

instruction of pupil-teachers in school management, for classes for instruction in drawing, science, &c., for grants for assisting the establishment of school libraries, for gymnastic and drill appliances, for apparatus for science and object-lessons, and for other well-known stimuli and aids to education, all of which are within the means of more favoured Boards, no funds are available.

Again, the salaries of the teachers suffer. In his opening address at the Teachers' Institute, the president, Mr. Davidson, stated that of the 385 teachers (exclusive of pupil-teachers and sewing-mistresses) employed in Taranaki, Marlborough, Nelson, Grey, and Westland (districts such as I am referring to), 226 receive less than £100 a year, and many much less. The effects of a low scale of salaries are obvious. Centralisation would remove all inequalities. Payment of salaries on a uniform scale by the central department would mitigate the evil, but the general impression seems to be that it would involve the abolition of the Boards, or such a reduction of their powers that the most desirable men would not seek election. These sweeping changes in our system of education would not, I think, meet with general approval, whereas the reform I suggested in my report for 1895 would not affect the system and would allow the present machinery to work more smoothly and efficiently. I pointed out that a sliding scale of capitation would overcome most of the difficulties. Instead of receiving £3 15s. *per capita* for all schools no matter what the average attendance, for schools up to 50 the Board might receive, say, £4 15s.; from 50 to 150, say, £4 5s.; from 150 to £300, say, £3 5s.; and from 300 upwards, say, £3, or £2 15s. I do not say that these should be the amounts fixed, but I strongly urge the adoption of the principle, which need not involve an increased expenditure to the colony, but would distribute the present vote more equitably.

Coming from the general question to our own case, one may naturally ask if something cannot be done though the capitation remain as at present. Taking other districts as precedents, we find that aided schools are established where the attendance does not reach a stated number, a fixed sum *per capita* being granted by the Boards to the local school authorities, who are required to argument it in order to pay the teacher's salary. The following table shows—A the districts in which aided schools are established, B the average attendance required before the Boards take over the schools, and C the amounts paid *per capita* :—

A			B	C
Otago	...	...	20	£3 15s.
Wellington	...	...	20	£3 15s.
Wanganui	...	...	20	£3 12s. for a female teacher, £5 for a male teacher.
Marlborough	...	...	25	Graduated scale, from £2 to £5.
Westland	...	...	20	£4 15s. for 15 or less, £4 7s. 6d. for 16 to 20.
Southland	...	...	20	£3 10s.
Auckland	...	...	None fixed	£3 15s.
Napier	...	...	30	£4 10s. and £4.
Nelson	...	...	20	£4.
South Canterbury	...	...	25	Graduated scale.

Two of the chief arguments advanced in favour of the establishment of aided schools are that the parents, having more direct interest in the education of their children, will send them regularly to school, and that the tendency to petition for schools near others already established is checked, and if there is any cogency in even these the scheme has much to commend it.

In some districts where the trains can be used for the free carriage of children fewer schools are established along railway-lines. As, until quite recently, the present number of ordinary trains did not run on Tuesdays and Fridays regular use of the railways could not be made, but now greater facilities are offered. Take, for instance, Norfolk Road and Tariki. The morning train from town arrives at Norfolk Road about 9.30, and at Tariki a little later; an evening train arrives at Tariki a little after 4 o'clock, and could be used for the return journey. Again, the morning train would suit excellently for the carriage of children from Waiongona to Inglewood, but the return train is somewhat late. Now, if there were no schools at Waiongona and Norfolk Road the pupils could be taught at Inglewood and Tariki at a diminished cost to the Board. As, however, schools are established the question becomes more complicated. At Waiongona the building is old and unsuitable, and the attendance is small; and at Norfolk Road the attendance is falling off; so that, in time, the question I have raised may be considered by the Board.

By the establishment of small schools adjacent schools are drained of their pupils, and more frequent changes of teachers and diminished efficiency result. If established schools were more supported and children kept at home till able to travel a short distance, I am inclined to think that at thirteen or fourteen years of age a pupil would be better educated than if, by the establishment of a smaller school nearer home, he could attend at a somewhat earlier age.

During the past three years the Board has spent a considerable sum in providing the most needful apparatus for schools. Additional maps, charts, blackboards, easels, &c., have been supplied, and worn-out, useless maps and appliances have been replaced. Map-stands, card-stands, reading-stands, science apparatus, and so on, though much needed, are not at present supplied. Another inexpensive, though useful, piece of furniture is a high stool to afford rest to a teacher while giving instruction. Standing all day is most fatiguing, and though chairs are provided, an energetic teacher will find them of little use during the greater part of the day, as when sitting he has not the command of his pupils that is desirable. Indeed, I hold it a bad sign if a teacher attempts to do much work while sitting on a chair. The stool, however, is not open to the same objections, and, I am sure, would be welcomed by the teachers. The apparatus is, as a