

children attending town and large village schools at once stimulating a desire for information and rendering its acquisition easier. These are important factors in the Auckland Province, where the Board's report for the year ending the 31st December, 1884, shows that the percentage of schools where the average attendance is under twenty-five is 27·8, and that out of more than 200.

*Second Cause found in the Difficulties incident to the teaching of Small Schools, where one Teacher has to deal with so many Classes.*—Another cause is the difficulty incident to the teaching of small schools, which, of course, is increased or diminished according to the class of scholars attending each, and the regularity or irregularity of their attendance. It is that of teaching a number of subjects to a number of classes, where different portions of each pass-subject have to be mastered by each class. This difficulty does not amount to an impossibility: in many instances it has been overcome; and many of our best teachers have won their spurs in such schools. It will now be diminished very much by some of the new Standard Regulations, which lessen the number of pass-subjects, and facilitate the grouping of classes for instruction. Yet the task, by no means easy as compared with that of an assistant in a town school, will require well-directed energy, experience in teaching, tact and skill, and a scholarship not too meagre for one who would undertake the duties of a schoolmaster and perform them with credit. It has hitherto been unaccomplished in many cases because a number of the teachers have not had the qualifications indicated; and such schools will, as a rule, remain poorly taught until the action of general causes, or specific circumstances created by the Board—such, it seems to me, as are referred to in the next heading—will induce a greater number of efficient teachers to take charge of them. This brings me to the third cause of the results given above.

*Inefficiency of Teachers in some of the Schools visited found to be a Third Cause.*—About 25 per cent. of the schools examined by me were in charge of uncertificated teachers, some of whom had fair scholarship and considerable aptitude for their work, but others of whom were wanting in scholarship, or method, or both of these requirements, and were, from having had too little practice in teaching before taking charge, or from not having mastered with sufficient thoroughness the principles of the subjects taught, unable to conduct their schools with success. But what inducement beyond the hope of promotion is there for men of skill and education to go to remote places to contend with the difficulties incident to teaching small schools for a salary barely above a labourer's wage. This brings me to the conditions under which the Board will be able to secure good teachers for the small schools. They are, first, increasing the number of half-time schools; secondly, sending to the small schools, which by their geographical position cannot be worked half-time, the *young* certificated teachers, or probationers, who have had *at least six months' experience in teaching*, and have shown somewhat higher attainments than hitherto required of them. I believe that the late extension of the half-time system will be attended with success in the schools where it has been adopted. Where this system is in force "the income derived from the combined attendances of both schools becomes sufficient to provide a reasonable salary for a certificated teacher;" and I think that the poor results got in so many cases by having a number of small full-time schools in charge of uncertificated teachers should be a strong inducement for extending the system as far as possible in the outlying districts. The principal objection stated is, I believe, that the children forgot one week what they have learnt the preceding one. But where there are many small full-time schools, for lack of inducement to men of suitable qualifications to take charge of them they must necessarily, for the most part, be in charge of teachers of very mediocre ability, under whom the children will be taught unskilfully and make slow progress, as is evidenced by the long time it generally takes children attending them to pass from one standard to another, and the very small number reaching the higher standards. If two schools are taught on alternate weeks by a qualified teacher (whose experience and scholarship should be shown by a certificate), the scholars, being taught with skill, will make appreciable progress in the week during which they attend school, and, by the judgment exercised in setting suitable home-tasks for the off-week, and the interest aroused in their work, will not forget what they have learnt in the school-week, but come with a clear knowledge of it, and prepared to make further regular progress. An efficient teacher will win the co-operation of parents and scholars, and secure *regular attendance* on the school-week, and, by the interest he will give the senior scholars in their work, will cause them to acquire and perform more than what is learnt or worked out under his immediate care. It is undoubtedly an onerous task, and one requiring much skill, to conduct two half-time schools, and great credit is due to those who have conducted them with success, as a number of certificated teachers have done. It is not to be expected that the scholars attending them can pass a standard every year. In many of the small full-time schools a very poor percentage of those in fair attendance manage to do this at present. I anticipate, however, that in them a fair proportion of scholars will pass the higher standards, judging from the results found in such schools when in charge of certificated teachers. Briefly, while the opening of small schools in outlying districts helps settlement, it is better for the settlers to have their children taught by teachers of fair scholarship, experience, and skill on alternate weeks, than to have them subject, were it six days every week, to the care of inefficient schoolmasters. Additional reasons in favour of having the very small schools conducted on the half-time system are:—the wholesome influence of a good teacher, such as can be secured for the salary based on the combined attendances of two half-time schools, extends beyond the scholars; a qualified master is superior to local influences which may be brought to bear upon one who is not duly qualified; half-time schools can now be worked more easily than heretofore, under the new Standard Regulations, which facilitate the grouping of classes for instruction; some of the half-time schools are under uncertificated teachers, and, therefore, the system has been tried under unfavourable conditions; when there are more certificated teachers in such schools, the settlers' minds will be disabused, and they will feel the advantage of this system for the reasons stated above; the opportunities which uncertificated teachers, sent to take charge of small full-time schools, have of getting help in their studies are few, and they may go on for years preparing for the examination with little chance of passing; certificated teachers, whose services can be secured for the salary