

*Furniture.*—Possibly good for a church; certainly bad for a school.

*Attainments of Pupils.*—Very fair. Sound and rapid progress is being made in spite of difficulties.

*Discipline.*—Pretty fair. School drill is carried on as well as it can be under the circumstances. There is often a considerable amount of noise and some disorder in the school. This arises mainly from the crowded state of the school. The tone is good.

*Instruction.*—Satisfactory throughout the school. Singing is taught.

*Remarks.*—Two pupil-teachers are required here, as a considerable amount of advanced work is done in the school. The teacher deserves a much better schoolroom.

VIII.—*Bell Block Boys' School.* (Teacher: Mr. Bennett.) Visited, 30th May. Present, 22.

*Building.*—Large enough, but very narrow.

*Furniture.*—Three rows of dual desks are required.

*Attainments of Pupils.*—Fair.

*Discipline.*—The boys are well drilled, and the order is excellent, but it struck me that the boys were sometimes spoken to rather too harshly by the teacher. Firmness is not incompatible with great kindness of manner. Discipline, if really good, is *mild* as well as *firm*.

*Instruction.*—Very great improvement; but the time-table should be more strictly adhered to. The children are not punctual. This is the reason assigned for the irregularity; but to depart from the order of the time-table on that account is to introduce unnecessarily a second evil, and to throw the whole school "out of gear." Singing is well taught here by Mrs. King.

*Remark.*—Mr. Bennett is a diligent and enthusiastic teacher. He is doing excellent work in the school and in the district.

XII.—*Kent Road, Mixed School.* (Teacher: Mr. Earl.) Visited, 23rd May. Present, 28.

*Building.*—Rather too small. A porch is much needed.

*Furniture.*—Wall desks are in use here; there is scarcely room for dual desks.

*Attainments of Pupils.*—Moderate. Rapid improvement is taking place.

*Discipline.*—This has greatly improved since my first visit. A further advance in this direction should be striven for. No child should be allowed to whisper in school, or to leave its place without having received permission to do so. The manners of the children in this school are not bad, but they might be much improved. The use of the expressions "Sir," "If you please," &c., might advantageously be introduced.

*Instruction.*—Most satisfactory improvement in this respect. Singing and drawing are efficiently taught here.

*Remark.*—It is very obvious that great good has resulted from the introduction of the new system into this school.

### 3. MR. CROMPTON'S REPORT.

SIR,—

New Plymouth, 31st December, 1878.

I have the honor to submit my report of the schools in charge of the Board of Education for the half-year ending this day. I have visited almost all the schools twice, and some more frequently, during the half-year elapsed, and examined in detail all the pupils present during my visits for that purpose. The regulations published on the 24th September last reached me too late to carry out the examinations in the manner therein prescribed. As yet the state of the schools will not permit one visit per annum for the purposes of general inspection to be sufficient.

I regret to state that, taken as a whole, the progress made by the fourth classes is not what I expected: there has been a lull in their efforts which I cannot account for. The Huirangi and East Schools are exceptions. The other classes show progress. The black-boards are not used as much as they ought to be. I would suggest that my recommendation may be carried out, that no school have less than two, and the large schools three, black-boards. In many of the schools, the Government regulations, which ought to be suspended in the schools, are either lost or mislaid: the time-tables are not written out in an easily legible form, and suspended in the schoolroom, as I have frequently wished them to be. All the schools should be supplied with terrestrial globes, and writing cards for the junior classes to copy from. The whole of the books used in the schools require inspection; many are in rags or deficient in pages, and some are quite useless. I would suggest that "Instructions to Teachers," similar to those promulgated in Otago, be printed and circulated here, and suspended in the school-rooms. They may save me a good deal of petty fault-finding, which I greatly object to. I have come to the conclusion, and lately I find others have too, that the more advanced histories of England should not be used in any class below the fifth. Such books as Collier's "British Empire" are too advanced except for the best pupils in the Gill Street and East Schools. It is excessively difficult to give vitality to such lessons in the minds of colonial-bred boys. In the course of my examinations I have sometimes endeavoured to impart life to the lessons by giving descriptions from my own personal knowledge, and showing prints of scenes, but the effect has only been transient, I fear. I wish to suggest that "Pictures from English History," and the six Royal Readers with their Sequels, be alone used in the schools. I do not know why it should be so, but, almost universally, the Fourth Reading Book, hitherto supplied, fails to excite the interest or imagination of the children, though it contains stories referring to New Zealand and Australia which ought to attract them. I again request the attention of the Board to the miserable rubbish in the shape of pens and copy-books, &c., parents supply their children. The bad writing which is so general in the schools is greatly aggravated by it. I felt annoyed at the amount of bad writing and the various sorts of copy-books exposed to Mr. Hislop's eye in the schools he visited. I see, in the London *Spectator*, this question of writing has arisen in England, and Vere Foster's copy-books are spoken very highly of: Mr. Petrie, of Otago, in his report dated 15th April last, refers to them. I would suggest that Vere Foster's copy-books, exercise-books, and figure copies be alone used in the schools, especially the last, as the figures on the slates and paper are almost universally bad.