

led to investigate and inquire for himself. The facts and processes he memorises must be those he has discovered and seen for himself, not merely those stated in text-books. The text-book has an important place, but it is a subordinate one. It should be used to amplify and verify the knowledge that has been gained by experience. The aim of teaching science, physical geography, and nature-study, so far as the primary school is concerned, should be to give the child a good working-knowledge of the forces operating in nature around him—forces whose actions and results he sees every day of his life.

The following pregnant paragraph from Professor Dewey's most suggestive book, "The School and Society," is deserving of close study by all who have to do with the work of our public schools. It contains the essential principle which should ever be our guide in all our schemes, our methods, and our management. After showing clearly the outstanding defects and weaknesses in our present curriculum and methods, he concludes thus: "I may have exaggerated somewhat in order to make plain the typical points of the old education: its passivity of attitude, its mechanical massing of children, its uniformity of curriculum and method. It may be summed up by stating that the centre of gravity is outside the child. It is in the teacher, the text-book, anywhere and everywhere you please except in the immediate instincts and activities of the child himself. On that basis there is not much to be said about the life of the child. A good deal might be said about the studying of the child, but the school is not the place where the child lives. Now the change which is coming into our education is the shifting of the centre of gravity. It is a change, a revolution, not unlike that introduced by Copernicus when the astronomical centre shifted from the earth to the sun. In this case the child becomes the sun about which the appliances of education revolve; he is the centre about which they are organized." To grasp the full significance of this great principle would mean something like a revolution in the methods and management of our schools.

In concluding, we would express our appreciation of the faithfulness displayed by most of our teachers in the discharge of their onerous duties and of the readiness with which they act upon our suggestions.

To the Board, for the consideration our work receives at their hands, and to the office staff, for the assistance they render us as occasion demands, we tender our thanks.

We have, &c.,

WM. GRAY,
JAS. MILNE, } Inspectors.
T. B. STRONG,

The Chairman, Education Board, Wanganui.

WELLINGTON.

SIR,—

Wellington, 1st March, 1905.

We have the honour to submit our report for 1904 on the primary schools in the Wellington District.

STATISTICS.—During the year 156 schools were in operation. Of these, three were opened towards the end of the year, and four (all aided schools) were closed at the time of the Inspector's annual visit. The remaining 149 were all examined. Eight Catholic Schools with a roll number of 1,266 were also examined, making a total of 157 schools in all, with a roll number of 17,359 children. The following is a summary of the standard classification of the Board Schools in the district:—

Classes.	Number on Roll.	Present at Inspector's Annual Visit.	Average Age of Pupils in each Class.
Standard VII.	696	677	Yrs. mos. 14 4
" VI.	1,091	1,062	13 9
" V.	1,552	1,521	12 10
" IV.	1,879	1,821	11 11
" III.	2,076	2,006	10 11
" II.	1,899	1,847	9 10
" I.	1,792	1,733	8 11
Preparatory	5,104	4,467	6 11
Totals	16,089	15,134	11 2*

* Mean of average age.

The numbers on the roll show an increase of 306, and those present at the annual visit an increase of 415, on the corresponding numbers for 1903.

During the year a Truant Inspector was appointed, and the satisfactory improvement that has already taken place sufficiently indicates the energy with which he has entered upon his duties. We do not think, however, that any scheme dealing with truancy will be a thorough success until a truant school is established in the city.

GENERAL REMARKS.—Making due allowance for those schools which have during the year been working at a disadvantage on account of epidemics of sickness and changes in the staff, we are well satisfied with the condition of the district in educational matters. A reference to the National Scholar-