

In addition to the visit for examination I have, during the past year, visited all the schools north of the Waitaha for the purposes of general inspection. These visits are always made without notice, and in every case I have spent the day, and in some cases more than one day, in watching the teachers at their work, and observing their methods of instruction and the ordinary discipline of the school. It is my custom on these occasions, upon entering the schoolroom, to request the head-teacher to carry on the work exactly as it would have been, and always is, carried on in my absence, or, in other words, according to the time-table. During the progress of the day's work I observe carefully all that goes on, and make notes of anything which strikes me as being faulty or the reverse. I also examine the written exercise-books, and take particular notice of the demeanour and bearing of the teachers and pupil-teachers towards the scholars, and *vice versa*. I make few remarks and offer no objection to anything while the children are present; but after the closing of the school I bring under the notice of the head teacher anything I have observed during the day which appears to me to call for alteration or amendment. In this manner the teacher's authority is subjected to no check in the eyes of his scholars, and improvements suggested by me in private are the more readily adopted, as they can only appear as the voluntary act of the teacher himself. In addition to observing the work of the school, I take an opportunity during the day to inspect the outbuildings and ascertain whether they are maintained in a proper state of cleanliness, &c.

The staff of teachers now in the employ of the Board is, on the whole, very satisfactory. They are, without an exception, as far as I can learn, persons of unimpeachable morals and of sound intelligence. Most of them are well qualified for the duties they have undertaken, and some of them particularly so. There are a few cases where the want of previous experience in the art of teaching acts as an impediment to otherwise fairly-qualified persons; but, on the whole, and looking at the very low remuneration that many of them are receiving, I consider that the Board has reason to be satisfied with its teachers and pupil-teachers.

I will now mention a few of the defects which I observed at various schools, and which I pointed out to the teachers concerned at the time of my visit.

**REGISTERS.**—In Circular No. 31, 1879, the Secretary for Education says, "The Minister feels that it is scarcely necessary to advert to the extreme importance of securing the utmost possible care and accuracy in the keeping of the school registers and the making up of the attendance returns." The circular goes on to state that the Inspectors are specially charged with the duty of examining them and ascertaining, as far as possible, that they are correctly kept. I have not of late had occasion to suspect any intentional falsification of the register, but many of them are faulty in one or more of the following particulars: A few teachers had not provided themselves with the proper registers, but were still using those supplied by the Board before the Act came into operation. I have requested these teachers to apply at once for the new registers. In some instances the roll had not been called, as required by the Board's regulation. Even at some of the best schools this is occasionally neglected. In some cases the teachers have been guided by the instructions printed on the cover of the registers, which state that the roll shall be called not more than one hour and a half after the opening of the school. The Board's by-laws, however, not being repugnant to the regulations, are to be observed in preference, and by them teachers are instructed to call the roll not more than one hour after opening. In connection with this part of the subject I wish to observe that some rule to guide teachers with respect to late scholars should be adopted. At present the practice as regards children who enter the school after the roll has been called varies in different schools. Some teachers enter them at the close of the morning's work, while others consider that if they are absent at roll-call they should be considered as absent for that session, and never alter the register when it has been once marked and added up. This is, in my opinion, the proper course, but I have not ventured to lay down the law on the subject, inasmuch as it partakes somewhat of the nature of a financial question. In some schools (including a few of the best) the registers are not so clean and neat as they ought to be. Blots, erasures, and alterations are frequent, and these last being generally made by writing one figure over another, the difficulty of checking the roll is greatly enhanced. Alterations and erasures should be especially avoided for obvious reasons. Another fault in connection with the keeping of the registers is that they are not, in many instances, posted up daily, weekly, and monthly. If used as intended, these registers insure the detection of any accidental mistake at the earliest possible moment, but any delay in the entering-up of the totals at once increases the liability to error and adds to the difficulty of its detection. It is of the utmost importance that the children present should be carefully counted by an assistant or a pupil-teacher in large schools, or by the teacher himself in small ones, before they leave their places and the roll is added up. I have, in several instances, detected an unintentional error in marking the roll called in my presence. As often as not the error is one which tells against the school. This is especially liable to occur where there are many infants, who sometimes omit to answer to their names, and are consequently marked absent. Mistakes as frequently arise from the practice of allowing children to answer "absent" for any child not present. This word, spoken indistinctly, is easily mistaken for "present," and the entry made accordingly. I have always advised the teachers in such cases to allow no child to answer for any but himself, and invariably to check the roll immediately it is called and before the children leave their places. A more general fault in connection with the register is the neglect to fill up the columns for admission number, age, time since admission, and standard last passed. I do not think there are more than two schools in the district where this is done. The admission register is not unfrequently used as a portfolio, and is distended almost to bursting with circulars, blotting-paper, foolscap, forms, &c.

**TIME-TABLES.**—These are, as a rule, fairly drawn up and carefully observed, but in a few cases they were faulty in construction, the work in a few others was not carried on in accordance with the table, and in two small schools no time-tables were in use. The chief faults I have noticed in the time-tables were want of clearness in the arrangement, too much time devoted to some subjects, too little to others, excessive length of lessons to infant and primer classes. In all such cases I suggested alterations, which the teachers promised to adopt.