

regard to some districts, more particularly the remoter bush settlements, yet in other localities in the Taranaki District I met men who seemed quite able and willing to do all that is wanted of a School Committee, and who complained of the state of tutelage in which they had been kept by the Board. I felt it to be my duty, therefore, to impress upon the members of the Board the advisability of using greater efforts to encourage the parents and the Committees elected by them to take an interest in school matters, by giving more effect to their views and representations, and by intrusting them with the expenditure of money on local requirements.

FUNDS.—The sparseness of the population, and the circumstance that so much of the settlement is in the bush, render necessary the maintenance of a comparatively large number of very small schools. In the Town of New Plymouth, instead of one large school, there are four small ones. The very large number of small schools, and the entire absence of schools having a large or even a medium attendance, press very hard upon the Board's funds, and render it necessary to exercise very rigid economy, as well as to keep the teachers' salaries at very low rates. The Board, in order to pay even the very small salaries at present received, has found it necessary to make use of a portion of the Committees' grant of 10s. for the purpose. The sudden withdrawal of this money from salaries, in order to give it to Committees to spend on other objects, would press very hard upon the already poorly-paid teachers. The proposed establishment of a large school in New Plymouth, and the gradually-increasing attendance, will, I am in hopes, place the Board in a better pecuniary position in the course of a short time.

As a result of my visit and inquiries, I submit the following recommendations:—

1. **SCHOOL INSPECTION.**—The very small number of schools would not warrant the employment all the year round of a thoroughly competent Inspector of Schools. You have sanctioned the payment of £200 a year as inspection subsidy to Taranaki District, but the gentleman performing the duty receives only £100 a year, and the other £100 is therefore still available. I recommend that this sum be offered to the Board for the purpose of employing for not less than three months the services of a thoroughly competent schoolmaster as an organizing master or inspector, who would visit all the schools frequently, and instruct the teachers in school organization and management, and in approved methods of instruction. There are twenty-five schools, and by taking two in one day he could make a number of visits to each, and I am sure a suitable man would bring about an immense improvement. Such a gentleman would also be able to advise the Board with regard to the establishment of the proposed district high school.

2. **IMPROVEMENT OF THE TEACHERS.**—There is likely to be an unexpended balance of the vote for the training of teachers. I recommend that each Board which receives no share of this vote for training-school purposes should be offered the sum of (say) £80 for the purpose of sending to a training institution in the colony for two months not fewer than four of their most meritorious and most promising untrained teachers (two of each sex, if possible), to enable them to gain a knowledge of school organization and management, and the best methods of instruction. This plan would meet, to some extent, the necessities of such districts as Taranaki, and would probably prove very beneficial. The Inspector-General concurs in this and the preceding recommendation.

3. **FUNDS.**—In connection with what I have reported as to the Board's funds and its relations to School Committees, I recommend that the Board be informed that, until the close of the current financial year, Government will forego absolute compliance with the terms of the regulation with regard to the payments to Committees, but that at the same time, where there are Committees willing to take the duty in hand, such Committees should be fully recognized, and encouraged to attend to local requirements, and, as far as practicable, put in possession of the requisite funds.

4. **PLANS.**—I recommend that the Board be furnished with plans and specifications of school-buildings. The cost of copying some of those in the office of the department would be trifling.

Wellington, 26th November, 1878.

JOHN HISLOP.

2. ORGANIZING INSPECTOR'S REPORT.

SIR,—

Dunedin, 17th June, 1879.

I have the honor to submit to the Board a report on the Taranaki schools, and an account of the work that I have done in connection with them.

A preliminary visit to all the schools in the district afforded me an opportunity of forming an opinion as to their condition generally, and enabled me to decide what measures should be adopted to render them thoroughly efficient.

None of the schools presented all the characteristic features of a good school. Some were defective in one respect, some in another, while several of them were, on the whole, decidedly weak.

The following conditions are, I conceive, fulfilled in every good school:—

1. The schoolhouse is sufficiently large, and is well ventilated. The desks are of such a kind, and are so placed in the school, that (a) the teacher is always able, without shifting his position, to see every child in the room; (b) that it is possible for the classes to go to, or to leave, their seats with very little noise, and without confusion; (c) that the teacher can, in a very short time and without disturbing the rest of the children, place himself beside any pupil that requires assistance, or whose work has to be examined. The school is provided with all necessary apparatus, such as black-boards, maps, printed lesson-cards, diagrams, illustrations of natural history, ball-frame, &c.

2. The teacher is actively engaged in actual teaching during the whole of the school time. No pupil ever has "nothing to do," but all are profitably employed during every minute of the day.

3. The work to be done in the school has been carefully determined upon and arranged in accordance with a definite plan: (a) a fixed proportion of the whole school time is devoted to each subject, regard being had to its relative and its intrinsic importance; (b) the order in which the lessons are to be taken is decided on. This has been so carefully done that any departure from the order would manifestly be a change for the worse. The system adopted is embodied in a document called the "Time-table." This time-table is in all cases rigidly adhered to. A visitor to the school, at any time, finds every pupil in every class engaged in the work set down in the time-table for that hour of the day.