

100 in S1 had dwindled to 47·8 in the Board schools, but in the Catholic it was 88 when the December examinations were held. In other words, 52·2 pupils in every 100 quit the public schools before passing the Sixth Standard, and only 12 per cent. quit the Catholic schools. Thus, although 3·4 per cent. more pupils were in standard classes in the Board schools, only 15·6 per cent. of the total children belonged to the two highest classes, whilst there were 18·1 per cent. in similar classes in the Catholic schools.

The general efficiency of the schools may be gathered by reference to the tables attached to this report [not printed], which give the total number of pupils at each school, the special certificates gained, and other information that is suggestive of the general state of a school. The Committee of each school district receives one or more special reports during the year following an Inspector's visit, and it is not necessary to particularize on the methods of teaching or on the character and quality of the instruction in detail.* The widening of the courses of instruction and the issue of suggestions for courses in geography—junior and senior—nature-study, elementary science, elementary home science, singing, and needlework have temporarily added to the difficulties and anxieties of many teachers who are isolated and have little opportunity of meeting other teachers. But during the year we have met the teachers in various centres and explained in general terms what is expected of them under the regulations. We are satisfied that when the full requirements have been mastered teachers will find the "Notes and Suggestions" extending from page 34 of the regulations under "Inspection and Syllabus of Instruction" of great help in their work. The past year has hardly sufficed to warrant us to express our full judgment on what is likely to be the outcome of the amended syllabus of instruction that became operative at the beginning of the year. This much, however, can be said, that the opportunity is now given for bringing out the best qualities of a teacher. The individuality of every teacher has a chance of making itself felt in the work of every school. New ideas can be developed and new aims pursued. Whether in town or country the teacher has a wide field to carry on his work, and our next visits of inspection will enable us to see how far the regulations have been studied and whether the wider freedom is likely to be of benefit to the children as a whole.

Physical Culture.—The old form of school drill has given place to the new form of physical training introduced into the schools for the first time less than two years ago. The methods of instruction are controlled by the Director of Physical Education acting through his assistants, who visit the schools from time to time. A good deal of attention is given to physical training, and the daily lesson is fully appreciated by boys and girls alike, and even by a majority of teachers. In his annual report the Director suggests the desirability of extending the time for physical instruction even at the sacrifice of important subjects in the school curriculum. This, we fear, is the usual way of the specialist. Although differing on the point, we acknowledge with pleasure a satisfactory improvement in the physique of the children, and suggest that at a time like the present a revival of cadet drill and shooting for all boys in the Sixth Standard would not be out of place. Physical training is carried on in all schools without exception, Catholic and Board alike. Instead of extending the time of instruction in the case of children, we are of the opinion that a week in camp every alternate year for all adult teachers would be beneficial, as the knowledge gained could be at once carried into the schools to vitalize the exercises of previous years.

In concluding our report we would like to suggest one or two matters of considerable importance connected with school buildings and furnishings:—

1. In the erection of new schools provision should be made for "block floors" instead of the present flooring. Such floors are noiseless, and they are in general use in Canada and in the Home schools.

2. As our climatic conditions are widely different from those at Home, it is suggested that provision be made for schoolrooms to open along the whole of one side. Such a plan would immensely improve the working-conditions in a school.

3. The Education Department has issued from time to time some valuable pictures and illustrations of the forest flora of this country, also pictures of great events in history, &c., and it is suggested that application be made for full supplies of these in anticipation of the opening of new schools. Every school should be supplied with full sets, and teachers and Committees should be encouraged to have them mounted.

4. We recommend that a small sum, not exceeding £1 a year, be given to each head teacher for the purchase of some special apparatus or illustrations required in class-teaching, and for which no provision has been made by the Board. Some useful apparatus would be provided in this way. The plan is adopted in all London schools. The Director of Manual Instruction could report on the way the grant has been expended.

We are, &c.,

H. HILL, Senior Inspector.

D. A. STRACHAN, Inspector.

The Chairman, Hawke's Bay Education Board.

MARLBOROUGH.

SIR,—

Education Office, Blenheim, March, 1915.

I have the honour to submit a general report on the schools of this district for the year 1914.

At the end of the year the number of schools in operation was ninety-two. In addition four private schools, with a roll of 232, were inspected during the year.

* A special report dealing with subjects of instruction is being issued for the information of teachers only.