

1878.

NEW ZEALAND.

EDUCATION.

REPORT OF THE INSPECTOR-GENERAL OF SCHOOLS UPON THE WELLINGTON COLLEGE.

Presented to both Houses of the General Assembly by Command of His Excellency.

No. 1.

The INSPECTOR-GENERAL to the Hon. the MINISTER of EDUCATION.

SIR,—

Wellington, 18th July, 1878.

The Governors of the Wellington College having requested you to appoint some person or persons to examine into and report upon the working of the College, you were pleased to appoint me to conduct the inquiry, and I now have the honor to submit the following statement:—

I am much indebted to the Governors and to their Secretary, who have placed at my service, for the purposes of this inquiry, all papers that were likely to be of use to me; and I desire to acknowledge my obligations to the Principal (Kenneth Wilson, Esq.) for the courtesy with which he received me on the occasion of my visit to the school, for the readiness and fulness of his replies to my numerous questions, and for the arrangements he made to give me an opportunity of seeing the school at work.

I find that it has been the aim of the Governors to make provision both for secondary education and for the higher education of the College or the University. The institution has apparently been moulded into its present form by the endeavour to compress the two stages, the secondary and the higher, into the ordinary period of school life, and to carry on the work of both stages at the same time, in the same school, and with a staff of instructors scarcely exceeding the number which would be required in an ordinary grammar school. The only teacher upon the staff whose services would not be necessary for the work of a grammar school is the Professor of Natural Science (T. Kirk, Esq., F.L.S.). The only work done by the College out of school hours, is the work of the evening classes and of a Saturday class, as follows:—The Mathematical Master conducts an evening class for mathematics attended by four persons, and one for classics at which three attend; the Modern Language Master has a class for French and one for German, attended by three and two persons respectively; and the Mathematical Master has an arithmetic class, composed of three girls, which meets on Saturday. The Principal is prepared to give lectures in English; and evening classes to be taught by the Professor of Natural Science have been proposed, but at present no students avail themselves of these arrangements. I learn that of the persons attending the evening classes only one is an undergraduate member of the University. There are also four undergraduates whose names are on the books of the College, and who are nominally keeping terms, but who do not attend lectures, and who receive no instruction from the College. With the exceptions which I have now stated, the operations of the College are confined to the work of the school.

In the school there are two boys who have matriculated to the University: one of these is in the Sixth Form, and the other in the Upper Fifth. The work of the Sixth Form is designed to constitute a preparation for the passing of the examination for the degree of Bachelor of Arts in the University of New Zealand. In this form there are at present two pupils, of whom one is an undergraduate. The Upper Fifth, in which is one undergraduate, consists of five boys who are preparing for the Senior Cambridge Local Examination; and the Lower Fifth, with eight boys, is preparing for the corresponding Junior Examination. I am informed that the practice is to enter for these Cambridge Examinations as many boys from the Fifth Form as are deemed likely to secure a "pass." The Fifth and Sixth Forms are under the direct care of the Principal; but all the boys in this upper part of the school receive instruction in physical science from Professor Kirk, who spends nine hours a week with them, and in mathematics they are divided into classes according to their attainments, and taught by the Mathematical Master. Greek, which is an optional subject as an alternative with German, is taught by the Second Master, and French and German are the special province of the Modern Language Master.

In the forms below the Fifth, natural science and Greek are not taught. The Fourth Form (11 boys) is reading *Cæsar*, and is learning the rules of Latin syntax: *Arnold's Latin Prose Composition* is also in use. In the Third Form (15 boys), the text-books are the Latin Primer, *Arnold's "Henry's First Latin Book,"* and *Valpy's Delectus*; in the Second Form (24 boys), the Primer and *Delectus*; and in the First Form (7 boys), the Primer only. These forms like the Fifth and Sixth are broken up into classes under the Mathematical Master, according to the attainments of the individual pupils. The Third and Fourth Forms are in the charge of the Second Master, and the First and Second are in the care of the Assistant Master. To all but the First Form lessons in French are given by the Modern Language Master. In all the forms a sufficient amount of time appears to be devoted to the subjects which fall under the general head of English.

From this description of the organization of the school it is apparent that a boy entering the First Form, and passing through all the other forms, including the Sixth, is expected to acquire a sufficient knowledge of the ordinary branches of a plain English education, and in addition to become acquainted with two modern and one ancient or with one modern and two ancient languages, with two or three branches of natural science, and with mathematics as far as conic sections. Moreover, he is expected to be able, at the close of his school course, to give such evidence of his proficiency in several of the subjects which he has studied as is involved in passing the examination for the degree of Bachelor of Arts in the University.

The case being thus stated, I find my attention diverted (necessarily, as I think) from the consideration of the efficiency of the masters, or the sufficiency of their numbers, to the discussion of the question of the possibility of realizing the ideal which is set before them. I do not doubt the possibility of imparting to the Fifth and Sixth Forms such a knowledge of certain branches of natural science as is required for the scholarship examinations, and (so far as subjects are concerned) for the degree of a Bachelor, and indeed the record of scholarships awarded shows that in this department the College has attained to high distinction. But I do not see how due attention to what ought to be the proper work of the Sixth Form in classics is compatible with preparation for the degree, nor how such preparation as a candidate is fit to receive at that stage can afford any reasonable hope of securing a place at the Honor Examinations. So, also, honors in mathematics are manifestly beyond the reach of candidates who have no instruction beyond that, good as it is as far as it goes, which is provided by the College. It is perhaps natural that, while there is no separate provision made in Wellington for superior education, the Governors of the College should endeavour to supply the lack as well as they can with the means at their disposal; but at the same time it is much to be regretted that in any institution the preparation of candidates for a degree should be of such a kind as to give them no prospect of anything better than a bare "pass," and that time should be spent in the laborious reading of books set for examination which would be far better spent in the study of a larger number of easier authors, and in the acquisition of a good vocabulary and of a ready command of common idioms. Judging from what I observed when I heard the Upper Fifth reading *Cæsar*, I should say that if a sound knowledge of Latin, as distinguished from the knowledge of special books got up for examination, is to be acquired in the school, it must be in the Sixth Form, the work of which is not now planned with that object in view.

Having thus indicated what I conceive to be the chief characteristic, and, at the same time, the leading defect, of the school, I am glad to be able to say, without reserve, that I see no reason to entertain a doubt of the competency or efficiency of the masters. I believe that they are working with much ability under a faulty programme, and that they might achieve signal success if their energies were directed simply to the work of secondary education. I am not sure that the number of masters is quite sufficient. I noticed particularly that the arrangement which places the Third and Fourth Forms under one master does not seem to afford all the supervision that one form seated at the desk requires while the other form is standing before the master. I fear that in such circumstances there can be no adequate attention given to the teaching of writing, and I do not altogether approve of the practice of allowing one class to prepare lessons while another class is receiving direct instruction. The preparation of lessons should rather, I think, be regarded as home work, and be done out of school.

The remuneration of the teachers (stated in the order in which the names appear in the prospectus of the College) is as follows: Principal, £700 per annum and house; Second Master, £400; Assistant Master, £250; Mathematical Master, £300; Professor of Natural Science, £450; Modern Language Master, £200; Drawing Master, £72: total, £2,372. If this be divided by the number of boys (72), the quotient shows the cost to be £33 per annum for each boy; but it must be remembered that the same staff is available for College lectures, and would not need to be greatly augmented though the number of boys should be largely increased. In this connection I may say that to me it appears highly probable that if separate arrangements were made for the higher education, and the school left free to attend to secondary education exclusively, the result would soon be, first, manifestly greater efficiency, and secondly, and as a consequence, a large influx of new pupils. It has also occurred to me, as a stranger, that the school would most likely be larger if it were nearer the heart of the city, and if better provision were made for warming the rooms in winter.

The Hon. the Minister for Education, Wellington.

I have, &c.,
WM. JAS. HABENS.