

beyond the precincts of the school. The boisterous rudeness that at one time characterised their conduct in too many localities has to a great extent given way to considerate respectfulness and even traits of politeness. To the teachers is due the credit of this reformation of manners. In several instances, too, they have succeeded in enlisting the co-operation of their pupils in beautifying the school grounds by borders of trees, shrubs, and flowers. The boys, during part of their spare time, dig the ground, and plant, protect, and water the shrubs, &c., until they have made a fair start. The girls, on the other hand, attend to the flower beds. The cultivation of a taste in this direction at school cannot be too highly commended. Not only must the pupils themselves be greatly benefited, but the face of the country at large may ultimately, through their instrumentality, be made to assume an improved appearance. Committees, as a rule, do as much as the means at their disposal will allow to render the usually bare surroundings of their schools attractive and ornamental. In some cases their efforts have been successful, but in others they have been comparative failures. Possibly, if teachers and scholars took a greater interest in the means used, the Committees would more frequently see their desires accomplished.

The Board has good reason to be satisfied with the very creditable condition of its schools as a whole. The teachers, with very few exceptions, are earnest and faithful, and well qualified for their work. Cases of hopeless inefficiency have been nearly all weeded out, and suitable modes of teaching are being constantly kept before the attention of those who are new to the profession, and give promise of ultimately rendering efficient service.

The Secretary, Education Board, Otago.

I have, &c.,

WM. TAYLOR, Inspector.

3.—MR. GOYEN'S REPORT.

SIR,—

Dunedin, 4th March, 1886.

I have the honour to present my general report for the year 1885.

The time spent by me in the service of the Board during the year was 1,833 hours—an average of over five hours a day for the whole year, Saturdays and Sundays included, or, Saturdays and Sundays excluded, over seven hours a day.

The material condition of the schools continues to be good, and in most cases the accommodation provided is in excess of that required for the attendance. Nearly all the schools are well equipped with educational appliances, but I regret to have to add that these appliances are not invariably so well taken care of as it is reasonable to expect they would be were they the teachers' own property. The school- and out-houses are generally scrupulously clean on the day of examination, but they are not seldom quite the reverse of this on the day of unannounced inspection. Very few of the country schools are swept every day, and a considerable number of them only once or twice a week.

The *morale* of the schools is, on the whole, good; but I should like to see more attention given to politeness and good manners. Class movements, though satisfactory in a fair number of schools, are but moderate in the majority, and I have seldom been satisfied with the character of the disciplinary exercises and singing in the infant departments.

I regret to be unable to report much improvement in the practical training of pupil-teachers. Of the 135 examined, sixty-one gained less—many of these much less—than 65 per cent. of the marks assigned for teaching. In a large number of schools training these youths to teach appears to be regarded as quite an unimportant matter.

A considerable number of teachers do not show much judgment in setting home lessons. I do not now allude to the length of these exercises, but to their unsuitable character. I believe the senior pupils ought to have about an hour's home work to do; but it is, in my opinion, highly improper to require them, as many teachers do, to prepare new matter for the lessons of the following day. The proper function of the exercise is to impress the explanations given in school, and not to prepare matter for lessons to be given.

A very striking improvement in methods and management in the brief space of a year is hardly to be expected, and one ought, I suppose, to be satisfied with a healthy, even if slow, forward movement in this direction. The advance made from year to year is not, to my thinking, so great as it ought to be; nevertheless it is a fact that the quality of the instruction is improving, and much more in the infant than in the higher departments of the schools. A considerable number of our larger schools continue to be ably managed, and in most respects well taught, and a similar remark applies to a fair number of our smaller ones. The percentages gained are precisely the same as those gained in 1884—viz., 77 in standards and 82 in subjects. The latter may be regarded as a fairly accurate index of the efficiency of the schools. Every child in Standard I. was examined in four subjects, every child in Standard II. in five subjects, and every child in Standards III. to VI. in seven subjects; and of course it was possible for every one to obtain a pass in every subject in which he was examined. The total number of passes obtainable in this way was 68,861, and of these the number obtained was 56,466, or 82 per cent. Gained as it was under rigorous examination, this result ought to be an assurance to the public that they are receiving a fair equivalent for their liberal educational expenditure.

In the majority of the schools examined by me reading is, upon the whole, well taught in the junior, and fairly in the senior classes. The taste with which a great number of Standard I. pupils read is most creditable. Meanings of words receive more skilful treatment than formerly; but there is little improvement to report in the treatment of the subject matter of the lessons read. In many schools the separate facts or statements of each paragraph are fairly questioned out singly, but nowhere have I seen the children trained to gather up the answers and express them as a connected whole. They deal from beginning to end with fragments of thought, and gain but little conception of the relation of these fragments. This gathering-up process is a highly educative one, and it is to be regretted that it is so generally neglected. School libraries would certainly do much to improve the reading and comprehension of the senior pupils. If the Government could see its way to spend the money now voted annually to public libraries in assisting to establish school