

It would be but the needless repetition of past reports to go into details over the defects discovered at our inspection visits. The average teacher still continues to do average work, the good teacher still strives to excel, while the very poor and lazy teachers give us no small anxiety in determining whether they should or should not, and when they should, be asked to seek another calling. The isolation of many of our teachers has frequently been brought home to us, and we have pondered over the question, how best to prevent them from falling into depression of spirits and mechanical routine in work, and how to kindle their enthusiasm by contact with a crowd of fellow-workers all striving for the same goal. We have also more than once had the question borne in on us whether it would not be for the benefit of education and for the good of certain teachers who are out of touch with their district, or have fallen into mechanical ways, if the Education Board had the power of effecting suitable transfers. This power could be easily limited or defined so as to preclude any tyrannous dealing, and thus exerted would prevent future trouble and ill.

We shall not enter into detail over our observations at the examination visits. Each school has been faithfully commented on, and we shall trust to these reports and to means adverted to in another place to work any wished-for changes next year. As is to be expected, the number on the examination rolls continues to rise, the increase this year over last being 483. The preparatory classes are larger by 238, and Standard VI. by 104. The average age of the standards continues to decrease. For the first time that of Standard VI. has fallen below fourteen years. Five hundred and ninety-nine pupils, each over eight years of age, were not presented in any standard, but in most cases satisfactory reasons were given. The table attached will give all the usual information about the standards.

Fifty-nine pupil-teachers presented themselves at the annual examination in June. Of these sixteen failed. Now that the Board has staffed its schools in accordance with the new scale, and has adopted a resolution stating that henceforth pupil-teachers will be allowed to remain in the school of their first appointment as long as possible, we hope to see better results in their work generally, and more easily to be able to sheet home deserved blame for neglect of their supervision and training. We are eagerly looking forward to the day when one scheme of training will rule the pupil-teachers of the colony, and when their period of apprenticeship will finish with a year or two spent in a well equipped training-college. As that day is still somewhat distant, we hope, before another year is out, to elaborate a scheme by which, taking advantage of the main district high schools in the district, our pupil-teachers will receive a somewhat better training than heretofore. In spite, however, of all drawbacks, we believe the pupil-teachers of our district will compare favourably with those of any other Board.

The annual examination for scholarships took place in December. Thirty-six candidates sat for the senior and thirty-two for the junior. The work done and the percentages gained by the seniors will compare favourably with those of any previous year; the work of the juniors, on the other hand, showed a falling-off. With the increase in the staffing and efficiency of our district high schools, and with the tuition at these free, the whole question of scholarships will sooner or later require revision.

II. *District High Schools.*—Two district high schools (Wanganui and Hawera) were at work during the whole year. At the former twenty-three pupils who had passed Standard VI. and at the latter eighteen sat for the examination prescribed. Since the examination Wanganui has reopened with some eighty pupils, and Hawera with close on forty. Marton District High School is now in full swing with some thirty pupils, and Feilding has about fifteen in high-school classes. The new District High School of Palmerston promises to eclipse all the others, nearly ninety high-school pupils being in daily attendance. Five district high schools with such attendances of ex-Standard VI. pupils speak volumes for the interest in education taken by the people of our district. We need not point out that these schools add very considerably to our duties. Looking ahead, we confess that we have no fears for the future of any of these schools. We have to thank the Board for the trouble taken in selecting the special assistants. In their hands we are assured that the pupils will be carefully and efficiently trained, and that their schools will take no mean place in the ranks of the colonial institutions of this kind. We have held various conferences with them all, and have discussed such topics as: Aim of a district high school; basis of its time-table; how far should it follow the traditional lines of the secondary schools; what languages should be taught; importance of English, &c. By means of these discussions we were enabled to come to a common understanding as to aim and work and yet leave room for the individuality of each teacher and the special needs of his district. In future conferences, with experience to guide us, we shall still further define both aim and work.

At Palmerston the high-school classes are worked in the closest connection with the technical. In Wanganui and Hawera we shall take care to make the connection even closer. In our opinion, all the scholastic institutions of the colony should be so correlated and co-ordinated that as little lapping as possible will take place, and each grade will be bound to all others by many links. We are hoping for the day when the idea that a boy or girl having passed all the standards has finished his education will be rooted from the minds of the community, and will be supplanted by this other, that till a boy or girl of our towns has passed sixteen or seventeen his education should continue. The aim of education should embrace the three ends—the good man, the good citizen, and the good workman; and, as the primary schools can but prepare the way for attaining these, technical and secondary schools should be called on to perfect their work.

III. *Changing Conditions and Relations.*—The new responsibility laid on teachers by the last syllabus carries with it certain implications which have not yet been grasped in their fullness. It implies on the one hand that teachers are judged competent to promote or withhold their pupils till Standard VI. is reached, and that the Inspector is much less an examiner than a supervisor, and is to allow for the individuality of the teacher and the special circumstances of the school