

During the past year, by direction of the Board, each Inspector has had charge of the same division of the district as in the previous year. We believe this has been of great advantage, as it has enabled us to more thoroughly judge of the efficiency of the teachers and the condition of the schools, and to acquire greater familiarity with the educational needs of the district. We regret that the Board has not thought fit to continue this arrangement for at least another year.

The new syllabus has now been in operation for a year. The difficulties consequent upon the alterations therein have been on the whole ably met by the teachers. By Order in Council the Inspectors were instructed not to exact full compliance with respect to the new requirements in drawing in 1892. We have, however, found little cause for the exercise of this indulgence. With regard to the geography of Standard IV., the efforts of the teachers have not been attended with much success. We cannot avoid the conclusion that the mathematical geography, which is rigidly insisted upon by the syllabus, is beyond the limits of the intelligence of the great majority of the children preparing for Standard IV. The definite permission granted by the new regulations to group to a greater extent than formerly certain classes for instruction in history and geography has been of great benefit to the teachers of small schools. Many teachers who have thus grouped two or more classes in history, geography, or science have, however, neglected to prepare an extended programme so as to show the distribution of the subject over a three years' course, as required by Regulation 19.

The school-buildings and teachers' dwellings are for the most part in good repair. We have, however, observed with great regret that in some cases where houses are provided they are not occupied, and present an appearance of neglect and decay. Comparatively few playgrounds present a really attractive appearance. Something has been done during the past year in planting a more suitable kind of tree than the funereal pine. We trust that the teachers and Committees will not relax their efforts in this direction.

In the work of the schools steady progress has been made during the past year, and the schools generally are in a very efficient state. The great majority of the teachers have shown zeal and industry in the discharge of their onerous duties, and such defects as still exist in the schools are much more due to unavoidable adverse conditions than to indolence or unskilfulness on the part of the teachers.

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, New Plymouth, 25th February, 1893.

I have the honour to submit my report on the schools of the district for the year ending the 31st December, 1892.

All the schools were inspected, and thirty-four were fully examined. Midhirst and Cardiff Road Schools were examined in part only, as the progress of their classes had been interrupted by the change of teachers and the closing of both schools for a few months. A partial examination was made at Upper Mangorei also, where the teacher had resigned her appointment after several months' service. The schools that I have not fully examined this year will in future be examined early in the year. This departure has been forced upon me by the increasing number of the schools and the steady growth of those in the early-settled parts of the district. There are about a dozen of this class that now take two or three days each for examination. The bush roads also, after the winter rains, are impassable before the end of September or the beginning of October; and the time remaining before the Christmas holidays is of too short duration to allow me to complete the examinations. Besides being advantageous in many other ways, this change will enable me to take the examinations at a time suitable to the special circumstances of those schools whose attendance and progress are so frequently interrupted either by epidemics or by changes of teachers.

The unusual weather of the past year has hindered the contemplated improvement of several of the school-grounds; still, the results of past work are seen in the cleared land and in the substantial fences, and the belts of trees now beginning to give shelter to the buildings and beauty to the areas they enclose. Two residences are unoccupied by the teachers, who prefer to reside elsewhere. New dwellings are, however, required in cases where the teachers are compelled to travel several miles over very bad roads to and from their lodgings. All the buildings are in good condition and repair. All the suggestions I have made to the Committees have been well received by them.

Additions have been recently made to the Midhirst and Stratford school buildings, and the enlargement, now decided upon, of the Cardiff Road School will supply the last remaining defect of school accommodation. Should the increase at Ngairu continue, it will be imperative to again enlarge the school there. The rapid increase of settlement also in new districts is certain to tax the finances of the Board heavily for several years to come.

The roll-number at December quarter, 1892, was 3,148. At the examinations 2,697 were presented. Deducting 1,042 presented in preparatory classes, 108 returned as absent, and 6 presented in classes above Standard VI., the remainder is 1,541, the number actually examined in standards. In classes above Standard VI. six scholars were presented, of whom only three attended. The attendance on examination day was 93 per cent. The number of exceptions is somewhat higher than formerly; the bad roads and severe weather, doubtless, being the chief causes of irregular attendance.