

in this method of computation. In the early part of the year the teachers were hampered by the difficulty of obtaining the books required under the new code, and the want of a good series of geographical Readers, covering the programme set forth for the higher standards, was sadly felt. A test is being made with slate-cloth, with a view to introducing it as a dado, thus enabling the children to obtain more practice in blackboard drawing. Long desks are largely used in our schools. They are apparently banished from the schools of the United States, in favour of the single desk, which gives more freedom for adaptation to the pupil, and, further, is an aid to discipline. A regulation in force in Ontario runs: "Not more than two pupils should sit at one desk, but single-seated desks are preferable." The Board is recommended to consider the advisability of providing only dual or single desks in future. Inaccuracy or omission in the register was again observed a sufficient number of times to merit a reference to the caution contained in my report of last year. Further, when a new teacher finds the register incomplete he should repair the omission as far as possible. A number of the schoolrooms would be rendered more attractive to the children by the application to the interior of a coat of light-blue paint.

**THE WINTER SCHOOL.**—During the inspection visits it was frequently observed that teachers were hampered in their efforts to cope with the latest modifications of the syllabus by not knowing exactly where to begin geography Course A, or nature-study, or how to correlate handwork with other subjects. Singing also was a source of trouble to those members of the staff who had not had the advantage of training. As many of the teachers are situated in remote localities where they have little opportunity to compare notes, and where they cannot well attend Saturday classes, it was thought best to organize a winter school. The Department generously granted railway facilities, material, and capitation, thus removing financial difficulties. Messrs. Hogben, Isaac, Strong, and Sturrock, and Miss Ellerbeck lent valuable aid, the subjects treated being: The mathematical geography of the new syllabus, plasticine-modelling, and carton-work, science for country schools, singing, brush and blackboard drawing, chemistry, and history. A week in July was given to this work, and almost every teacher in the district was present, both from public and private schools. There is no doubt that the gathering succeeded in securing the objects desired, and enabled the teachers to attack their work with new spirit. I expect the results to show more clearly in 1906 than in 1905.

**EXAMINATION.**—Sixty public and six private schools were examined. Three of latter are in the Sounds, and, in default of a teacher with a proficiency certificate, were operating with teachers not sufficiently qualified for approval by the Board. Promotions in schools under uncertificated teachers were determined by me; but elsewhere, even when the pupils were examined, the responsibility for classification was thrown on the head teacher.

It is now necessary for the teacher to give special thought to his examinations, using them as far as possible to indicate to the pupil his progress and defect, as well as to satisfy his own inquiry into the amount of the objects of study assimilated, or his success in educating-faculty. The crusade against the Inspector's examination is not an indication that examination is in itself bad, but that as a means of deciding individual results it is insufficient. When reinforced by the teacher's daily knowledge of the pupil, it affords both teacher and pupil a fair summary of the work done, and, viewed simply as a collateral test, added to the teacher's general opinion of the standing of the pupil, is of great importance. Provided their lessons are taken to heart, examinations are indirectly a means of teaching, for they reveal weakness and partiality of assimilation, and give opportunity for useful revision and summation. They show the pupil what he has learnt, what he can do; they reveal talent, and provide a suitable halting-place for the stimulation of honour, industry, and neatness; if fairly frequent, they afford a good incentive. The present system, throwing as it does the responsibility for the classification of his pupils on the teacher, does not make his work lighter; but it leaves him more free to adopt what his experience and intelligence tell him most suits the individual child. The more earnest the teacher, the more frequent, searching, instructive, and stimulating his examinations will be. As the Inspector will occupy himself in discovering the average rather than individual results, and in gauging methods, much of his testing will be by sample. It is therefore the more needful that the teacher preserve the records of his examinations, for in them will be found the necessary reference to individual results that the present system has not done away with, but for which it has shifted the responsibility.

In general, I was satisfied with the attainment of the Convent schools. The girls' school narrowly escaped being classified with those described as "good." The total enrolment at private schools was 167—present 159.

At times of examination there were 1,913 children on the rolls of the public schools. In 1904 there were 1,935. The number present at examination was 1,833, as compared with 1,835 of the previous year. In 1904 only twenty-seven schools had all the children present on the date of the Inspector's visit. This year there were thirty-four.

The larger schools show considerable improvement in attendance, but there is still need of better things—*e.g.*, while the Dunedin and Oamaru schools secure 90 per cent. of attendance, Blenheim Boys has only 81 per cent., and Blenheim Girls 84 per cent. The whole district has an average of 84·3 per cent., which is an improvement on the 1904 record, but Otago in 1904 averaged 88·6 per cent. Teachers can do much to stimulate attendance. Several times I discovered that attendance certificates, though earned, had not been applied for. The law in Ontario bears somewhat heavier on truancy than it does in New Zealand. There, any one employing a child under fourteen years of age during school hours is liable to a penalty of 20 dollars, while parents and guardians, if neglectful in this matter, are liable to a fine of not less than 5 dollars, nor more than 20 dollars. In one of our schools, although four children lived within half a mile, along a good road, the register recorded on six days of the first quarter of 1905—"Wet day; no school." The United States Ambassador, Mr. Choate, speaking at Oxford, said that education was the chief industry of the United States. If a country where the farming interest is so great values education thus much, and has on account of its predilection come to the front, surely there is need for public opinion in districts of low attendance to show itself in an attempt to remove what can only be regarded as a reproach. By contrast, it is worthy of note that at Cullensville two pupils have attained seven years without intermission.