

painting of the exterior of the buildings, and the Committees are supposed to attend to the painting or the distemping of the interior; but this they seldom do, and the result is that many of the buildings are very dirty within. It is possible that their dirty condition is not without casual connection with the epidemics from which we have suffered so much during recent years. We suggest that, when the painters are sent out to paint the buildings, they should be instructed to paint both the interior and the exterior of them. The men being on the spot, the additional cost would not be great; but even if it were that should not be set against the health of the children. It is mockery to teach the laws of health while in practice we infringe them all.

CLASSIFICATION OF THE CLASSES ABOVE STANDARD VI. ACCORDING TO THEIR GENERAL EFFICIENCY MARKS.

Weak, eight schools; fair, eighteen schools; satisfactory, twelve schools; good or very good, twenty-three schools.

The schools represented are all country schools. As you are aware, more than twenty of our best schools were not examined in any department except Standard VI.

In former reports we have discussed the question of providing more advanced education for those of our pupils who wish to proceed beyond Standard VI., but who either have no desire to enter upon the study of secondary work or live too remote from secondary schools to be able to attend them; and, as little has been done to supply what we consider a serious defect in our education system, we feel it our duty to return to it. What have we done, and what remains for us to do? We have increased the number of district high schools and made them all free. In every village in which an average attendance of not less than twelve ex-Standard VI. pupils can be maintained we have made provision for free higher primary and free secondary education; but, oddly enough, we have done nothing to provide similar free education for centres where scores and even hundreds of such pupils have equal claims to it and the same need for it. What has been done for the dozens in country villages cannot, we think, fairly be denied to the hundreds in Dunedin. We therefore urge upon the Board and the Department the claims of Dunedin to a school that shall provide for its children what is now provided for those of the smaller towns and larger villages of the district.

Special schools established in Dunedin and the larger villages can, however, do the educational work of the district only to a very limited extent, for they are inaccessible to the people who are the very backbone of the land—namely, those who are occupied in taming the wilderness and in compelling rock and river to yield up their treasure, and without whose labour the towns could not exist. In former reports we have set out with sufficient detail what, in our opinion, should be done to supply their needs, and we shall not repeat here what we have said there. If we wait till we can supply what is ideally excellent we shall have to wait a long time. Except under the influence of an inspiring teacher, it is no doubt true that when a boy has reached the top of his school he has reached a point where the stimulus of work is apt to be too feeble to be highly educative, and that when this point is reached he should be sent to a school in which higher aims would be set before him, and in which he would have to compete with pupils whose attainments and ability are equal to or greater than his own. But how if this is impracticable? Is more advanced education to be denied to the child because his circumstances make it impracticable for him to attend a school specially staffed for advanced instruction? It would, we hold, be saner policy to make the best of circumstances and do what is done elsewhere—namely, provide for advanced instruction in every school in which there is a demand for it, and make it worth the teacher's while to encourage his pupils to enter upon it. To the hungry child half a loaf is better than no bread at all.

In the majority of our schools a large amount of highly creditable work is done; and, if in this report we have dealt more with defects than with merits, it is because we feel that, if we mean to maintain a place in the van of the school world, we must keep a keen eye on defects, be unsatisfied with present attainment, and ever strive to make our reach exceed our grasp.

We have, &c.,

P. GOYEN,	} Inspectors.
W. S. FITZGERALD,	
C. R. RICHARDSON,	
C. R. BOSSENCE,	

The Secretary, Otago Education Board.

SOUTHLAND.

SIR,—

Education Office, Invercargill, 31st March, 1902.

We have the honour to present our report for the year ended the 31st December, 1901.

By way of introduction we may be allowed to make some remarks of a more or less general character on the work of primary education as carried on in this district. In casting up the elements of gain and loss, we believe that the balance inclines to the credit side. Good work continues to be done in the majority of the schools. The appointments made to the vacancies that occurred in the teaching staff during the year are in themselves a guarantee of a certain amount of progress in a definite direction. The ranks of the pupil-teachers, too, have been filled by young persons of proved capacity. The usefulness and attractiveness of a number of the schools have been enhanced, on the one hand by grants for appliances and apparatus, and on the other by an extension of the new subject of handwork. Improvements have been made in some of the school-grounds. In the school garden, however, we find an item that must be put to the negative side of the account, for at all except a very few schools—notably, Gibbston and Invercargill South—gardening appears to be a lost art.