—one of vital interest to the community."

I have, &c.,

R. J. O'SULLIVAN, Inspector of Schools.

The Chairman, Education Board, Auckland.

SINGING-MASTER'S REPORT FOR 1883.

SIR,—

Auckland, 31st December, 1883.

I have the honour to submit my report on the singing in schools for 1883. There are now more teachers giving instruction in singing than at any previous time, and some of them show considerable skill in the work. In several of the schools the teaching is very satisfactory and real progress is made. Other schools are without teachers capable of giving a singing lesson, and consequently are backward. Especially is this the case where my visits are only once a fortnight. In two or three of the large schools systematic teaching is given in every standard, and I believe the result will be a great improvement in the singing of the higher standards as the young scholars come forward. Again, there are other schools where the children are all massed together with the result that the singing is not satisfactory. Still, this is unavoidable until there are more teachers with sufficient musical ability to give a singing lesson. I have taken every opportunity of overlooking teachers giving singing lessons. I find, in most cases, that good work is being done. My visits have necessarily been rare, but I consider this should be the principal work of the singing-master.

The students at the Training College have received a lesson once a week, and good progress has been made; many of them show decided musical ability, and I believe will become valuable teachers of vocal music. During the year six teachers have passed the requirements of the elementary certificate of the Tonic Sol-fa College, and two have passed the intermediate. The possession of the intermediate certificate is now recognized as the standard for exemption from the Saturday singing class, and this will induce many more to prepare for the examination. Frequently there has been a difficulty in procuring song-books, the stationers, having kept so small a stock, have continually run out, and this has been a great hindrance.

I have, &c.,

THOS. CRANWELL.

REPORT OF THE INSTRUCTOR IN GYMNASTICS.

SIR,—

Auckland, January, 1884.

I have the honour to submit my report on the drill and gymnastics in the public schools, and also in the teachers' classes on Saturdays, for the year ended 31st December, 1883. During the past year there has been a greater interest than formerly taken in drill and gymnastics, both by pupils and teachers, and the result on the whole is very satisfactory. In my last report I complained of the number of letters received from parents requesting that their children be excused from drill and calisthenics. During the past year such requests have been very few in number. In some cases, when the children have been brought before me, I have advised them to try the exercises, to rest whenever they felt tired, and stop when they felt they had enough. This advice has been taken, and some of these are now amongst the best drilled in their classes,