

of pupil-teachers most largely in teaching these classes needs to be reconsidered by many head teachers. Unfortunately the recent strengthening of the school staffs has not been adequately applied in the directions in which the strengthening was most urgently required—namely, in schools of Grades 6, 7, and 8.

Country teachers are often thankful for advice about helpful books. I would like to direct their attention to the last issue of "The Code and the Suggestions," published annually by the English Board of Education. It costs 1s. net.

Mr. Stewart draws attention to what he calls the "over-examination" of Standard VI pupils. These are examined at their own schools at the time of the head teacher's "annual examination." Many of them are again examined at the National Scholarship and Free Place Examination, while most are examined once more at the Central Examinations for Certificates of Proficiency. It is well to direct attention to this, though I do not see how the liberty to attend either or both of the two latter examinations can be interfered with.

The order and discipline of the schools are in general good, and they are seldom unsatisfactory. But even in good schools the tone sometimes needs to be raised. Pupils—the older ones more especially—should realise that they come to school to improve themselves and to learn to study, and that steady application and loyal co-operation with their teachers are necessary conditions of good progress. When changes of teachers occur we have the means of judging how far this spirit prevails in our schools, and the estimate we must form is too often unfavourable. We are outgrowing many weaknesses, and it is highly desirable that we should outgrow the "fight" that is still apt to occur when a new teacher is placed in charge of a new class. In this matter head teachers, as well as the assistants concerned, should seriously ponder their responsibilities.

The Inspectors speak with one accord of the zealous and willing work done by the teachers of the districts placed in their charge, and these high qualities deserve all public acknowledgment. Efficient and skilful work may also in general be expected. The tenor of this report shows that in many cases there is much to be desired in this respect. But many teachers in the larger and in the middle-sized schools, and even in the smaller ones, are beyond question both skilful and efficient.

I have, &c.,

D. PETRIE, M.A., Chief Inspector.

The Chairman, Education Board, Auckland.

TARANAKI.

Education Office, New Plymouth, 31st March, 1909.

SIR,—

We have the honour to submit our annual report for the year ending the 31st December, 1908.

At the beginning of the year eighty-one schools (including six half-time schools) were in operation, and during the year new schools were established at Mangaehu, Musker's, York, Okau, Okoke, and Piko.

Puniho, a Native school, was brought under the control of the Board.

Pohokura, which had been closed the previous year, was again reopened.

The following table contains a summary of the numbers in the several classes for all the schools in the district:—

Classes.	Number on Roll.	Present at the Annual Examination.	Average Age of Pupils in each Class.
Standard VII	113	105	Yrs. mos. 14 3
" VI	325	315	13 9
" V	519	502	12 10
" IV	560	548	11 11
" III	630	615	11 11
" II	677	655	10 1
" I	662	639	9 0
Preparatory	1,851	1,717	6 11
Totals	5,337	5,096	11 3*

* Mean of average age.

The mean of the average ages is somewhat lower than that for last year.

Compared with the return for 1907, the roll-number shows an increase of 182, while the increase in the number present at the Inspector's annual visit was 549.

It is gratifying to notice that the number of pupils in Standard VII shows a steady increase.

CATHOLIC SCHOOLS.—In addition to the public schools, the Roman Catholic schools at New Plymouth, Inglewood, Stratford, and Opunake were inspected and examined.

The work done in these schools has now reached a satisfactory standard of efficiency, and compares favourably with that presented in the State schools of this district. These schools presented 377 pupils for examination.