

Manners generally were very satisfactory in school; outside there was often much to be desired.

In conclusion, we may say that much good work has been done during the year. The teachers, as a body, are earnest and zealous, and they are respected and esteemed by the parents of their pupils. Failure to procure reasonably good work, all circumstances being considered, was very seldom the result of deliberate neglect. Suggestions given by the Inspectors have generally been taken advantage of, and have borne good fruit.

Two great obstacles to progress have been irregular attendance and changes of teachers during the school year. With regard to the former, the disadvantages are so manifest that there is no need to say anything here. With regard to the latter, we generally found bad work at schools that had two different principal teachers during the year, and each teacher put the blame on the other's shoulders. We are inclined to think that the retiring teachers relaxed their efforts on news of their promotion, and that the incoming teachers did not work as hard as they might, waiting till after the examination.

But another very serious obstacle to satisfactory progress has sprung up during the past few years—viz., the dairying industry. At many schools in the northern portion of the district the pupils appeared thoroughly tired and worn out at the very beginning of the work on the examination day, and some actually fell asleep *while writing*. But this cannot be wondered at when it is remembered that these children were up at about 4 a.m., milked several cows and did other farm work, and then had to wash and dress, get breakfast, and ride or walk some distance to school. We have come across children from six to twelve years old who milked as many cows morning and afternoon as they could count years in their lives! It must be very evident that it is impossible for children who have to work in this manner to make satisfactory progress during the school year, or to do themselves justice on the examination day. We often sorely pitied them, but an Inspector cannot make distinctions.

We have, &c.,

W. H. VEREKER-BINDON, M.A.,
Chief Inspector.

JAMES MILNE, M.A.,
Assistant Inspector.

The Chairman, Board of Education, Wanganui.

WELLINGTON.

SIR,—

Wellington, 28th February, 1898.

We have the honour to report on the work and condition of the primary public schools of the Wellington Education District for the year 1897.

The number of schools examined was 120, including all in operation in any locality at the time of our visit. This is an increase of fourteen on the number of the previous year, caused by the opening of seventeen and the closing of three small country schools. Of the seventeen new schools, five are in the approximate neighbourhood of Wellington, four lie east of Masterton, one is near Carterton, and the remaining seven are in the Forty-mile Bush country.

The demands for school accommodation have been fairly met in all urgent cases, and certainly as far as it is possible to meet them with the funds available. In the City of Wellington, the building of the school at Roseneath now under contract, the reconstruction lately effected at Clyde Quay and the Terrace, the recent extension of South Wellington School, and alterations already decided upon in the Willis Street School, will afford needed improvements; and we hope the time is not far distant when a better building will be provided for the Mount Cook Girls', in accordance with the suggestions made in our last report. Speaking of the country properties, it is evident that the wear and tear on the large number of buildings now erected is very considerable; and to keep them in repair, to make alterations necessary from time to time, to put up outbuildings, and to do the painting at even long intervals, is a heavier charge upon public funds than is commonly supposed. As a consequence, some buildings are left too long before repairs are effected, and in other cases cramped and unsuitable accommodation has to be put up with.

The attendance shows an increase of 506 children—from 13,688 on the books in 1896 to 14,194 in 1897. The number present for examination in standards is augmented by 336—from 8,977 to 9,313; and the number actually passed in standards was greater by 548—from 7,559 to 8,107. The number of passes increased from 84 to 87 per cent. of the number of pupils examined. The classification of the children passed is shown in the following table:—

	Standard I.	Standard II.	Standard III.	Standard IV.	Standard V.	Standard VI.
1896	1,597	1,581	1,583	1,338	942	568
1897	1,639	1,684	1,588	1,407	1,080	709

Besides these there were 392 in the class above Standard VI., representing those who had already passed Standard VI.; and in the previous year the number so classed was 349.

In reporting on the passes made we are pleased to say that both in numbers and in quality of work they represent more than an average year's progress. In numbers an increase of 3 per cent., with an upward movement of the passes in all standards, and more particularly in the higher ones, is satisfactory, and it follows that there is a steady uplifting of the work, which means a steady progress of the classes. We fully recognise, however, that in the matter of passes quality is of far greater importance than quantity, and in going again through our schedules and notes we find sufficient evidence of improved quality of work, and more particularly in greater fluency in reading in many classes attributable to the introduction of more varied reading matter, and in the use of shorter and better methods of teaching arithmetic.