E.—1B. 24

former may be mentioned Makatoku, Hampden, Waipawa, and, in some respects, Ashley Clinton; and among the latter, Norsewood, Takapau, Te Ongaonga, and, I regret to add, Woodville. The other schools in the county, except the one at Makaretu, are in fair working order.

Makaretu School.—Makaretu occupies quite a unique position among the schools of the district, and it appears to me to deserve more than a passing notice. When judged according to the standard work alone the results are low, but, judged according to the usefulness of the work done. I am inclined to place it among the best in my district. The children are of mixed race, but the majority are Scandinavians; and the master, well knowing how the lives of the majority of them will be cast, has practically adapted his instruction to the future necessities of the children. From Standard II. upwards the work partakes more or less of a technical character. The pupils are made familiar with all forms of business—of buying and selling, of exchange, of keeping accounts, of tendering for work, and making topographical plans of the Makaretu settlement. They are acquainted with the more important trees in the bush, and can botanically describe the flowers growing by the wayside. I have carefully examined the pupils in most of these matters, and I must confess the pleasure I experienced on finding that the children had a full appreciation of many of the social and economical questions which will come more closely under their observation in years to come. The topographical maps of the settlement constructed by the pupils in Standards III. and IV. are excellent; and, when mounted and varnished, readily sell to the settlers at prices varying from 2s. to 10s. each. The tendering by the lads for digging small garden plots for the master is well carried out, and shows really good judgment on their part. I have gone over the last lot of tenders sent in for digging a plot of ground 4½ yards by 5 yards, and I have not found relatively so much difference between the highest and lowest tenders as I have often seen in tenders for the erection of school-buildings. The method adopted by the master in teaching his children the art of buying and selling, and keeping accounts, is exceedingly interesting and instructive. Each senior pupil is requ

The following is an account taken at random from one of the books used by the children:—

1yd. blue ticking " 29.—1 whistle 1 top 1 squeaker 2 hats at 6s.	 	1 10 0 1 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 12 0 12 0 8	d. 0 0 2 1 1½ 0 6 0 10½	1885. July 1.—Brought forward "21.—1lb. butter "27.—2lb. pork at 6d. 1 woodhen 1 bucket milk 11 chickens at 6d. "31.—1 quarter meat	Cr	•••	 4 0 0 0 0 0	s. 16 1 0 2 5	9 6 0 6 6 6
	 -	£5 12	9				£5	12	9

Preparation of Subjects.—The preparation of several of the standard subjects does not proceed as satisfactorily as I could wish in a number of the schools. There is an absence of steady and systematic teaching, which, if it does not destroy, is very detrimental to educational efficiency. For a few months before an examination extreme pressure is put upon the children; and then for four or five months the teaching is carried on in the most desultory and erratic manner. The fault is to be found in large as well as in small schools, and, I regret to say, among trained and untrained teachers alike. In paying casual visits of inspection one is often surprised to find how seldom the work is proceeding according to the time-table. I think it is of great importance to promote as much as possible individuality among teachers; but individuality will never be promoted by breaking through the school time-tables or by permitting teachers to give lessons which form no part of a definite and systematic course. On visiting a school I do not merely wish to find the pupils busy and the teacher seemingly active, but I want to be fully satisfied that good, honest, and systematic work is being done. It is not pleasant to find in visiting a school that the geography lesson, the history lesson, and even the reading lesson have been skipped for an arithmetic lesson—that "city of refuge" to the unprepared and unsystematic teacher; but I have found this state of affairs in more than one instance. The new regulations of the Board will, no doubt, cause an improvement in this direction during the coming year.

Standard subjects.—Few teachers appear to give that attention to reading and its opposite, writing, which their great importance demands. A child who can read with intelligence has acquired the power of becoming acquainted with the thoughts and actions of mankind both past and present, and a child who can write has acquired the art of conveying his own thoughts to others. By means of the one process the children gather knowledge, and by means of the other they sow it, and all mental and moral education may be said to be embraced within the scope of these two arts. Much of the reading in the schools, especially in the higher standards, betokens a want of "conception" of the incidents in the lessons on the part of the readers, and I much doubt whether a love of reading is being engendered among the pupils who pass through the schools. It is impossible to create interest in a reading lesson which has no counterpart within the range of the children's experiences, and this is the case with many of the lessons found in the reading-books in Standards V. and VI. The reading in the lower standards is usually more intelligent than in the higher ones, and it is to be accounted for by the fact that the lessons in the books used by the former relate to subjects with which the children are familiar, or about which they are able to form correct notions. Exposition