

adult teachers, and twenty-seven pupil teachers. On December 31st, 1879, the number of schools in operation was thirty, and the number of teachers employed amounted to seventy-six, viz., thirty-two male and twelve female adult teachers, and thirty-two pupil teachers. In their report for the year 1878, the Board drew attention to the fact that, owing to insufficiency of funds, they had been obliged to make very considerable reductions in the salaries of the teachers; and that, owing to the same cause, they had found it necessary to close several schools, and make others half-time schools. The effect of these changes is clearly shown in the Inspector's report, and though the Inspector expresses satisfaction with the general progress made during the year, it is evident that the sweeping alterations the Board were compelled to make, have operated most detrimentally to the progress of education in the district. The changes which came into operation on February 1st, 1879, are as follows:—1st, three schools closed; 2nd, two brought under the 88th clause of the Act; 3rd, eight made half-time instead of full-time schools. As stated in the Inspector's report, the half-time schools were found to work most unsatisfactorily; and the Board therefore decided to convert all such schools into full-time schools, under the 88th clause of the Act. The following are the schools which were carried on at the end of the year under the 88th clause:—Totara Flat, Orwell Creek, Dunganville, Marsden, Greenstone, Upper Crossing, Waitangi, (opened 1st July, 1879,) Arawata Town and Arawata Flat, (Jackson's Bay.) These last two are still half-time schools. In each case the teacher receives from the Board as salary only the amount of capitation allowance of £3 15s. accruing to the schools; and at one school only of those enumerated is the attendance sufficient to give the teacher fair remuneration for his labor. The effect is therefore to cause changes of teachers to be of constant occurrence in these schools, and to make it almost a matter of impossibility to procure the services of persons qualified for the position. In addition to the schools mentioned as being closed on February 1st, the Board found it necessary, during the year, to close the following:—Greek's Gully, Callaghan's, Granville, and Waipuna. The Board had also decided to close the schools at Rangiriri and Okarito, but have been induced by the strong representations made by the school committees and inhabitants of these places to keep them open, subject to an additional grant being obtained from the Government. The Board have so often brought under the notice of the Government, in previous reports and correspondence, the exceptional position of the district under the Act, that to go fully into the matter in this report would amount to unnecessary reiteration of a very self-evident fact. Moreover the Government are evidently aware of the disadvantages under which the smaller educational districts labor, as compared with the larger districts, since they have expressed their intention of assisting those districts as far as lies in their power. The Board therefore have every reason to hope, that such an amount of additional grant will be allotted to them as will enable them to pay their teachers fair salaries, and provide the outside districts with the educational advantages the Act is supposed to furnish them, thereby preventing those continual changes of teachers, which have such a prejudicial effect upon the progress of a school. In schools other than those under the 88th clause the teachers are paid a fixed salary and capitation allowance, which latter varies according to average attendance. The amount of fixed salary is decided by resolution of the Board. Capitation allowance is paid according to a graduated scale. From the 1st day of January, 1879, teachers in the employ of the Board were paid at the annual rates decided upon, such payment consisting of fixed salary and of capitation allowance. Previous to the reductions in expenditure, the Board had in operation a scale fixing the number of teachers for schools according to attendance. This they were then compelled to abolish, and decide the question of what number of teachers should be employed in any particular school in accordance with the funds at their disposal.

**STANDARDS.**—The Board would recommend that the suggestion made by the Inspector in his report, with reference to promotion in standards, receive consideration. There is no doubt that the teaching of a large number of children of unequal capacities in one class, is one of the greatest difficulties a teacher has to contend with under the present system; and though the difficulty is one which in a uniform system of education must always exist, yet it is desirable to reduce it as far as possible to a minimum.

**MIXED SYSTEM OF TEACHING.**—The greater number of the schools in the district being small schools, under the charge of one adult teacher, it is evident that, even if the Board disapproved of the sexes being taught together they cannot receive separate instruction. Neither in the large schools does the staff the Board are able to employ render such division possible. As far as the Board are aware no evil has resulted from the system of mixed teaching carried on in their schools, and they are inclined to believe that, supposing strict supervision be kept, and as far as possible the thorough teaching of needle-work, &c., be provided for, the system is the one best adapted to elementary schools. As far as the progress of the scholars is concerned, it is quite possible that a greater feeling of emulation exists than if the boys and girls were taught separately.

**PROGRAMME OF INSTRUCTION.**—With reference to the extent to which the programme in clause 84 of the Act has been observed during the past year, it is quite evident (more especially after the very sweeping changes the Board were compelled to make at the beginning of the year) that it would be absurd to insist upon the adoption and carrying out of the whole of the programme. The Board therefore issued the following instructions, intending at the same time to secure closer adherence to the programme whenever practicable:—"The compulsory subjects shall be those contained in regulations (No. 7 and 9 (omitting singing and drawing), and in regulation 10, as published in the *New Zealand Gazette*, No. 92, September 26th, 1878. The adoption of the remainder of the programme, as contained in the above-named *Gazette*, to be left to the discretion of teachers, at present. In half-time schools, the following shall be compulsory subjects, viz., reading, writing, grammar, spelling and arithmetic. The teaching of other subjects to be optional with teachers of half-time schools."

**SUPERVISION OF SCHOLARS IN PLAYGROUND.**—In connection with the supervision of the scholars in the playground, the Board would direct attention to the remarks made by the Inspector in his report. The Board's bye-laws contain the following clause relating to this matter:—"Teachers will be expected to see that the children are neat and clean in their appearance, and not suffering from any apparent illness. All healthy bodily exercises and play should be strongly encouraged by the teachers outside school hours." Though it is not stated in so many words, the meaning of this clause is practically that some one of the teachers should exercise supervision over the children, not only whilst in school, but also during play hours. The reason for its not being strictly observed is not however far to seek; and the