

INSPECTOR'S REPORT.

The following remarks have reference to the character of the papers sent in.

Latin.—The questions in declension were fairly well answered. Most of the pupils acquitted themselves creditably in the questions dealing with irregular verbs. The numerals were not very well known. Some of the examinees misunderstood the question on the comparison of adjectives. With a few exceptions the translation was carefully done.

French.—The results are not strong. The grammar questions were evidently beyond some of the pupils, and too many of the answers were of poor quality. The translations were better.

English, I.—"Macbeth": In this subject the candidates were more at home, and much of the work was of very fair quality. Several papers were of high merit in drawing the character of Macbeth. The paraphrasing was not so well done, although it supplies scope for the mind to dwell upon. Those who attempted the analysis did it well.

English, II.—"Westward Ho!" and the selections from Tennyson and Macaulay supplied plenty of scope to the general reader, and several of the candidates acquitted themselves excellently in "Westward Ho!" The general papers brought out wide contrasts among the candidates, and some of them obtained the mark "Good," or "Very good" in this subject.

Euclid.—Some of the papers in this subject were very good, and some very bad. As a whole, the results may be set down as very fair.

Algebra.—Seven pupils obtained satisfactory marks, and deserve special mention. Several of those who attempted the paper are very weak.

Arithmetic.—This subject seems to have been overlooked during the year, as the methods were defective, and poverty of thought is manifested. Mechanical questions were attempted, but little else.

Science.—The information was good, but illustrations were wanting, and those who did illustrate showed weakness. The drawing of illustrations as given in the text should be fostered in all scientific work. The text-book in use is an excellent one, and the pupils should be thoroughly prepared in this subject for the paper in biology in the Matriculation Examination.

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Inspector of Schools for Hawke's Bay.

MARLBOROUGH.

SIR,—

Blenheim, 20th February, 1902.

I have the honour to present the report of the Marlborough Education Board for the year ended 31st December, 1901.

BOARD.—At the commencement of the year the Board was composed of the Hon. W. D. H. Baillie, M.L.C., John Duncan, Alfred G. Fell, Alfred J. Litchfield, Richard McCallum, the Hon. C. H. Mills, William Benoni Parker, Joseph Henry Redwood, and Arthur Penrose Seymour. Mr. Mills, greatly to the regret of the Board, resigned his seat upon taking up his residence in Wellington, and John Clervaux Chaytor was elected to fill the vacancy, this being the first election under "The Education Boards Election Act, 1900." The members retiring by rotation in August were Messrs. Baillie, Chaytor, and Seymour. The two last named were re-elected, and Mr. W. H. Macey was elected in the place of the Hon. Captain Baillie. The rejection of this gentleman, who has been a member of this Board from its first election in 1877, came as a disagreeable surprise upon the Board and to the great majority of the public of Marlborough; and, although the gentleman who was elected to fill his seat is in every way well qualified for the position, the Board cannot but regret that the first act of the newly constituted School Committees' Association should have been the deliberate rejection, without any justifiable reason, of an old and well-tried public servant who has always, both on the Board and in his place in Parliament, done his utmost to promote the cause of education in Marlborough. The Board met thirteen times during the year, and the average attendance of members was the same as it was last year—viz., six.

AVERAGE ATTENDANCE.—The average attendance for the whole district for the year was 1,757, or 82.6 per cent. of the average roll-number. There can be little hope of any great or permanent improvement under the last (or any other) Attendance Act until the police are required to deal with breaches of that as they are with breaches of any other law, and the Board is glad to learn that some steps in that direction are contemplated by the Government.

SCHOOLS.—The number of schools open at the end of the year 1900 was sixty-six. Three of these—Elnslie Bay, Opuā Bay, and Ugbrooke—were closed, and three others opened—viz., Onahau, Richmond Brook, and Te Puru. Three schools were temporarily closed during the last quarter, so that there were sixty-three schools open at the end of December. Of this number twenty-five have an average attendance below eight, and belong to Grade 0. The absolute necessity for the existence of these schools has been repeatedly demonstrated, and the Board is aware that the allowance made to small schools under the Public-School Teachers' Salaries Act is, on the whole, a liberal one, but it cannot be said to provide a "living wage" to teachers of those below Grade 1. If the Government is convinced, as the Board is, that these small schools are necessary, some better provision should be made for them, or the Government should take the responsibility of closing them if it is of the contrary opinion.

While admitting that the Act has done much to ameliorate the condition of teachers all over the colony, and in all grades of schools except those in Grade 0, it is still, in the opinion of the Board, capable of amendment in several directions. The difficulties experienced by teachers of schools with less than forty in average attendance might be met somewhat in the manner prevailing formerly in Marlborough, where, at thirty, a "sewing-mistress" was allowed at £12 per annum; and, although the term "sewing-mistress" was not always appropriate, it enabled the Board to supply to such schools some assistance, of which they were, and are, greatly in need. There are nearly always to be found young persons who have passed through all the standards,