

answering depends on good questioning. A good many of our teachers are now endeavouring to give this kind of training, not without encouraging success. I should be glad to find the interest of the head teachers of the larger schools in this matter more thoroughly roused.

In handling lessons in reading and explanation, teachers would do well to deliberately work out and adopt a general scheme or routine of treatment that could be advantageously followed in all ordinary circumstances. Pupil-teachers might be required to do the same. One rarely sees evidence of a thoughtful plan underlying the handling of lessons in this subject.

In the great majority of the schools the order and discipline are good, and in very few are they unsatisfactory. The best and highest test of discipline is the spirit of work, the steady earnest application shown by the pupils. Judged by this exacting test, our schools compare very favourably with any of which I have had experience. Referring to this, Mr. Purdie says, "It is pleasing to note the very large number of pupils in our schools who put forth serious effort in dealing with their school work. It may with safety be said that the number of pupils who give evidence of possessing a good spirit of work has very greatly increased of late years." This is, I believe, true of the whole education district, and I know of nothing that reflects greater credit on the teachers as a body than this notable improvement in discipline in the best sense of the term.

All the Inspectors testify to the zeal and fidelity of the great majority of teachers of all grades. Their duties are arduous and trying, and demand for their skilful performance a happy mixture of qualities of mind and temperament that is not of every-day occurrence. Considering the difficulties of their work and the heavy demands on their mental and physical energies, we can feel assured that, in spite of some inspectorial grumbling and hammering at what may be thought lofty ideals, they are doing good service to the community, and striving with more or less success to give us of their best.

I have, &c.,

The Secretary, Auckland Education Board.

D. PETRIE, M.A., Chief Inspector.

TARANAKI.

SIR,—

Board of Education, New Plymouth, 22nd April, 1902.

I have the honour to submit my report for the year ending the 31st December, 1901.

At the close of the year sixty-six schools were open. Tongaporutu was examined, but was closed shortly afterwards. The Tutatawa School and the half-time school at Purangi were opened for the first time, but only the former was visited. In all, sixty-five schools were examined, and the following table shows the summary of examination results:—

Classes.				Number on Roll.	Present.	Passed.	Average Age of Pupils in each Class.	
							Yrs.	mos.
Above Standard VI.	...	...	...	54	52	...	15	2
Standard VI.	...	...	...	181	173	126	14	1
" V.	...	...	...	397	379	270	13	8
" IV.	...	...	...	527	507	362	12	7
" III.	...	...	...	566	549	422	11	6
" II.	...	...	...	603	582	475	10	6
" I.	...	...	...	540	510	441	9	2
Preparatory	...	...	...	1,468	...	...	...	...
Totals	...	...	...	4,336	2,752	2,096	12	4*

* Mean of average age.

The table has been computed somewhat differently from preceding years. Pupils above Standard VI. are included among those present, and their ages are considered in making out the return of average ages. This accounts for the apparent increase in the mean of the average age—from eleven years eleven months in 1900 to twelve years four months—whereas for Standards I. to VI. it is the same. A pleasing feature is a further increase in the number of pupils who are remaining in the higher classes, the increases during the year being—above Standard VI., 45 per cent.; in Standard VI., 22 per cent.; and in Standard V., 26 per cent. Comparing the figures for 1901 with those in Mr. Murray's last report—1894—I find the above classes have increased as follows: Above Standard VI., 980 per cent.; Standard VI., 151 per cent.; Standard V., 89 per cent. As regards those above Standard VI., the figures imply, of course, that the class was practically non-existent in 1894, there being only five pupils for the whole district.

This comparison, which covers the period during which the dairying industry has been maturing in the principal dairying district in New Zealand, seems to me to have an important bearing on a much-discussed question—the effects of the industry on the children of the district where it is carried on. I am afraid, however, I stand alone among the Inspectors in even hinting that the dark cloud of child-labour is not so dark as it is painted, and that it has a silver lining; but after seven years in Taranaki I may be allowed to know a little about the subject. I have yet to be convinced that an industry that here, at any rate, has lifted the parents from positions of penury and want to positions of comparative affluence has not proved beneficial to the children, who are now kept longer at school, and sent more regularly. I am not shutting my eyes to the existing evils, but venture to assert that to the question there may be another side differing somewhat from