

total, 27. Schools under one teacher—Satisfactory, 33; fair, 26; inferior, 7: total, 66. Aided schools—Satisfactory, 9; fair, 5: total, 14. Infant schools—Satisfactory, 3.

In the eight Roman Catholic schools 1,112 children were presented in 1900, and 1,079 in 1901, showing a small decrease of thirty-three. The number presented in standards in 1900 was 656, of whom 558 passed; and in the past year, 1901, the number of standard children was 644, of whom 566 passed. These results tend to show that the efficiency of the schools is maintained. Improvement is in evidence also in the extent and quality of both standard and class work. In several of these schools elementary science, drill, and kindergarten occupations received more attention than formerly; and the teaching of arithmetic is much more satisfactory than it was in former years. Good reading, composition, and needlework are features of these schools; and very commendable order and control are met with.

The destruction of the Thorndon School buildings last year by fire, and of the Terrace School this year, caused much inconvenience for a time in the carrying-on of the work of these large schools; but it speaks well, I think, for our educational system and the Board's resources that the results of the examination of these schools show no falling-off, and thus testify to the efficiency of the teaching, the energy of the staffs, and the excellence of the management.

As, on the whole, there is no increase in attendance, the demands for increased school-space will necessarily be limited to certain localities, unless the Education Department insists on an increased supply of 200 cubic feet per child in all schools. I note also that a limit to the erection of small up-country schools appears to have been reached, at any rate until fresh settlement has been opened up. The Carterton School is for the most part becoming antiquated, and it is a question now whether it should remain in its present position. The Mount Cook Girls' and Lower Hutt school buildings, though long condemned, are still doing duty. The new Terrace buildings about to be erected and the Thorndon just completed will mark a new departure in improved designs. The alterations at Newtown and the improvements lately effected in several up-country schools will add considerably to the improved accommodation. The full floor-space of 12 square feet per child, with a height of 14 ft., has been allowed in these later structures; and it goes without saying that such extended space, as is now rightly insisted on by the Education Department, cannot be supplied without greater outlay per head than was formerly deemed sufficient. To my mind, it is of national importance that the schools, which are so much the homes of the youth of the colony, should be thoroughly sanitary, convenient, and tasteful in their furnishing, with plenty of playground, air-space, passages, ventilation, and lighting; and to provide these a liberal building grant will be necessary.

I am pleased to report that, as a whole, neither the standard nor the class work shows any falling-off in quality, and that there is a distinct improvement generally in the class-work of all the larger schools, and in that of many others, especially in grammar, word-knowledge, science, and geography. The strictures made last year with regard to the teaching of writing are still called for—the handwriting in many schools being defective in form and style, and giving no indications of being systematically taught. It is as true to-day as it was a quarter of a century ago that the frequent use of suitable mental exercises and the careful teaching of rapid and ready methods of reckoning are the surest ways to success in the teaching of arithmetic, and such work calls forth the best energies of the most skilful teacher. I have been hammering on this refractory subject for many years, and yet it is far from assuming the constructed shape I could desire. In much arithmetical work that is still accepted as satisfactory, because the answers are correct, the processes employed are not the simplest, nor do the modes of procedure show in detail a knowledge of ready methods. It is not in the extent of the programme, but in this readiness of methods that further improvement in this work should be looked for.

In many details of school-work marked improvement is apparent—such as in the order, discipline, desk drill, kindergarten paper-folding, and the substitution of plasticine for clay in modelling. Special features of the year are the organization of games, such as tennis and croquet, and the erection of flag-staffs in the playgrounds of many schools.

I am also very pleased to find greater attention being paid to the manners and behaviour of the children, a point to which I have alluded in special addresses in many schools. The devotion to duty by our best teachers is most commendable, and I feel sure a case has occurred during the past year in which one of our country teachers, the late Miss Elkin, of Wallaceville, might have prolonged her life had she been less conscientious and less self-sacrificing in the discharge of her duties.

During my term of office cadet corps have always been in existence in some schools of the district, and I may say they have always been encouraged by me. To illustrate this I will quote an extract from my report for 1878: "There is a well-trained cadet corps established in the Te Aro (Ghuznee Street) School. It is drilled by an officer from the Armed Constabulary Barracks, and is a credit to the school, the master (Mr. Holmes) serving as captain. The corps is efficient and attractive. The present champion rifle-shot was, as a boy, a member of the Te Aro Cadet Corps." For some time past I have advised the introduction of battalion drill and the encouragement of the formation of cadet corps in all schools sufficiently large, the equipment of these corps with proper light rifles, the appointment of officers, the dressing in uniforms, and the training of bugle bands. This was approved of at the time, and a capable officer (Mr. McDonald) appointed to carry out this arrangement. Subsequently the Board allowed the scheme to fall through. I am now pleased to find the Education Department has taken some such scheme in hand, and there is a prospect of the movement being a great success, for I am sure it will be, as it is in New South Wales, a help to the discipline in schools, an aid to the physical development of our young men, and a means whereby the military defences of the colony will be most effectively provided for. It is further satisfactory to find that the Board has reinstated Mr. McDonald in his proper position as officer in charge of our local corps.

The question of the training of young teachers is again before the minds of educational