

In many schools there was clear evidence of extended general knowledge, due to the introduction of Science Readers, and, in part, to the extended use of school libraries. Much improvement was effected in the writing by the adoption of a more upright style; and map-drawing was generally improved in printing and tinting. There was marked improvement in other subjects, as in physical and political geography, and in the teaching of more facile, thoughtful, and accurate composition.

In summarising our reports on the several schools, we find that in the twelve largest, which contain on an average 600 children each, and in the aggregate rather more than the remaining 108 schools, there has been no case of serious disaster, the least satisfactory having one or two weak classes, but all showing commendable work in the best classes. In eight of these the class-work was more or less satisfactory throughout. We are pleased to notice the improved position taken up by the Mount Cook Schools, and we note with satisfaction the improved upper work in the Masterton School.

Next in importance to the large schools are eighteen with an average of 153 on the rolls; and, of these, we can report favourably of thirteen. In the remaining five the work is never very good, and varies too much from year to year.

We have also twenty-six country schools, under two or at most three teachers, with an average of nearly seventy on their rolls. About twenty of these show painstaking work, the remaining six having inexcusable weakness in certain subjects.

There are now fifty-one schools each under one teacher only, not including ten small aided ones recently opened. Of these fifty-one schools six are below average merit, and better work will be looked for in them. The other forty-five, which are in all stages of progress, are in good working order.

The large Kindergarten schools fully maintain the favourable notice given in our former reports.

We now wish to call attention to a few defects, which should receive the special attention of careful teachers. One is the need of better preparation for the giving of lessons, especially in class-subjects, such as science and object-lessons. Another is indistinctness and often inarticulation in reading and speaking. We so often ask a pupil to repeat his answer, owing to the difficulty of making out what he has said. We know that both these defects are old-time troubles with teachers, but we are not less impressed with the importance of overcoming the difficulties; and we find on the latter point the British Education Department has lately issued a circular note calling general attention to the matter. As we indorse, from our own point of view, what is therein contained, we venture to quote a few extracts therefrom, which cannot fail to be of interest to teachers who are conscious of the defects complained of:—

The department holds that it is impossible to give sufficient individual practice in classes consisting of forty, fifty, or of even a greater number of children, or, indeed, any practice worthy of the name 'in the midst of confusion and clatter.' 'No answer to a question should be accepted from a child (unless he is conspicuously lacking in self-confidence) which is not clearly heard by every member of the class.' A practice full of profit to every member of a class, and to the teacher as well, is 'to make each in turn read exclusively to the ears of his comrades, and not as is usually the case to their eyes alone.' Teachers are advised that they will do best to divide reading-lessons into two separate parts, attention being continuously given, at the one time, chiefly to the matter read, and at the other, chiefly to the manner of reading. Finally, 'children should not usually be asked to read a passage aloud until they have had sufficient time to master its general meaning by silent study.'

Much of the success of any system of education depends on the complete staffing of the schools, on the selection of teachers, and on the inducement held out to them of obtaining promotion, of pursuing their education and training, and of maintaining their health and energies; for these inducements are great incentives to well-doing, and the chief means by which thorough interest in work is sustained. Speaking generally, the best interests of our teachers are carefully considered, and there exists a feeling of satisfaction with the administration, and a sense of justice done to the service. The instances in which teachers fail to obtain deserved promotion within a reasonable time are rare; and, on the other hand, there are very few cases in which teachers do not conscientiously perform their duties to the best of their ability. We think there is somewhat undue mental strain put upon our young teachers, who are engaged in their schools all the school day, and are required to attend instruction classes four hours a week, and, presumably, spend many more hours in preparation work. Besides this they have their household and social duties. In England it is now recognised by many of the chief provincial School Boards that pupil-teachers should be relieved from part of this work, and supernumerary pupil-teachers are appointed with this object. We are of opinion that a modified plan of this kind might commend itself to the Wellington Education Board, and we most respectfully suggest that the members should give due consideration to the matter. We think that when there are two or three pupil-teachers on the staff of a school, a supernumerary one should be allowed, who could relieve each of the others in turn from some portion of the class-work, giving them rest and affording them spare time for recuperating their energies, preparing lessons, and looking on at the work of other teachers. They would also act as relieving-teachers in case of absence. In large schools one such supernumerary might be allowed for every three pupil-teachers on the staff; and if this were done there would be no need of relieving-teachers in any school in which there were two pupil-teachers on the ordinary or unsupplemented staff. The effect of this suggestion would be to prevent undue mental pressure from over-work on young teachers. The gain to the service would be in the more vigorous teaching brought to bear on the classes, the reduction in the absence of sick-leave, and the freedom of action given to the head-teacher, who would be so much less hampered in his management. If this consideration were granted to pupil-teachers then it would be only reasonable for them to understand that at the completion of their year of service, or so soon after as they have