

fewer than forty weeks. Unless there is some special cause, as an epidemic, every school should be opened at least four hundred times in a year. The closing of schools at odd times leads to much irregularity, and a large part of the bad attendance must be set down to this tendency to close schools at times other than what are authorised by the Board. One exception to the ordinary closing must be made, although in reality it ought to be counted as a school attendance. I refer to the annual railway excursion, which has grown into popularity in some of the country districts. The effect of a railway trip upon school-children even in a subject like geography is very marked, and it seems to me that the utmost good would result to the country were the Government to offer a free railway trip for one day a year to every pupil making four hundred or more attendances at school during the year.

The advanced classes at the Gisborne District High School continue to maintain a high standard of efficiency. This is the only school under the Board where work beyond the standard requirements is taken, other than advanced drawing at Napier Main and Port Ahuriri, and Euclid and algebra at Makotuku. The new regulations that have recently been issued by the Government, with the view of fostering the establishment of district high schools, make it possible for districts like Hastings, Woodville, Wairoa, and Dannevirke to have each a school approved by the Minister of Education as a district high school. Perhaps the Committees concerned will make an effort to obtain for their respective districts the fullest advantages offered by the regulations. The grants are so generous that Gisborne might easily double the attendance of pupils in the advanced classes by granting free scholarships to pupils in the district who have passed the Sixth Standard.

The Training School is continuing to show signs of progress. The arrangements that have been made for the instruction of the students in drawing at the Technical School promise the best of results, and it would be well if other arrangements could be made for instructing them in drill and calisthenics. Whatever the teachers in training learn during their year of special preparation is really for the benefit of the whole of the education district. It is a form of educational investment that is sure to bring in a satisfactory return.

The proposal to hold a synchronous examination in drawing for Standards III., IV., V., and VI. at the end of June or immediately preceding the midwinter vacation has been duly intimated to teachers. Certificates will be issued to all pupils who pass the first-grade requirements on payment of a small fee. Mr. Anderson, the master of the Technical School, is rendering me effective help in this new scheme of examination.

Before closing this report I would like to suggest to the Board that the time has arrived when the question of establishing a Technical School for Hawke's Bay might well be considered. The Act passed last year, known as the Manual and Technical Instruction Act, provides, under certain conditions, for the payment of a grant by the Government sufficient to erect the necessary buildings. For many years I have urged that increased provision should be made for the fostering of adaptive education, and the opportunity has come at last. A Technical School for the furtherance of art and science is of the utmost importance to the future of the district, and if two schools could be supplied, one at Napier and one at Gisborne, an immense impetus would be given to the furtherance of that kind of training such as environment and local needs might suggest. It is useless to expect teachers in the country to give instruction in science until their own training has been considered, and this can easily be done if Technical Schools are provided as suggested.

The Catholic schools are working with like earnestness and diligence as the Board schools, and each year there are encouraging signs of progress in the lower aspects of school training. Eight hundred and seventy-eight children were present in the six schools examined. My visits to the schools have been less frequent than to the Board schools, but the examinations have been carried out in the same way, and I have issued certificates to all pupils who passed Standard VI. under the Departmental regulations.

The Chairman, Education Board, Napier.

I have, &c.,

H. HILL.

MARLBOROUGH.

SIR,—

Blenheim, 11th March, 1901.

I have the honour to present my report on the public schools of the Education District of Marlborough for the year 1900, this being my tenth annual report.

The number of schools under the control of your Board at the end of the year 1900 was sixty-six. Two other small schools were open for a portion of the year, but, as unfortunately so frequently happens in those remote districts, they were closed through losing their teachers before the end of the year. Altogether there have been sixty-eight schools in operation during the year 1900. Last year there were sixty-one, showing an increase of seven.

The number of scholars on the rolls of the schools examined at the dates of the examinations was 2,125, an increase of twenty-six more than last year. Of this number, 609 were in preparatory classes, and seventy in Standard VII, leaving only 1,446 presented in Standards I. to VI. Of these, forty-four were absent at the date of the examination, leaving 1,402 who were present and examined. This is less by eleven than the number examined last year. The number of scholars who earned promotion this year was 1,254, or sixty-five more than the number passed in 1899. The percentage of passes for the district was therefore 89.3, which compares favourably with the percentage for the whole colony in 1899, which was 84.4.

Of the total number on the rolls, 59 per cent. passed Standards I. to VI. This also compares very well with the average for the whole colony as given in the Minister's twenty-third annual report (54.66). The failures amounted to 10.5 per cent. of the number examined, which may be regarded as highly satisfactory when compared with the results throughout the colony in 1899,