

tion of mental activity that I always find refreshing. The very promptitude with which the master ceases his instruction of one class, and, leaving it to silent study, turns his attention to another, has something inspiring in it. There is not time, perhaps, for niceties of scholarship, but the school is alive, and I may add that, in proportion to its size, it has not done badly in outside examinations. I am very sorry to learn that, in consequence of financial difficulties, the governors are dispensing with the services of the second master.

My experience leads me to believe that schools where, on grounds of economy, it is found necessary to teach boys and girls in the same classes suffer in efficiency in a way that I should not have anticipated. A certain shyness, explicable enough when one comes to think of it, imposes a reticence on boys and girls alike that makes it comparatively difficult for the teacher to get at their minds so as to gauge their difficulties and estimate their progress, and, further, some boys appear to be much disheartened when they find themselves distanced by girl competitors. Difficulties of this kind emerge, I think, at New Plymouth, at Timaru, and perhaps at Invercargill. I understood that since my last visit the governors at New Plymouth have resolved to have boys and girls taught separately, though how this is to be well done with only three teachers I do not see. At Timaru the staff is larger, and the difficulties of separation will be less. The schools in which boys and girls are taught together are Whangarei, Thames, Akaroa, and Rangiora, at New Plymouth, as I have already mentioned, a change has just been made. At Auckland College and Grammar School boys and girls are under the same roof, but in different rooms, and the girls are taught by ladies, except in the classes for Latin, French, mathematics, and science, in which subjects they have the same teachers as the boys. At Timaru and Invercargill the most advanced girl pupils attend the same classes as the boys in classics and some other subjects.

I have observed great progress during the last sixteen years in methods of instruction in high schools, especially in the substitution of class-teaching for wasteful superintendence of individual work, in the employment of concrete illustrations of abstract principles, and in the rearrangement of the parts of a subject to facilitate the apprehension of the several parts and of their inter-relations. I mention with special approval the use made of the workshop as part of the Timaru High School, where the pupils make their own scientific apparatus, and the illustrations of their school studies, and I take this opportunity of expressing my high sense of the value of studies that can be illustrated in this way. I feel that it is somewhat invidious to refer to special features of individual schools, and I refer to them only as illustrations of what I should like to find in all schools, and of what in different degrees I have found in several. At the Dunedin Boys' High School, and at the Girls' High School at Christchurch, I was struck with the wide range of the reading in Latin, and at the last-named school I was much impressed with the very excellent construing of one pupil. It is satisfactory to find that at schools like Christ's College, where Greek is still cultivated, and the Christchurch Boys' High School, where it is not neglected, excellent arrangements are made for instruction in modern science. The study of English literature is a marked feature of the Girls' High School at Dunedin, and so is the student-like application of the girls of the highest form.

I have not considered it my duty to report in detail on the minor defects and weaknesses that have come under my notice in the course of inspection. It would be strange if I had detected none in visiting so many schools, spending a whole day in each, and observing all the proceedings with a critical eye. But I hold that only harm can come of entering these things in a public report. If I observed any fault serious enough to be reported to you I should beg that the report might be regarded as confidential except as between you and the institution criticized. But such defects as I have found—weak discipline, for example, in a class intrusted to the care of a junior teacher or a mistake made by a teacher in the spelling of an unfamiliar and technical word—I regard as matters for subsequent conference with the head master. I believe that this quiet treatment of such matters is useful as well as right. Occasionally I find that my indication of a weak place in the organization confirms a half-formed judgment in the mind of the principal, and at other times I have reason, after a discussion of the subject, to feel that I must suspend my judgment, or that a perfectly satisfactory explanation is possible.

It may afford some poor satisfaction to governors and masters of schools in which the numbers are declining to point out the commonness of the decline. Comparing the attendance reported at the end of 1886 with the attendance seven years later, I find that three schools open at the later date were not in existence at the earlier time—Wanganui Girls', Waitaki Girls', and Whangarei, and that these together make up an average attendance of 108. Yet the average attendance at all schools was less by 80 last year than it was seven years ago, and consequently less by 188 than it would have been but for the opening of the new schools. The schools that have grown are Christchurch Boys' High School (from 66 to 193), Wanganui Collegiate School (from 150 to 180), the Wellington and Nelson Schools, and the Thames School. Altogether, these show a gain of 200. Consequently the other schools have lost 358. This seems to indicate the influence of some widely-operating social cause or causes, such as a general necessity of curtailing expenses, or a general acknowledgment of the sufficiency of the primary-school course, and to suggest that it may be very unfair to attribute the decline of any school to inefficiency, unless the inefficiency can be proved without reference to the decline.

The marked and, as I think, the well-deserved success of the Wanganui Collegiate School should not be quoted to the disparagement of any other school without making due allowance for the special feature of the Wanganui School as being distinctly a Church of England boarding-school, and, if the declining numbers at Christ's College are brought into comparison with the very large increase of the Christchurch Boys' High School, it is fair to remember that not only is the High School a very excellent school, but the fees are very much lower there than at Christ's College.

I notice with great satisfaction that the headmastership of Auckland College and Grammar School, for so many years held with much honour by Mr. Bourne, and rendered vacant by his