

TRAINING COLLEGE REPORT.

SIR,—

Normal School, Dunedin, 9th March, 1899.

I have much pleasure in presenting my annual report on the work of the Training College for the year 1898.

We enrolled fifty-eight students this year, of whom twenty-seven were pupil-teachers. I am glad to say that the health of the students was good; they attended regularly, and the attention they gave to their daily duties was very satisfactory. The following shows the enrolment for the year in detail:—

	Males.	Females.	Total.
Second-year students	2	10	12
First-year students	8	34	42
Number left during the year	1	3	4
Number in attendance at the close of the session ..	9	41	50

In looking over the work of the training-classes for the past fifteen years, the term during which I have been connected with the College, one cannot help noting with satisfaction the advance that has been made during that time in the literary status of the students. Fifteen years ago the senior division of the students was preparing for the matriculation examination and the junior for the E certificate; this year, on the other hand, at the close of the session the roll included three who had passed the M.A. degree, one the B.A., four the first section of the degree, and ten others who kept terms at the University.

To those interested in securing a highly qualified staff of teachers in our public schools it ought to be a source of gratification to know that candidates for the teaching profession show themselves, so far as their literary attainments are concerned, well qualified for the discharge of their responsible duties. The majority of the students in the College are being trained for primary-school work, but quite a number this year are professedly looking forward to positions in high schools. Evidently this class of students recognises the desirability of becoming acquainted with the principles of teaching as applied to the primary schools, and looks upon our course of training as an appropriate preparation for their future work. They attend all the classes in the College dealing with the technical subjects of instruction required in the public-school curriculum, and remain with us for a period of two years, with the view at the end of their term of obtaining a teacher's certificate.

I have very little to say with regard to the general aim and purpose of the training-classes beyond this: that I endeavour to bring under the notice of the students the many opportunities they have, in their lessons, of employing sound educative principles, and of applying them to every lesson they take in hand. I have put before them the best outlines of lessons that I am acquainted with, and I have illustrated them as fully as time would permit. I have asked them to carry them out according to my methods, but at the same time I have laid great stress on the necessity for throwing some individuality into the treatment of their lessons, and of showing some evidences of originality and research in methods of teaching, if they wish their work to be successful. I have not insisted on a strict adherence to the details of any particular method further than to emphasize, by carefully prepared notes of lessons, that the main factor in every good lesson consists in attention to detail in the preparation of the material and the plan of the lesson.

The greater part of the course is taken up with practice in teaching. Every student has to teach frequently before his fellow-students, and to undergo the ordeal of oral and written criticism; then, in his turn, he has an opportunity of seeing others teaching and of criticizing them, and obviously this twofold training in observation and experiment, given under a healthy spirit of emulation, ought to bring out their best efforts and increase their professional skill. The school-method class includes a large number of subjects, all of which have to be treated, first, by way of an exposition of the principles of the subject, and, secondly, in the form of a practical lesson. It is clear from this that to treat them all exhaustively would require more time than I can spare. I have sometimes to sacrifice the one form of lesson to make room for the other kind. I may say again that very little time is given to any direct preparation of the students to enable them to pass their annual examination, and I hope the annual results will not necessitate in the future any deviation from this course.

I give considerable attention to the teaching of reading. The students themselves require instruction in the art of reading. To this branch of work I devote some time, but necessarily I am chiefly concerned with methods of reading as they apply to the pupils and the class-room. Thirty criticisms and model lessons were given in the subject—one-half to the infant-room classes, and the others to lessons in Standards I., II., III., and IV. The lessons were designed to illustrate the most important elements of intelligent public-school reading. The lessons in grammar always require a great deal of time, and I think a good share of time should be given to them, as they afford a splendid field for the exercise of skill in oral exposition and in setting forth the difficulties that surround the most abstract and difficult of all the school subjects. Including composition, forty-eight lessons were given in all.

In geography our work concerned chiefly the requirements of the junior classes of the school, and dealt with the physical and political rather than with the mathematical branch of the subject. We have a very poor supply of apparatus for teaching astronomical geography, but if we can get a better set next year we shall give more attention to the mathematical geography of the Fifth and Sixth Standards.

Several conversational lessons were given this year, dealing with common plants, flowers, and other objects. They were very interesting and instructive.

For one whole month we were engaged with lessons on the science of numbers and its application to school arithmetic. The elementary or first lessons of the infant-room received most