

The Department of Education, adopting a method necessarily artificial, determines what may be supposed to represent the absolute status of teachers by striking a balance between the various classes and divisions, thus dividing the teachers of the colony into nine grand ranks. From this point of view our certificated teachers must be classified as follows: None in rank 1, none in rank 2, six in rank 3, sixteen in rank 4, twenty-three in rank 5, thirty-seven in rank 6, thirty-seven in rank 7, twenty-seven in rank 8, four in rank 9.

Taking everything into consideration, we believe that the efficiency of our teaching power will compare well with that of most other districts. Remote from university and training-school centres, our teachers, so far as literary attainments are concerned, labour under great and permanent disadvantage, and, as the appointments in our new schools are usually filled by young teachers whose chance of acquiring skill and experience has been but small, the higher divisions are necessarily somewhat thinly represented. There can be no doubt, however, that in respect of the professional status of our teachers every year brings substantial individual and general improvement.

As there are altogether 167 teachers holding responsible positions under the Board, it remains to account for the seventeen that are uncertificated. Of these, eight are licensed, while nine have no professional standing whatever. One can only marvel at the want of pluck—we had almost said of self-respect—that deters most of these teachers from encountering, at least, the E examination. The Board would be acting with perfect justice were it to say to a number of them, "You have had time and opportunity to establish yourselves in your profession; you must now, either by accepting a lower position or by quitting the service, make room for superior teachers kept by you in inferior positions."

Apart from his ability to teach, the ideal teacher is a man of many and diverse gifts. He is resourceful and endowed with an ample measure of tact, able to control and able to organize, an example for imitation and an influence for good in his district, in a word, his parts must be summed up in an individuality that cannot fail so to mould the character of his pupils that they will pass from his hands clad in moral armour and furnished with intellectual weapons worthy of the dignity of citizenship so soon to be conferred upon them. Every day in each school the ideal is more or less unfolded, here almost realised, there almost destroyed. We refer for a moment to organization and to example.

The power of a school depends very largely on its organization, the aim of which should be to secure the maximum result with the minimum effort. In many of our schools the organization is perhaps as nearly perfect as circumstances will admit, but in others, and these sometimes not the least important, the teachers go through the day's programme in a happy-go-lucky fashion, without once pausing to reflect that the same power will produce very different effects according to the degree of skill and foresight with which it is applied. Hence it happens, in these latter schools, that pupils are not taught to win half the battle by being taught from the beginning to help themselves—that the freedom of classification encouraged by the Education Department is not taken advantage of—that successful grouping of classes is not accomplished—that pupil-teachers are kept teaching the same classes year after year and that the pupils of the class above Standard VI. pass their time as aimlessly as if they were already swelling the ranks of the unemployed. It would be well, indeed, if the Board were to demand that pupil-teachers should have, during the course of their training, experience in teaching some at least of the subjects of each class in the school, and also that in schools in which there is a class above Standard VI. a definite programme of work should be submitted for examination.

As showing the infectiousness of example, we may state that in the Waimea Plains there are three schools the interiors and gardens of which, in respect of taste and good order greatly excel those of all the other schools in the district. One teacher first set the example—the others followed, and who can estimate the effect of the unspoken lessons in taste, order, and economy that the children attending these schools unconsciously learn? In another school, in a different part of the district, the teacher has a taste for natural history—his pupils take their walks and rambles with observant eyes, and frequently bring him some object of curiosity or of admiration from nature's inexhaustible store. In yet another school the teacher has more than ordinary skill with his pen and pencil—he enables his pupils to dispense to a great extent with text-books by mimeographing so much of the essentials of a subject as he wishes them to remember. In this he is followed by other teachers, to the great gain of the pupils, who, with such excellent models, cannot fail in successful imitation. The new method of reporting on the examination of schools leaves the teacher to some extent free to follow individual bent, which it is devoutly to be hoped will early displace the hungering and thirsting after standard passes that have hitherto characterized a too large proportion of our primary-school teachers.

*Education.*—This subject naturally resolves itself into two parts—namely, subjects of instruction and methods of instruction. The subjects of instruction dealt with in our primary schools are divided into three classes, "standard," "class," and "additional," these again being subdivided into the various branches deemed proper to an elementary training. Following the wake of civilisation, those in charge of educational matters are prone through excessive definition to specialise certain subjects by detaching them from their general bearing, almost to the extent of pernicious isolation. Herein lurks an evil which if not guarded against will gnaw at the root of true educational progress. The grand truth that knowledge is one and indivisible may be obscured, and unwary teachers led to regard every subject as independent of, if not antagonistic to, every other and to the remaining portion of the educational whole. We would not be understood to imply that education should lag in the march of civilisation. On the contrary, it must be sensible to all the influences making for individual, social, and national welfare, but it must foster them only by letting some of the old material go, and by bringing into stronger relief the immutable principles on which all true development rests. Careful definition is indeed a practical necessity—but it does not follow that because the branches of knowledge are carefully defined pupils are educated by