

those who are in this predicament; and, if his opinion agreed with that of the district Inspector, why should not the teachers' status be reduced? At present highly-classified teachers have far too little inducement to maintain their zeal and skill at the level which gained them their high classification.

I have in recent reports referred so fully to the management and teaching of the Board's schools that I refrain from entering on that topic on the present occasion. The teachers are, as a rule, most zealous and painstaking in the discharge of their onerous duties. If all would show the same zeal in striving to elevate their aims and improve their methods we should soon have little reason to complain of mechanical work and disappointing results. I will only add my dissent from the emphatic opinion expressed by an Inspector in a neighbouring district, to the effect that the public schools are mere cram-shops. I am sure that such a description of the Board's schools would be most unjust. The teaching is in many cases not by any means so intelligent as could be wished, but there is almost everywhere a fair leaven of intelligence, and in a considerable number of schools the work leaves little to be desired on this head. It is quite possible to expect from young children a higher measure of intelligence than is reasonable, and it may well be that Inspectors are prone to err on this side. If a just mean cannot be observed, that is the proper side to err on.

I have, &c.,

The Secretary, Otago Education Board.

D. PETRIE, M.A., Inspector.

## 2. MR. TAYLOR'S REPORT.

SIR,—

Education Office, Dunedin, 31st March, 1887.

I have the honour to submit my report for the year 1886.

During the year I inspected sixty-three schools, and examined eighty-one. At the examination of thirty-two of the latter I took part either with Mr. Petrie or Mr. Goyen. In the discharge of my duties I spent 1,912½ hours, and travelled 3,924 miles. Seeing that full information is given in tabulated form regarding the examination of each individual school in the district, I shall on this occasion merely refer shortly to some of the principal topics connected with inspection.

**DISCIPLINE.**—The discipline continues to be very satisfactory in a large majority of the schools. The number in which it can be said to be positively inferior is very small indeed. Not only are good order and control maintained, but in cases not a few the teachers have succeeded in infusing into their pupils a spirit of earnest work and hearty co-operation in the business of the school. When both teachers and pupils are animated with a desire to do their best and together put forth the necessary effort there can be little doubt about the results that will follow. It is certainly gratifying to see a large body of children march into school with briskness and precision of movement, take their places without noise and confusion, and at once set to work earnestly and diligently, every one knowing what to do, and no one interfering with a neighbour. This is no overdrawn picture, for a number of schools could be named answering, with varying shades of excellence, such a description; but they are only to be found where the teacher possesses the consummate art of commanding the respect, confidence, and ready obedience of the pupils. There are schools of an opposite type—but happily they are very rare—where noise, confusion, anarchy, and idleness seem to reign supreme, there being no master mind and will to which the pupils feel constrained to subject themselves.

**MANNERS.**—A considerable amount of attention is now paid to the manners and general behaviour of the pupils, both in and out of school, and one cannot help noticing a great improvement in both these respects. The pupils have become more respectful and less uncouth in their manners, and even show a degree of polish to which children in the same circumstances were formerly strangers. Although in many schools the efforts made to inculcate habits of politeness and to foster feelings of deference and respect for others have been productive of good results in the direction sought, still there are those the pupils of which, if not positively rude, exhibit very few traits of refinement; never allow, by any chance, "Yes, sir," or "No, sir," to escape their lips; never condescend on any occasion to raise their caps, and remain dumb and look amazed if one bids them "Good morning." It certainly rests with the teachers, where home influences are at fault, to train their pupils to habits of politeness and grace of manners, which are greater charms than fine dress and good looks. What can be accomplished in one school can be accomplished in all to a greater or less degree. A few lessons on manners given during the year, with attention to the practice of them, ought to have good effect.

**METHODS.**—Very great importance is attached to the employment of good methods of instruction, and consequently every effort is made to have those introduced and used that are reckoned the best fitted to train and develop the intelligence of the pupils. A certain result may perhaps be attained as soon by one method as another, and yet there may be a vast difference in the amount of profit derived by the pupils using the respective methods. One may have had his mental faculties so trained and exercised as to fit and strengthen him to pursue successfully an independent course; while the other, having reached his end in a measure blindfolded, carried as it were on the shoulders of rule and rote, is but little better fitted to trust to his own resources. That method is to be commended which, as Kingsley puts it, will teach a pupil the "art of learning, that will enable him to mine for himself, and make him strong to hunt and till for his own subsistence." Of course a child smart and attentive will learn by almost any method; but the dull and careless must be led by a way that will rouse and interest him, and by which he can proceed from one sure foothold to another. Sometimes the best of methods will fail of their due effect if the teacher does not press home his instructions and is not on the alert for inattentive pupils. Good methods of teaching are becoming every year more general. In quite a number of schools they are nearly all that could be desired, and in comparatively few are they positively wholly bad. The method of teaching beginners to read