

prehension of them, in the place of the confused and useless smattering of half a dozen, which is about all that they can possibly retain under the present circumstances, at schools such as are here referred to.

Handwork has been recently added to the list of class-subjects, but, invaluable as that means of education would be if efficiently treated, something must be struck out of the syllabus before any great advantage can accrue from its introduction, which, moreover, would necessitate an expenditure in material and appliances that it will be difficult to provide for in the smaller districts without special assistance from the Department. For some years past the teachers of some of our smaller schools, as well as the mistress of the infant department in the Blenheim School, have made good use of the kindergarten material supplied to them, the latter being particularly zealous in the work; and I cannot refrain from once more urging upon the Board the completion of the infant-school by the erection of the eastern wing, and fitting it up as a proper kindergarten school. The furniture might be so arranged as to be easily removable, so as to allow of the room being used at certain hours for any classes in manual or technical instruction that may hereafter be established. It is high time that some movement in this direction should be made in Blenheim, where teachers of many branches of industrial art can be so easily found. On my visits to Wellington I have been struck with admiration, somewhat alloyed with a feeling approaching to envy, to see the abundant provision that has been made for this modern phase of popular education; and I feel sure that, at any rate, a small measure of assistance might reasonably be asked for towards the improvement of Marlborough in this direction.

The new regulations have now had a year's trial, and we shall no doubt soon hear from all parts of the colony to what extent the cause of education has benefited by them. With the view of ascertaining, as nearly as possible, the effect of these regulations upon the efficiency of the school work in this district, I took advantage of the provisions of clause 6, and examined exactly as heretofore the four upper standards myself; and, as stated above, I found in the whole district only twenty-four scholars passed that, in my opinion, were not quite fit to be promoted; and even this was partly due to the leniency of the regulations before referred to. I am decidedly of opinion that there is little danger of any less vigorous treatment of the subjects taught, or that any relaxation of the requirements of the examinations will follow from the granting of this liberty to the teachers. It may be some time before the general public will feel the same confidence, but that will come in time if the teachers continue to deserve the judgment which I unhesitatingly pronounce upon the general effect of the regulations in this district during the past year namely, that no depreciation, but rather some considerable improvement on the whole, has resulted from the adoption of the new system.

*Scholarships.*—In consequence of the establishment of a High School in Marlborough, it became necessary to abandon the old scholarship regulations, and fresh ones were prepared and submitted to the Department for the approval of the Minister. After considerable correspondence, and several alterations made to comply with the wishes of the authorities, the regulations were finally approved by the Minister. The chief change agreed upon was in the age-limit of candidates and in the subjects of the examination. There are now two classes of scholarships—namely, "town" and "country" scholarships; the former of the value of £10 and the latter £35 a year, both tenable for two years at the Marlborough High School. The age of candidates must not in future exceed thirteen years, and the basis of the examination will be the subjects prescribed for the Fifth Standard. Two scholarships awarded under the old regulations will continue to be held at Nelson College for the remainder of their term—that is, until December next, after which date no more scholarships will be held outside the district. In order to guard against any injustice to scholars who had been kept at school for a year or more in the hope of gaining a scholarship under the former regulations, the Minister was induced to sanction the retention, for this occasion only, of the former age-limit—namely, sixteen years. The number of scholarships that the Board was able to offer under the new conditions was five, three being town and two country scholarships. For these, nine schools sent up in all twenty candidates, with the result shown on Table 6. The father of the winner of one of the country scholarships, Mr. Charles White, with a generosity worthy of special remark, agreed to accept a town scholarship of £10 a year in place of a country one of £35, on condition that the Board would make up the amount thus set at liberty to £30, to afford three other pupils, who had qualified, to receive scholarships they could not otherwise have hoped for, as the age-limit would prevent their trying again next year.

It will be noticed that of the nine candidates who gained sufficient marks to qualify for a scholarship under the regulations—60 per cent. of the possible marks—as many as seven were sent up by the Blenheim Girls' School, the tenth on the list being also a pupil at the same school. This fact must be very gratifying to the teacher and to the Committee, while it must also be a matter of surprise and regret that the other large schools failed to secure even one of the eight scholarships actually awarded.

*Moral Training.*—It is a somewhat trite remark that the passing of children through the standards in the shortest possible time is not the sole or even the chief duty of the public school teacher; but, inasmuch as the system under which he works is secular, as well as free and compulsory, so much greater is the obligation resting upon him not only that the characters of his pupils should be influenced as far as possible by the inculcation of lessons having a sound moral application, but that his own character should be above reproach as much in the general tenor of his daily life as an ordinary member of society as in connection with the discharge of his duties inside the walls of the schoolroom. Happily, the day has gone by never to return when any person who had failed at other occupations was thought "good enough to teach a school," and when almost any kind of misconduct outside the school was regarded with indifference provided that the work of the school was not grossly neglected. I believe that the teachers in this district are fully