

give sentences to be parsed and composition to be written if no attempt be afterwards made to correct such exercises, point out the mistakes, and cause correct copies of the same to be made. In several instances I have noticed that teachers expect too much way in the way of home lessons. It would be far better to give short lessons, and insist on their being properly prepared.

EXTRA WORK.—The only school that attempted any work beyond what is prescribed by the Government standards was East Christchurch. The elder boys have made some progress in Latin, algebra, and geometry.

Schedule showing condition of schools inspected is appended.

John Inglis, Esq.,

Chairman, North Canterbury Education Board.

I have, &c.,

W. L. EDGE, M.A.

SOUTH CANTERBURY.

SIR,—

Education Office, Timaru, May, 1879.

I have the honor to submit my general report for that part of the year ending December 31st, 1878, during which I have held office under your Board.

I entered on my duties at the date of my appointment, July 1st, and it was at once evident that the exceptionally pressing work of organizing the new education district would prevent much active inspection of the well-established schools before the end of the year. My attention has therefore been mainly devoted to the organizing and executive work of the office, and to fostering the formation of new school districts and the erection of schools. In the work of inspection not much has been done. The South Canterbury District had been previously under my immediate inspection as a part of the Canterbury District, and, in continuing the work of inspection under the new Board, all schools urgently requiring inspection were visited before the end of the year.

The routine of examination pursued was the same as that previously in force under the Canterbury Board, and I have to report very little change in the results attained. Our schools are, comparatively speaking, efficiently officered, and the work done will probably compare favourably with any produced in similar schools in New Zealand. At the same time, I am far from resting satisfied with the results already produced. Two main defects are perceptible in a greater or less degree in almost all our schools. They are, a lack of thorough, easy discipline, and a want of continuity, firmness, and method in the teaching. Both defects are attributable to a want of training in the teachers. To try, in some measure, to remedy these defects will be one of my principal works for the current year. It has long been evident that most of our district masters and untrained teachers required something more than periodical inspection of their schools, and it has often been the expressed wish of teachers that the Inspector should spend a day or two in their schools and practically demonstrate the means of improvement recommended in method of teaching and in organization. The £80 "training grant" given by the department has been supplemented by the Board, and a certificated master has been engaged, who will be available, in pressing cases, for temporary service as master, and who at other times will so relieve me of office work that I shall be able to give the material help to teachers so long shown to be necessary.

Another matter claiming the best attention of the Board is the inefficient training and education obtained by our pupil-teachers. A considerable number of these young persons are now in the service of the Board, and, apart from the question of ultimate benefit to the Board and the profession, they may fairly demand an effective training in return for their term of service. The employment of pupil-teachers, however, appears to be generally looked upon as a happy means of disposing of the drudgery of teaching the lower classes, and as, even in this duty, they receive comparatively little training for their work, the infant classes are generally deplorably backward, and depressed by an utter want of tone; and the pupil-teachers themselves, at the expiration of their term, are quite unfit for responsible positions, and possess very little knowledge of their profession. At a recent examination, in answer to a question on school management, I was informed that a first-year pupil-teacher should do little more than "fill ink-wells, fetch slates and books, and tell who speaks." I regret that I did not ascertain this candidate's views on the duties of senior pupil-teachers. While such ideas prevail there is ample work for an organizing Inspector. The Board has, in its recent regulations, made the most liberal provision for the training and remuneration of pupil-teachers, and will be justified in expecting commensurate results.

The institution of a separate Board for the South Canterbury District has facilitated the formation of many school districts necessitated by the rapid development of the country. At the end of the year 1878, 17 schools were at work in the education district. By the end of the current year 31 schools should be in active operation. The Board has made great efforts, with the means at its disposal, to meet all pressing demands for school-buildings, and the work of subsequent years should be comparatively easy.

All the new schools will be well supplied with furniture and apparatus of the most suitable description. The schools already established are in most cases well furnished. In one respect, however, there is a deplorable exception. In none of our larger schools has any attempt been made to properly arrange and furnish the infant departments. This defect has been brought prominently forward, and provision has been made for properly furnishing and organizing the infant departments in all cases. To supply them with suitable apparatus will be a more difficult matter, as our principal school stationers appear to have entirely overlooked infant-school requirements. The school grounds and premises generally are, in many cases, far from presenting that neat, clean, and well-kept appearance that is essential to the proper training of the children. It is no uncommon thing to find dirty grounds and petty damages to buildings and apparatus standing in the same condition at two or more visits to a school, or leading, in the course of months, to further serious damage, causing considerable outlay. The same excuse is invariably given by Committees—"We have no funds." It is abundantly evident that the incidentals