

4. In order that the attention of the pupils may not be overstrained, the lessons on each subject are short, and follow, one after another, in such a way that an agreeable variation of work is maintained throughout the day.

5. In a good school it is never found to be the case that, while a few of the pupils in the highest class are pretty well advanced, the lower classes have gained little or nothing by their attendance at school, except the power to read in a slovenly manner and to write a little, with possibly some vague notions about the easier parts of the multiplication-table and the ability to work very little sums incorrectly; while they have been contracting a habit of being idle and disorderly, which it will be very difficult to cure.

6. The pupils are classified in accordance with the recognized standards, and not with reference to their ages, their social position, or incorrect notions of parents with regard to their children's proficiency.

7. The teacher is able to keep order by means of his personal influence alone, and rarely requires to have recourse to punishment of any kind. The pupils are quiet, attentive, and fond of their work. They are regular and punctual in their attendance. They are well drilled, and march into and out of school in an orderly manner, and all changes in the positions of classes are effected without confusion, and with very little noise.

8. The pupils, while being examined, are able not merely to answer questions correctly, but to answer them in such a way as to show that they have been taught to think clearly and intelligently, and not merely to repeat, parrot-fashion, words and phrases which they only imperfectly understand.

9. The written work of the pupils is neat and accurate, and their knowledge is thoroughly sound as far as it goes. What the children know they know thoroughly, and an examination in "back-work" has no terrors for them or their teachers.

10. The pupils work independently: prompting and copying are unknown in the school.

To arrange matters so that the requirements here sketched out should be satisfied in each school, as far as its circumstances would permit, was the work that I had to carry out.

If the teachers with whom I had to deal had been careless, or altogether unskilled in their profession, it is very plain that the attempt to reach so high a standard would have been utterly futile. Fortunately, however, the Taranaki teachers are earnest and energetic, and some of them possess very considerable professional ability. Besides this, they nearly all seemed anxious to become acquainted with the methods used in the modern systems of primary education. Owing to circumstances on which it is unnecessary here to dilate, they were, for the most part, entirely unfamiliar with these methods.

Thanks, too, to the untiring efforts of the Inspector, Mr. Crompton (whose aid and co-operation during my visit to Taranaki were very valuable indeed), very considerable advances had been made towards preparing the way for the new organization.

Thus the task which had to be performed was vastly less difficult than it would have been if nothing had been done previously, or if the teachers had passively resisted the introduction of the new system.

After the preliminary visits had been paid, I spent two days in each school. On the first day all the children were examined and classified according to the "Standards of Education." Then a time-table suited to the wants of the school was drawn up. On the second day I took charge of the school and taught it myself, in order that the teacher might see the work actually done as specified in the time-table. This was successfully accomplished in every case, even when the pupils were quite new to the work and unfamiliar with the methods employed. It was confidently expected that after a little practice on the part of teachers and scholars the new system would be found to work quite smoothly.

The work of organizing was finished on the 17th of May. Since then I have paid twenty-five visits of inspection, and have found that very gratifying improvement has taken place in nearly every school.

I was unable to pay final visits to the two Mangorei schools, as two of the other schools had to be visited twice instead of once. The Inspector, however, kindly undertook to visit these two schools, and to report on them.

The appended detailed report on each separate school in the Taranaki Education District will give a tolerably exact idea of its present condition.

In conclusion, I would wish to direct your attention to my reports on some of the school-buildings, and more especially to those on the Gill Street and Waitara West Schools. It is not possible for the school work to be properly carried on in the present buildings. It may be that there are financial difficulties in the way, and that the Board is not in a position to provide suitable buildings for these important schools, owing to the urgent demand for new schools in the country districts. It has occurred to me that the Government might be induced to take into consideration the fact that the relatively backward condition of education in this district is, in the main, the result of its having had in bygone years frequently to fight the battles of the colony. While the other provinces had time and opportunity to attend "one to its farm, and another to its merchandise," and while, with the wealth flowing in from such sources, their more fortunate fellow-colonists were able to build good schools and to satisfy educational wants generally, the people of Taranaki were struggling for existence, and sometimes had to bear up against the whole weight of "the Native difficulty." I venture to suggest that if the Government would look at the matter in this way, and would propose a comparatively small special grant for school-buildings in your district, the difficulty might be overcome, and the Board be placed in a fair position for carrying on the work of education.

I have, &c.,

The Chairman, Taranaki Education Board.

JAMES H. POPE.

APPENDIX.—DETAILED REPORT ON THE TARANAKI SCHOOLS.

I.—*Gill Street Girls' School.* (Head Teacher: Miss Reeve.) Visited, 20th May, 1879. Present, 66 (average about 80).

Building.—Unsuitable, and far too small: in its present state it might hold forty pupils conveniently.