

was deemed deserving he would be raised a class. Once he reached the first class he would, as long as he was an assistant, always be of that class, unless the Board saw fit to reduce him for gross misconduct or for neglect of duty—most improbable contingencies. Under this plan there might be two assistants of the same class at one school. I trust that the Board will kindly give some more consideration to this matter, for under the present system anomalies will be continually occurring.

BUILDINGS AND PLAYGROUNDS.—Most of the buildings are in good repair, and several have been improved during the year. A very few, built some twenty-five years ago, in which aided schools are held, are in a bad way. Two aided schools are conducted in private houses, and two in buildings belonging to public bodies. And here I may say that it is undoubtedly false economy not to supply the absolutely necessary furniture and apparatus to such schools as these. Smoking chimneys are a perfect nuisance in certain parts of the district. There is a small fortune awaiting the man who will erect chimneys in the most convenient position in a school building, and yet successfully guarantee them not to smoke. The Board's regulation with regard to the ventilation of schools is often neglected. Frequently I notice when passing the schools, or on my special visits to them, all the windows closed on fine, warm days; and many teachers do not flush the rooms with fresh air before the school sittings and during the recess.

Many Committees have done a great deal to improve their playgrounds by gravelling and planting, and in bush districts by clearing, laying down in grass, and fencing the land. The usual plan adopted is, the Committees collect some money from the settlers, and the Board supplements the amount with pound for pound. The money so collected throughout the district during the year amounted, I am sure, to no inconsiderable sum. Strange to say, it is in the bush settlements and at the small schools that most is done in this way (one Committee of a school with an average of about forty-five planted several rows of trees along three sides of a playground of eight acres), and yet in some of the towns the playgrounds present, to put it in the mildest form, a far from nice appearance. At many of the small schools unsightly broken swings are to be seen. With their dangling ropes swaying in the wind they may serve to remind the criminally-inclined tramp of the extreme penalty of the law, but they are not calculated to impress others with the idea that the governing bodies take much interest in their school.

Before closing this report I beg to thank the Board for their kindness in granting me leave of absence of sufficient length to enable me to visit not only some of the other districts in this colony and the Exhibition at Dunedin, but also Australia. I trust that I may be able to turn the experience gained to the benefit of the Board's schools. From what I saw during my trip I am convinced that the teachers of this district, taken as a body, are doing as good work as their brethren in the neighbouring districts and colonies. At several places the superiority in style of our slate and paper work was forcibly presented to my mind.

I regret that the district was almost unrepresented at the Exhibition. For myself, being engaged daily at the standard examinations during the last five months of the year, I could not attend to this matter, and with regard to others who should have interested themselves it appears to have been the old story, "What was everybody's business was nobody's business."

I cannot speak in too grateful a manner of the kindness shown to me by all connected with the Education Departments of Victoria and New South Wales. The Ministers of Education, the Secretaries of the departments, and the Inspectors did all in their power, though I was in no way accredited to them, to make me thoroughly familiar with the educational systems of their colonies. All Acts and documents bearing upon these systems were freely given to me, I was conducted over the Training Colleges, and I took advantage of a pass on the railways to visit schools here and there from Ballarat in the south to Bathurst in the north. At all public institutions the same kindness was extended to me by the officials, no trouble taken to give me information being deemed too great.

I have, &c.,

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

The Chairman, Board of Education, Wanganui.

WELLINGTON.

SIR,—

Wellington, 25th February, 1890.

I have the honour to present my sixteenth annual report on the working condition of the primary State schools of the Wellington District.

During the past year 10,460 children, in seventy-two schools, have been examined by me. At the time of my visit two very small aided schools at Kaiwhata and Otahua, which were in operation last year, were closed; and the Courtenay Place and Thorndon Infants' Schools were absorbed into main schools. On the other hand, the large new Clyde Quay School, Wellington, was in operation, with 527 children on the books; and three other new schools were opened—at Shannon, Paraparamu, and Hastwell. Also an aided one at Bideford was reopened after being closed six years.

In standard work the following table shows results, as compared with those of last year:—

	S. I.	S. II.	S. III.	S. IV.	S. V.	S. VI.
1888. Number below S. I., 3,467; above S. VI., 91. Passed ..	1,602	1,133	1,074	799	550	216
1889. Number below S. I., 3,256; above S. VI., 74. Passed ..	1,347	1,548	1,039	943	684	351

The total of the passes in standards in 1888 was 5,374, and in 1889 it was 5,912. There is a highly satisfactory increase in the numbers passed in the higher standards, and an equally satisfactory decrease in the numbers returned in and below Standard I. Thus it is shown that the standard of classification throughout the district is rising fast.

After going carefully through my reports on each of the schools I am pleased to find that a classification of them under the heads "Progressive," "Stationary," and "Declining" shows that