

fairly known, but the pupils were not sufficiently familiar with the translation of the paragraphs they had read. The geometry class passed an indifferent examination. In this subject I think that too much was attempted.

At the Tokomairiro District High School the range of the extra work was nearly the same as for last year. The Greek class has, however, melted away, and the amount of English read has been much reduced. Most of the extra work at this school has been thoroughly and skilfully taught, and all the classes have made good progress during the year. The mathematical subjects were decidedly the best known. The Latin and French classes made a very creditable appearance, but they were both stronger in translation than in accidence.

At the Lawrence District High School there has been a conspicuous advance in the amount of the extra subjects. In accuracy and thoroughness of work nearly all the classes will bear favourable comparison with those of any other of the schools of this class. The Latin, algebra, and geometry classes answered most accurately. The French and English papers were also creditably done.

I have, &c.,

DONALD PETRIE, M.A.,

Inspector of Schools.

The Secretary, Otago Education Board.

SOUTHLAND.

SIR,—

Invercargill, 18th February, 1881.

I have the honor to forward my general report for the year 1880.

My time has been occupied in inspecting and examining the schools, conducting the pupil-teachers and scholarship examinations, inquiring into the merits of applications for new schools, preparing examination papers for the schools, for scholarships, and for pupil-teachers, writing reports, and conducting the district high school for the month of July.

During the year new schools have been opened at Chatton, Heddon Bush, Otautau, Pukerau, Pembroke, and Waikaia. There are now sixty schools in operation and one in course of erection. There still remain, however, several places in the district in which school accommodation is urgently needed, and in which it should be supplied as soon as funds are available for that purpose. Of the schools in operation, one (Pukerau, opened in December) has not been visited at all; two (Heddon Bush, opened in July, and Hedgehope, closed during a large portion of the year) have been inspected but not examined; and the rest have been both inspected and examined. Some of the country schools have been inspected two or three times and the town schools several times.

The remark made in my last report respecting the dirty state of some of the schools and out-offices has, I am glad to say, had a good effect. There is, however, another matter to which I must direct the Board's attention, viz., the abuse of the school premises when they are used for concerts and dances. I do not know that there is any serious objection to the use of the schoolhouses for these purposes once or twice a year; but there is certainly very serious objection to scribbling upon the walls both inside and outside, scratching the paint, desks, &c., and otherwise damaging the property. I feel sure that the School Committees are, one and all, wishful to preserve the Board's property, and that it is only necessary to call their attention to this abuse of it.

Much yet remains to be done to the school glebes: many of them are not fenced and some of them are badly fenced, so that in not a few cases they are well nigh useless to the teacher. I am bound to say, however, that not all those teachers that have their ground fenced bestow much labour on its cultivation. But whether the glebes are cultivated or not, if the schools and residences are to be protected against vagrant horses, cows, &c., they should be fenced. In about four-fifths of our schools the furniture is of the most approved type (consistent with economy), but in the other fifth it is defective—in six or seven cases very seriously so. In most schools one now finds a tolerably good supply of black-boards, maps, reading cards, and other requisites. The term "black-boards," as applied to those now in use in many schools, is, however, a misnomer, as they are not black but dark brown; and it is found that boards so painted are immensely superior to those painted black. Teachers are unanimous in their praise of them. No matter how defective the lighting of the schoolroom is, all the pupils within the field of the board can see most distinctly what is written upon it.

TEACHERS.—Exclusive of pupil-teachers and sewing-mistresses, there are engaged in this district 80 teachers, and, of these, 24, or nearly 30 per cent., do not hold any classification either from our own department or any other. A few of these unclassified teachers are doing good work, but the majority of them are largely responsible for some of the low results disclosed by the tables given in another part of this report. They know next to nothing about the work of teaching, are not qualified by education to give sound instruction in the subjects to be taught, and make no effort to qualify themselves. One has no heart to instruct such men in the heart of teaching, for one's efforts are in a large measure spent in vain. The Education Act does not allow their employment when certificated teachers are available. I would suggest therefore that they be summoned to attend the next examination of teachers, and that those failing to answer the summons be compelled to give place to better men. To show how indifferent these teachers are, I may mention that, out of 24, only 5 presented themselves at the examination of teachers just concluded. Most of our classified teachers are, I believe, earnestly endeavouring to overtake the work of the syllabus.

PUPIL-TEACHERS.—The pupil-teacher system is on the whole working well, and is rapidly extending itself through the district. In 1878 there were 11 pupil-teachers employed in 5 schools; in 1879, 17 in 8 schools; and in 1880, 25 in 15 schools. Since 1878, therefore, there has been an increase of nearly 120 per cent. in the number of pupil-teachers employed, and of 200 per cent. in the number of schools employing them. Many of these teachers are doing good work, and give promise of becoming excellent teachers. I should be glad to see the department undertake the work of examining and classifying pupil-teachers. This appears to me to be quite as much the work of the department as that of examining and classifying teachers.