

for there will always be some masters unable to teach it, some pupils with no taste for it, and some pupils who cannot or will not obtain the necessary books and instruments. Also, some of the books authorised for use in the schools are now, and always will be, quite beyond the powers of ordinary boys. I think that drawing should be made an optional class subject.

BUILDINGS. PLAYGROUNDS.—Several of the buildings will, I am afraid, shortly need roofing with iron, as the shingles are in a bad state of decay. Additional accommodation is much required at Palmerston, Terrace End, Eltham, Bunnythorpe, and some other schools. As a rule, playgrounds and fences are fairly well looked after; but there are some very bad exceptions. In some cases the playgrounds are far too small for the number of children's horses. In future districts sufficient land to enable a teacher to graze a cow and horse ought, if possible, to be set aside; for the salaries of teachers in the bush are small, and such land would not only be a great convenience, but also a monetary help. Some Committees have done a great deal during the year towards clearing bush playgrounds. A few teachers have laid out flowergardens, and these are kept by the children. I am, however, surprised that more teachers in the country districts do not improve their grounds by the planting of flowers, shrubs, &c. The difference in appearance between Government grounds in this country, where flowers grow like weeds, and shrubs and trees spring up in a few years, and similar grounds in the Home-country, where so much trouble and time are required to make a nice place, is very marked. Broken swings give a very untidy appearance to some playgrounds: wire ropes to swings are the only ones that last.

This report has already overstepped the limits to which I had intended to confine it, but I cannot conclude without drawing attention to what I consider is partly the cause of poor work in the case of some teachers—viz., neglect of instructions and suggestions in various reports. That this neglect is intentional, except in a few bad cases, I do not for a moment believe, for it is to be found amongst earnest as well as amongst apathetic teachers; but it is none the less very noticeable. Thus, at one examination of a particular school certain weaknesses—say dirty drawing books and copy books, in which the work shows no supervision—are pointed out; but at the next examination exactly the same weaknesses are to be found. Or, again, in an annual report certain faulty methods are pointed out and better recommended; but when my inspection visit takes place I find that not only has no attempt been made to introduce the better method, but the teacher is absolutely unaware that the old method was condemned. I recollect a certain very earnest teacher who informed me with evident delight that he had discovered what he proved to be an excellent method for teaching some subject; but this teacher was unaware that this particular method was recommended in three successive annual reports lying at the time in his school cupboard. Again, at standard examinations some teachers take an interest in the oral examination of their classes, but it is indeed rare to find a teacher taking notes. Let me give one more instance in this connection. At some schools I have seen "Fitch's Lectures on Teaching" and other valuable books of the same class on the teacher's shelves; yet the methods especially recommended in these books were not attempted, and the evil practices condemned were rife. During the last few years eminent men in the educational world have given us such methods as they have proved to be the best for cultivating the intellectual faculties of a child, not for merely making him the passive recipient of another's ideas; and it behoves every teacher with love for his profession to become acquainted with these methods. But it must be remembered that good methods are of no use unless they are properly carried out. Of far more importance than the method is the intelligence of the teacher that employs it. As Herbert Spencer points out, the success of every appliance depends mainly upon the intelligence with which it is used. An unskilful workman, though having the choicest tools, will botch his work; and bad teachers will fail even with the best methods. Indeed, the goodness of the method becomes in such case a cause of failure; as, to continue the simile, the perfection of the tool becomes in undisciplined hands a source of imperfection in results.

In conclusion I may say that the order and discipline, except at a few schools, are generally very fair throughout the district, and really bad conduct is almost unknown. Sometimes upon examination days I found a tendency to talk, especially after a paper was finished, and at a few schools the work was hindered by the teacher's lack of power of control. But such schools were the exception, and at the majority the pupils did their work in a diligent and businesslike manner. In the paper work the larger schools had somewhat of an advantage over the smaller; for, while the latter had to take all the papers in one day, the former took only one paper at each sitting. To counter-balance this in some respect, the cards were so drawn out that those for the smaller schools did not entail so much mechanical work as those for the larger. I seldom took up any pupil's papers before he had quite finished his answers. In school the manners of the children are generally pleasing—in some cases exceedingly so; but outside school this is too often not the case. "Hello!" is occasionally the only salute on the road or street, or a boy stares open-mouthed when wished "Good morning." Many pupils, however, are brilliant exceptions to this class, more especially the pupils of this town. I generally find that the pupils of those schools where they are daily taught to say "Good morning" and "Good afternoon" to their teachers treat their teachers and others with like courtesy when they meet them on the road. When a visitor enters the classroom the children should stand; if they are at work, only when bidden by the teacher; if waiting to be set to work, as when an Inspector enters on examination day, unbidden. In some schools this rule is observed, in others not.

I beg through this report to convey my thanks to the teachers for the manner in which everything was got ready for the examination, and for their hearty co-operation while I was conducting the examination.

I have, &c.,

W. H. VEREKER-BINDON, M.A., Inspector.

The Chairman, Board of Education, Wanganui.