

of what constitutes a good picture, combined with occasional visits to the Picture Gallery, would increase the interest in pictures, and go far to create such interest in this institution as would bear fruit later on. We should also like to see instituted some scheme by which schools might exchange pictures for limited periods.

In physical instruction, drawing, and needlework the standard of work has been well maintained, and the order, discipline, and tone of the schools throughout the district are good.

During the year the staffs of the city and suburban schools have been called upon to assist with their pupils at several functions that have no direct bearing on the life of the schools. While to some extent indirect benefit may result to pupils participating in outside functions, there is not the slightest doubt that considerable interference with the ordinary work of the schools is experienced, and the feeling that the schools are being exploited to some extent is on the increase. We are of opinion that this tendency must be resisted or serious harm will result.

C. R. RICHARDSON,
C. R. ROSSENCE,
J. R. DON,
J. ROBERTSON.

} Inspectors.

The Chairman, Otago Education Board.

SOUTHLAND.

SIR,—

Education Office, Invercargill, 31st March, 1914.

We have the honour to submit our report on the schools of the district for the year ended 31st December, 1913.

Classification, Roll, &c.—The following information as to number on roll, classification, and ages of the pupils in the schools of the district is extracted from the Inspectors' returns :—

Classes.					Number on Roll.	Present at the Annual Examination.	Average Age of the Pupils in each Class.
							Yrs. mos.
Standard VII	...	...	...	...	43	41	14 8
" VI	...	...	...	...	660	651	13 11
" V	...	...	...	...	1,070	1,039	13 0
" IV	...	...	...	...	1,200	1,164	12 1
" III	...	...	...	...	1,363	1,321	11 2
" II	...	...	...	...	1,376	1,334	10 1
" I	...	...	...	...	1,440	1,391	8 11
Preparatory	...	...	...	...	4,138	3,852	6 10
Totals	...	...	...	...	11,290	10,793	9 7*

* Mean of average age.

All these schools were paid an announced visit during the year; about one-half of the number an unannounced or surprise visit. Fortunately, we were not called upon very frequently to make special reports entailing long journeys, and the consequent curtailment of the time at our disposal for the work of inspection. Under the rearrangement of duties coincident with Mr. Neill's retirement we were relieved from supervision of the technical day and evening classes, but were deprived of the energetic assistance of Mr. McCaw in the management of the manual training and teachers' Saturday classes. The work of inspection, too, has practically to be suspended during the course of the special fortnight's training for teachers in physical drill, while the preparation of a new set of regulations for the Board entailed a vast amount of labour not only on the Inspectors and Secretary, but even on the staff of the Board itself. It is to be hoped that these regulations so far as they affect teachers will have careful attention; already in the course of our work of inspection we have found teachers whose study of them seemed to have been, to say the least of it, rather superficial.

Grounds, &c.—The steady growth of population in Invercargill emphasizes the necessity of providing school-sites of sufficient area before the increase in cost renders such a course almost impracticable. In this connexion we would urge the Board to acquire in each instance where possible an area of at least 5 acres for school purposes. Hygienic considerations indicate this as the proper course, whilst the educational call for smaller classes and more adult teachers clearly points to an increase of accommodation which will encroach unduly on playing-areas unless liberal provision is made in this direction beforehand.

We venture to repeat the hope expressed in last year's report that before long there may be a general movement for the beautifying of school grounds. The resolution of the Board to award prizes for the best work done in connexion with school gardens should give the movement a decided fillip, since the amounts thus gained, it has been stipulated, are to be expended under Mr. Moodie's direction in planting ornamental trees or shrubs or otherwise beautifying the grounds of the fortunate schools. We sincerely trust that the movement thus initiated may spread