

given to those in charge of half-time schools, are in a better position, if they see fit, to prosecute their studies alone; there should be little difficulty in obtaining certificated teachers (now that there are so many in New Zealand) for such positions, as vacancies occur.

I now pass on to those very small schools which, owing to geographical position or bad roads, cannot be conducted on the half-time system. The young certificated teachers, who have gone through their course of training, and who, being single, can live on the salary, could teach the major part of them, and should make a start in them, as they must naturally expect to climb the ladder by beginning at the lowest rungs. There would be no chance of their staying unreasonably long in them; for by good work they would soon have a just claim to a higher status and salary. Those who, having the requisite scholarship, have entered the Board's service as probationers, and have, since entering, had *at least six months' training in the art of teaching* in some larger school, are in a position, as vacancies occur, to conduct with success the small schools which are neither half-time nor full-time in charge of certificated teachers. The standard of scholarship expected from probationers on entering the service should be fully up to the mark of that for the E certificate in all the subjects except in the principles of school organization and government, of the art of teaching and of method, and in singing, in which they could qualify themselves afterwards.

Notwithstanding some of the remarks under this heading, the equitable claims of certain teachers in the small schools, who have for many years served the Board to the best of their ability, but who, by their isolated position, have been less able to fully qualify themselves, call for some recognition—such, perhaps, as being placed for a time near some centre where they will have more facilities of so doing.

I take occasion to remark on the importance of having as first assistants in large schools teachers of as high qualifications as possible, as on them in many cases falls the conduct of the higher classes. Unless a head-master has as first assistant a good disciplinarian, able to treat with skill the subjects taken up in these classes, he is not in a position, without prejudice to this part of the school, to devote a sufficient portion of his time to the lower classes, and, what is vitally important, *to the training of the rest of his staff.*

*Frequent Changing of Teachers a Fourth Cause.*—The frequent changes of teachers is a hindrance to progress, especially where the changes in a staff take place midway between two examinations, or shortly before one. The continuity of the work is destroyed—one teacher seldom takes up the threads of his predecessor's work. As far as circumstances will permit, the changes should be made just after an examination, otherwise an Inspector is less able to estimate the work done by the several teachers who have had charge of a school or class during a year.

*Strict Way in which the Standards have been Applied to the Cases of Individual Scholars a Fifth Cause.*—The strict observance of Regulation 8, Standards of Education, 1878, has told severely in certain schools where the work was uneven, being good in some subjects, to which disproportionate attention had been given at the expense of others. History has invariably been counted as a pass-subject, a matter in which there seems to have been some latitude in one or two of the provinces where there are many small schools. The past year's experience has shown me how greatly the new Standard Regulations, which come into force in 1886, will facilitate the teaching of such schools. Unevenness of work in certain schools has arisen from not paying close enough attention to the lines of the standards of education; so that, while good work has been done in certain subjects, and much progress on the whole has been made in them, when tried by the standard test a low percentage was obtained. In some of the schools the unevenness was attributable to the poor method in which some of the subjects had been handled; in others, the time-table could not have been followed with sufficient regularity. In several of these schools, however, I anticipate considerable improvement in the next year's work. In one or two cases a good deal of effort has been put forth by the teachers to prepare their scholars to give musical entertainments occasionally. However excellent such entertainments may be, and calculated to make a school popular, their preparation should not encroach on the school-work.

*The way in which the Subjects have been treated in Class in certain cases a Sixth Cause.*—In some of the schools, including some of the larger ones, the results in the higher standards were poor, because, though the whole of the standard work had been gone over, it had been treated in a superficial or otherwise imperfect manner. Thus, in some cases the children could read a large portion of their reading book fluently, without having any idea of the drift of the lesson, as the explanation they had been accustomed to was simply the substitution of one word for another, with little or no attempt to bring them into communion with the thoughts and feelings of the writers. So, too, in many cases the children in the higher standards—Fifth and Sixth—have failed to do the problem-work in arithmetic; because, while they had been taught certain rules and formulæ, they had little grasp of the principles on which these were based, and were only able to apply them to the simplest cases, as their intelligence had been brought insufficiently into exercise. In the teaching of grammar there is little variation in the method used, so as to enable the scholars to grasp its principles: the inductive method is not sufficiently adopted. In teaching the analysis required by the Standard Regulations it should not be treated only as a separate subject, but should be made an instrument in the teaching of parsing. The scholars should be accustomed to analyse sentences before parsing them, that they may better see the relations of the words to one another. As to the teaching of physical geography, where the more general laws governing the phenomena treated had not been skilfully explained, and their action suitably illustrated, the pupils in one or two schools gave pretty certain proof that they had been preparing for the examination in this branch by committing to memory long passages from a text-book which they had evidently failed to understand, for the reason stated. There may be many good methods of treating the same subject; the main thing is the skill with which the method adopted is applied. The practical difficulties experienced by a teacher in getting his scholars to grasp the principles and laws referred to under this heading are often great, owing to the poor mental power some of the scholars bring to their tasks, especially those who have not been well trained in the earlier stages of their school course.