

course and methods of instruction followed by the several teachers. As a rule these are satisfactory. In one case, however, I observed upwards of fifty uncorrected errors in eleven exercises (Latin). The exercise books of a pupil-teacher from a country school contained little but dictation and grammar (chiefly parsing); in the former many words were left out entirely, and in the latter many mistakes and omissions were not marked, and doubtful abbreviations, such as "p.," "a.," "ad.," &c., were habitually used. Another pupil-teacher, from the same school, had no exercise books excepting those that he had written under private tuition, and stated that the head teacher of his school had given him very little written work, and that had been done on scraps of paper, instead of in books as required. He also stated that he had received no instruction in algebra during the past year from his own head teacher. If these statements are correct I must again urge the Board, in justice to the young people whom they undertake to train up for the teaching profession, to reconsider the suggestions made in my last and several earlier reports, or, at any rate, to decline to appoint fresh pupil-teachers to this school, but, as those now engaged drop out, to supply their places by allowing two monitors who have passed Standard VI. for each pupil-teacher allowed by the Board's regulations. There is another matter connected with the pupil-teacher system that I must refer to at the risk of giving offence, and that is, the passing over of pupil-teachers out of their time, and appointing young persons without any claim on the Board, and certainly far less qualified for the position, to the teachership of small schools. There is a point where subservience to the wishes of Committees and parents ceases to be praiseworthy, and here at least I think the Board should take a firm stand, and absolutely refuse to appoint or (in the case of aided schools) to sanction the appointment of any unqualified person when an ex-pupil-teacher is willing to accept the position. Before leaving the subject of pupil-teachers I may refer to the inconvenience and even injury suffered by schools having pupil-teachers, upon the retirement of one or more of them at the expiration of their terms of service, and the filling of their places by young persons necessarily without experience. As it is only by strictly adhering to its regulations that the Board can hope to keep its expenditure within its income, it is absolutely necessary that pupil-teachers out of their time should be replaced by others of the lowest class; but it is evident that this bears hardly on the schools that have to exchange the services of a first-class for those of a fourth-class and inexperienced pupil-teacher. Any scheme that could be devised to obviate the evil would be liable to derangement from time to time through pupil-teachers leaving the district before their terms of service had expired, as has happened several times in the Hokitika School. A suggestion has been made by some members of the Committee of that school which I think is worthy of consideration. It is that pupils desirous of appointment as pupil-teachers should, as a "condition precedent," be required to give their services gratuitously as monitors for a certain time before they should be eligible for appointment, and while awaiting a vacancy. This plan would have the double advantage of giving the aspirants to the position an opportunity of exhibiting, and the head teacher the means of judging of, their fitness for the teaching profession; it would involve no expense to the Board, and would reduce the chances of an unsuitable appointment to a minimum. The number of such unpaid monitors should bear some fixed proportion to the number of pupil-teachers employed in the school, and there is no doubt that there would be no lack of scholars who have passed the Sixth Standard who would be willing and eager to act as monitors, as their chance of ultimate appointment would then be materially increased. The chief advantage gained by such an arrangement would be that upon the retirement of a pupil-teacher the vacancy in the staff could be filled at once by one of these monitors with some little experience in school work, and not by an entirely untried hand. Should the idea thus roughly sketched out commend itself to your judgment, I shall be glad to draw up the details of the scheme in the shape of an addition to the present pupil-teachers' regulations, and submit them for your consideration at the next meeting of the Board.

I had almost finished writing this report when the seventh annual report of the Educational Institute of New Zealand came under my notice. With many of the resolutions agreed to by the Council I heartily concur, and the principles of not a few of them have been again and again recommended by myself, and indorsed by the present and former Boards in Westland. I may instance resolutions Nos. 1, 2, and 5, relating to departmental control, whilst No. 2, relating to the interpretation of regulations, is almost identical with the regulations in force in Westland before the Act of 1877 came into operation. With No. 3 of the same series I also cordially agree, notwithstanding that circumstances have compelled me hitherto to be somewhat profuse in percentages. There is, however, a remark in the address of the President which I hope is not to be taken as an expression of the opinion entertained by the Institute. It is as follows: "Some Education Boards . . . have been too liberal in the distribution of small schools—a policy that has materially lessened the salaries of teachers in their districts." Fortunately for the remote and scattered population of Westland, this Board is one that has erred in the direction indicated by the President of the Institute, and has given every encouragement to the establishment of schools where the inhabitants have shown a willingness to help themselves to the best of their ability. In my opinion, so far from deserving censure for such a course, the Boards referred to have shown only a proper perception of their duties, by a commendable desire to extend the advantages of the public-school system to those least able to help themselves, and in so doing have at the same time done much to encourage that most desirable class of settlers who, instead of thronging to the already congested labour markets of the towns, have elected to hew out a home and independence for themselves in the waste places of the colony. If the funds at the disposal of these Boards have been so limited as to compel them to underpay the teachers of the larger schools in order to provide a mere pittance for the remote teachers, it is the fault of the system, and not of those who administer it, unless it can be shown that they have been extravagant in other directions; and I trust that wherever a dozen children can be assembled at one centre no Board will hesitate to extend to them the advantages of a system of primary education which their parents, as taxpayers, are assisting to maintain. If