

either chatty or learned lectures on common things, which we suspect are often hurriedly rushed through in the last few weeks preceding the examination. We expect each teacher to draw up and carry out a more thorough and systematic course for the ensuing year.

Recitation.—The importance of storing the memory with a few great masterpieces of English poetry should not be lost sight of. Unfortunately, the pieces in the children's reading-books are too often of second- or third-rate merit—good enough in many cases for reading and even for re-reading, but hardly worth committing to memory to the exclusion of those classics the possession of which should be “a joy for ever.” Teachers are recommended to go outside the class-books for suitable pieces, and to carefully consider their permanent value before making a selection. A list should be kept of all the year's work in this department.

Music.—With a few exceptions singing is taught wherever the teacher has an ear, and especially when some elementary knowledge of music has been acquired. Little advance, however, has been made in this art except in the City of Nelson, where a number of the younger teachers have recently qualified themselves to take it up. It is now taught systematically in the two central schools, the work of the year, though not of a showy character, being calculated to be of great value as groundwork for future efforts. The tonic sol-fa system is in general use throughout the district.

Drill is now becoming more general, but in very few instances can it be said to be well taught. Those who attempt to teach military drill are often as much as twenty years behind the times, and we doubt whether some of the orders we hear ever had their origin in any existing drill-book. “What is worth doing is worth doing well,” and it especially behoves those who are training the “coming race” to be progressive. The latest authorised book on the subject, “Infantry Drill, 1893,” is used by all Volunteers in the district, and should be readily procurable. Its first forty-two pages give sufficient instruction for imparting a good military and physical training, and, if desired, Indian-club exercises will add a pleasing variation. Through the wise liberality of some Committees, several schools have been supplied with gymnastic apparatus, but we have not yet had the pleasure of seeing any training given in the right use of these machines. Except in a very few schools little is yet done for the girls, for whom pole and Indian-club exercises, as well as general calisthenics, are so well adapted.

Needlework.—We desire to express our thanks to the ladies who, in most of our schools, gratuitously examine the sewing. In many cases their criticisms are of great value, and with the reports form powerful incentives towards the maintenance of efficiency.

In conclusion, we desire to touch upon a subject the importance of which it is difficult to over-estimate, and upon which it is yet more difficult to form a definite opinion—namely, the training in manners and morals which our children are receiving. As far as our limited opportunities enable us to judge, there is reason to conclude that these important matters are by no means neglected. The conduct of the children at inspection and examination visits is almost invariably good, instances of misbehaviour being rare indeed. The discipline of the schools appears to be maintained without undue severity, and it is hoped that the teachers are, in most instances, thoroughly alive to the importance of that moral training and discipline which are nowhere more needed than in a community like ours, where it is notorious that “home rule” is, for various reasons, considerably relaxed.

We have, &c.,

G. A. HARKNESS, M.A., } Inspectors.
W. LADLEY,

The Chairman, Education Board, Nelson.

GREY.

GENTLEMEN,—

28th January, 1896.

I have the honour to lay before you my annual report on the Grey public schools for the year ending the 31st December, 1895.

There were at the close of the year twenty-five schools at work under the Board, being one in excess of the number for last year. The one to which I refer—Blackball—was opened with a roll-number of about twenty, which increased steadily until the end of the school year, when the roll-number was forty-five—a very gratifying result, and on which the Board decided to complete the building according to the original plan. I consider this school is destined to become one of the most important under the Board.

During the year inspection visits were paid to twenty-four schools, the one omitted being Barrytown; this building having been blown down during a gale, all school work was necessarily suspended for a time. The building, reduced in dimensions, has been re-erected on a better and more convenient site, and is now a very nice school, being quite large enough for the requirements of the place.

The inspection visit disclosed some laxity on the part of a few teachers in keeping their registers fully written up, and serious negligence on the part of one in not keeping any register with the exception of that for the daily attendance. I found in several instances no entry had been made under the heading of “Progress” in the admission-register for some years. In each of such cases the teacher was instructed to fill these particulars in as far as possible.

Detailed reports on the buildings (included in inspection reports) were laid before you during August last. The various repairs and improvements effected during the year placed most of the smaller country school buildings in a fairly satisfactory condition. The two large schools, viz., Grey and Taylorville, to either of which little was done last year, will be found to need a considerable outlay to put them in an efficient state, and I would strongly urge the Board to deal with these during the year. In my report on each building I have suggested further repairs and improvements