

Some of the schools show excellent work, and the efforts made in original-design brushwork and advanced model are very suggestive as to the possibilities in the way of economic training in this direction.

All the students who completed their year's course of technical training at the Napier Training School have obtained appointments as teachers under the Board, and it is gratifying to find that they are doing well. The more one sees of the work of those teachers who have passed through a regular course of training and preparation the stronger grows the conviction that a period of training in the art and science of school-keeping is essential in the life-work of every teacher. A second year as a student at one of the university colleges would add immensely to the value of the preparation, and should anything be done in the way of extending the system of training young teachers for public-school work this aspect of the question should not be overlooked.

The science work in the schools lacks appliances to illustrate what is attempted in the way of preparation. The few diagrams in physiology and the illustrations in Murché's "Science Readers" are all that the children have to help them in the preparation of the syllabus work. The spirit of inquiry is sadly lacking in the school life generally, and the text-book rather than the book of nature is dealt with in the science training of the children. Here and there one finds an exception, and some fine specimens of plants, insects, and of native birds' eggs have been collected by some of the children in the bush districts. But individuality among children is far too little fostered, and too often one finds that the greatest dread of pupils is to put down their own thoughts. The book is taken as the standard, and originality of thought and of expression are seldom fostered in class preparation.

Drill for boys and girls has grown into popularity in the majority of schools, and in quite a number of them the boys excel in military drill, whilst the girls have club drill and calisthenic training of a type. But one thing appears to me as wanting in the physical training of girls, and that is deportment. Gracefulness in walking in the case of a woman is worth striving for, and this can easily be attained if attention is paid to this aspect of training during the calisthenic exercises.

Of the moral aspects of school life little need be said. Committees do a good deal in the way of supervising and visiting the schools to see that things are going on properly. There certainly is no lack of educational interest on the part of Committees, who quickly discover for themselves the efficiency or otherwise of their school. Assistance is readily given in the case of teachers who wish to carry out anything for the good of a school or a district, and the ignorant Committee-man is fast disappearing as a factor in the work of education.

The buildings that are the property of the Board are generally in good working order, the grounds are neatly kept, and the fences are in fair repair. The teachers' residences in a number of cases require some attention, but otherwise I do not anticipate that any large demands for repairs will be made by Committees during the current year.

The Chairman, Board of Education, Napier.

I have, &c.,

H. HILL.

#### MARLBOROUGH.

SIR,—

Blenheim, 20th January, 1902.

I have the honour to submit my eleventh annual report on the condition of primary education in the district.

The number of schools open during the year varies with every quarter. For that ending the 31st March sixty-one schools were in operation; for the June quarter, sixty-six; for the September quarter, sixty-five; and, for the December quarter, sixty-three. These fluctuations are caused by the temporary closing of small aided schools, due to the difficulty of obtaining teachers willing to accept situations in remote and dull localities for the very small remuneration obtainable. These constant changes, besides being, of course, injurious to the progress of the scholars, are exceedingly troublesome in the office, as it is frequently discovered that a school has been closed only by the absence of an attendance return at the end of a quarter. I suggest that in future the correspondents be required to give at least one month's notice of the closing or reopening of their schools. The total number of scholars on the rolls also necessarily varies with each quarter, and the report will refer to the numbers on the rolls of the schools at the date of the annual visit. This year the roll-number at the time referred to was 2,077, or forty-eight less than were returned in 1900. The decrease is due partly to the temporary closing of schools already mentioned, and partly to the success which has attended the newly established High School, the majority of whose pupils would probably have been attending some of our primary schools.

The following statement of the roll-numbers during the last ten years is interesting, though revealing the unsatisfactory truth that of late years there has been no increase, but rather a tendency towards a diminished school population. In the year 1890 the roll-number was 1,826; in 1891, 2,002; in 1892, 1,991; in 1893, 1,978; in 1894, 2,079; in 1895, 2,169; in 1896, 2,185; in 1897, 2,130; in 1898, 2,135; in 1899, 2,099; in 1900, 2,125; and, in 1901, 2,077. This roll-number was distributed amongst the several classes as follows: 58, or about 2·8 per cent., in Standard VII.; 167, or 8 per cent., in Standard VI.; 211, or 10 per cent., in Standard V.; 264, or 12 per cent., in Standard IV.; 283, or 13·6 per cent., in Standard III.; 257, or 12·4 per cent., in Standard II.; 240, or 11·5 per cent., in Standard I.; and 597, or 28·7 per cent., in the preparatory class. These proportions vary slightly from the corresponding figures last year, being 2 per cent. higher for Standard VI., 1 per cent. lower for Standard V., and the other classes being about  $\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. lower.

The number of scholars promoted in Standards I. to VI. was 1,276, or 61·5 per cent. of the roll-number and 92 per cent. of the number examined in those classes. The failures altogether amounted to 108 (or about 8 per cent. of the number examined), and were distributed as follows: Thirty-four, or nearly 21 per cent. of the number examined in Standard VI.; twelve, or nearly