

that the answers were too often given by a very small portion of the class under examination. We notice but little improvement in this respect. We have again to urge the absolute necessity of teaching this subject experimentally. The great value of the science lesson is the bringing the mind directly into contact with fact, and practising the mind in drawing conclusions from the accurate examination of objects and phenomena. We recommend those teachers who can conveniently do so to attend the Saturday science lessons at University College, Auckland, that they may acquire skill in experimental work.

Generally speaking, the knowledge of history gained by the children in our schools is very scanty. It is a study that does not commend itself to the juvenile mind in this country. The best work is mostly in that part of the programme which treats of the events that happened during the Norman and Plantagenet periods, while the period from the Revolution to the present time, perhaps the most interesting to the adult student, seems to possess but little charms for young people.

Singing, needlework, drill, and calisthenics are taught with success in the larger schools.

It is again our duty to report in favourable terms of the good work done by female teachers in charge of small schools. In this connection we may remark that the career of a public-school teacher seems to present but few inducements to the best kind of Auckland boy. At the end of the year, of 195 pupil-teachers employed by the Board, only forty-three were males.

The schoolhouses and teachers' dwellings are in fair condition. Many teachers have made little attempt to beautify or even cultivate the ground surrounding their houses. Two reasons are generally given for this neglect—the first is the uncertainty of the teacher's tenure of his post; the second is the alleged poverty of the soil. The state of many country playgrounds still calls for improvement.

The school records have been more carefully kept; though it is still necessary to remind teachers that the admission and summary registers must not be neglected. A few cases of violation of the regulations relating to the daily register of attendance have been specially reported to the Board.

The general tone, discipline, and behaviour of the children in our schools are on the whole very creditable alike to teachers and pupils.

We append the statistical returns required by the Education Department.

We have, &c.,

JOHN S. GOODWIN,	} Inspectors.
WALTER HENRY AIREY, B.A.,	
JAMES C. DICKINSON,	
RICHARD CROWE,	

The Chairman, Education Board, Auckland.

TARANAKI.

SIR,—

Education Office, 17th March, 1892.

I have the honour to submit my report on the schools of the district for the year ending 31st December, 1891.

The number of schools at the close of the year was forty-five. Only two new schools—Hurford Road and Pungarehu—have been opened in the course of the year. That at Pungarehu is an aided one.

Visits of inspection were made to all the schools save the three in that portion of the Stratford County then within the Wanganui Educational District, but placed during the last quarter of the year under the Board's control. The schools at Pukearuhe and Hurford Road were not examined. The first-named had been arranged for on two occasions, but, through local circumstances, has not yet been overtaken. At Hurford Road the scholars are only beginning school-life, so that an examination was unnecessary. In future I shall give two or three days to the examination of those schools whose growth has made rapid strides in the past few years. I found the schools and grounds on the whole in a very satisfactory condition. Several are exceedingly well looked after, both by the Committees and the teachers. Some of the older buildings have had their rooms brightened by a judicious use of oil-colours, and I have heard of others likely to be treated in a similar manner. The gloomy appearance which the time-stained lining of the interior walls gives to the rooms has a very depressing effect. I am sorry to say that in some instances the teachers themselves do not appear to give this matter any consideration. Even the maps and lesson-pictures are kept out of view. Many of the pictures in magazines and newspapers could be easily prepared for the decorative treatment of the schoolroom. However, I am glad to notice the efforts of a few teachers of the right stamp, who can interest themselves in such matters, and can also find time and money to make and supply simple apparatus and appliances to aid them in the proper treatment of their class-lessons. How different to those whose apathy cannot allow them to drive an occasional nail or tack, or to do some slight repair to furniture or appliances! The school-furniture is, however, generally well preserved. But few articles, and these always of a minor character, are found missing in schools where so many changes of teachers take place. This can be accounted for by the teachers' compliance with the regulations, and the attention which the Chairmen of Committees give to the required checking of the property return when a change occurs. I am glad also to notice the almost entire absence of that spirit of indolence amongst the boys that shows itself in the disfigured furniture of the schoolroom. A few useful articles, such as large reading-sheets similar to the text-books in use, arithmetic sheets, larger maps, and blackboard rulers, have been issued, and I hope to have every school fully supplied with such during the present year.

The average attendance for the year shows no improvement. The low attendance at a number of the schools continues to have a very bad effect in adding to the difficulty of obtaining competent teachers. Efficiency in these schools is out of the question, hence the work of a year has to be