

the condition of the school surroundings reflects great credit on the Committees and teachers, but in a few districts we find the Committees apathetic in matters affecting the welfare of the children. On the whole the schoolrooms are kept very clean and tidy. Some of them are well supplied with suitable pictures, but in many the walls are quite bare, and a strenuous effort should be made to remedy this defect.

Pupil-teachers.—One of the effects of free places at the high schools has been to increase the number of matriculated candidates for pupil-teacherships. At the completion of their course entrance to the training college is gained through partial D, consequently the necessary course of study is by no means exacting, especially as it is relieved by drawing and physical-instruction classes, which are in the nature of recreative exercises. We regret that wiser counsel does not prevail in the case of those young people who, though at a critical age, are aided and abetted in the unwise course of taking university classes during the years of their pupil-teacher-ship—too frequently with ill effect upon the health, and at all times with the tendency to detach themselves from the work of the school, and expend energy in work that is provided for later in their training, and which, though no part of the pupil-teacher course, has been used to discredit the system. We are of opinion that the pupil-teacher course should be such as gives ample opportunities for rest and recreation, and this it does, especially as most of the youths are well on to partial D on their appointments, and the requirements can well be met without strain or other ill effects.

Miscellaneous.—Board's regulations: We frequently find teachers not as conversant with the Board's regulations as is necessary, and we consider it desirable that not only during their course of training, but also subsequently, means should be adopted to secure familiarity with the regulations under which our schools are to be conducted.

Educational literature: There appears to be prevalent the wrong impression that possession of a certificate obviates the necessity for further study. As a consequence too seldom do we find teachers well versed and up to date in educational literature, or imbued with the idea that the knowledge of the art of teaching obtained during their comparatively short period of training only enabled them to advance but a few steps out of the dark, and that they are yet only teachers in the making who require not only experience, but also effort directed by the master minds of education.

We cannot allow this report to pass without reference to the excellent patriotic work done by the children and the teachers—work which shows a fine spirit and is deserving of the highest praise. As a practical lesson in civics it cannot be surpassed, and it also affords evidence of the interest taken by the teachers in the welfare of the children both in and out of school. This interest is also shown by many teachers, who willingly give much of their spare time to instruction in and supervision of such organized games as cricket, tennis, football, hockey, &c.

We have, &c.,
T. R. FLEMING,
C. K. BOSSENCE,
J. R. DON,
M. J. LYNKEY, } Inspectors.

The Director of Education, Wellington.

SOUTHLAND.

Invercargill, 26th March, 1918.

SIR,— We have the honour to submit our report on the schools of Southland for the year ended 31st December, 1917.

The following table gives information as to number on the rolls, classification, and ages of the pupils attending the public schools of the district:—

Class.	Number on Roll.	Present at Annual Examination.	Average Age of the Pupils in every Class.
			Yrs. mos.
Standard VII	15	13	14 2
" VI	769	743	13 10
" V	1,203	1,165	12 11
" IV	1,329	1,287	12 1
" III	1,436	1,400	11 2
" II	1,538	1,476	9 11
" I	1,638	1,578	8 11
Preparatory	4,153	3,912	6 9
Totals	12,081	11,574	11 3*

* Mean of average age.

So far as attendance goes the year's record as regards a good many schools is anything but satisfactory, although the annual statistics show an increase on last year's figures. Southland achieved unenviable notoriety in the diphtheria epidemic of 1917, the number of cases in the district being larger than in any other in proportion to population. This led to wholesale