

Habits of self-restraint need fostering. The attention of the pupils is frequently more satisfactory in the small schools than in the large ones. Several principal teachers might do more to improve the attention and tone generally in some of the classes in their schools. Attention is a lesson to be learned, and quite as much a matter of training as any other lesson. Attitude in class is not always what it should be. There cannot be any really good work going on when pupils are in lazy, slouching attitudes. "Attitude makes false work, as well as betrays false work." At many small schools I was much pleased with the manner in which pupils gave their whole attention to their paper work from 9 a.m. to 4.30 p.m., and then answered brightly in oral work.—The *Manners* of pupils I find very nice at most schools.

REGISTERS, ETC.—The *Registers* generally are correctly kept as far as mere accuracy in calculations is concerned, but sometimes at my inspection visits I had to point out such omissions as the following: Total of morning attendance not entered before afternoon sitting, daily attendance not added up to date, number of weeks and average weekly roll for quarter not calculated, previous week's attendances not entered in summary. Many of the books I found spotlessly clean, a few very dirty and untidy. The latter were generally without blotting-paper, or had meagre pieces about an inch square, saturated with the ink of six months or so, while the pens and the ink on the tables were unfit for use.—The *Quarterly Returns* not infrequently showed glaring errors, which could have been the result of only gross carelessness.—In the *Log-books* I should like to see more remarks with regard to the actual working of the schools, the progress of classes, and the work of subordinate teachers. In these books at the beginning of each year and each quarter certain matters with regard to organization should be entered, as, for instance, the number on school roll and the number in each standard, the name of each teacher and the class taught by him or her, the average attendance for the past quarter, &c.

Before closing this report I beg to ask teachers to read again what I wrote last year with regard to questioning a class and training pupils in expressing their answers well. Year by year the number of schools where this important matter receives attention increases, but only very slowly. Simultaneous answering and indiscriminate answering are still far too common in what are supposed to be educative oral lessons; and as a consequence I often found, both at inspection visits and at examination visits, that answers given—if disconnected words making no sense by themselves can be called answers—had no association with the questions. Simultaneous answering may at times be useful—indiscriminate answering, never—in purely *memoriter* work in the lowest classes; but to require a whole class to repeat simultaneously answers which have been given by individual pupils when the exercise involves no mental effort is worse than useless. How absurd, for instance, is the following example of these two kinds of answering, which is a *fac-simile* of what I heard at a certain school: "What part of speech is 'that' in this sentence?" Answer (shouted by several pupils here and there in the class): "Relative pronoun." Teacher: "Nonsense! how could it be?" Answer (shouted immediately by several pupils): "Conjunction." Teacher: "Right. Now, whole class together, what part of speech is 'that'?" Answer (in one great shout, some pupils looking amused and supremely self-satisfied, others gazing about in an absent-minded manner): "Conjunction." Now, after such treatment as this, how could pupils be expected to know under what circumstances 'that' is a relative pronoun, under what it is a conjunction? Surely here was a good opportunity for inductive teaching! Surely here simultaneous answering was of no use whatever! In mental arithmetic, too, simultaneous answering is useless, but it is commonly practised. *E.g.*: Upon the correct answer to "What is the cost of ten slates at 8½d.?" being received, the teacher follows with "Now, all of you, what is the cost?" "Complete answers" are of great importance in mental training. "Round," shouts a boy in answer to the question, "In what are a pencil and a penholder alike?" "Yes," says the teacher, "they are both round." But children should be trained to express their ideas accurately and fully in their own simple language, without any padding on the part of the teacher.

Once more, then, I ask teachers not to hurry their questions in educative oral work; not, as a rule, to accept answers in single words; and not to be satisfied if the pupils are apparently interested and attentive, and acquiesce in what is merely told them. As Mr. Fitch points out in his "Notes on American Schools," "There is no true teaching unless the learner is made to speak his own words, as well as to listen to those of an instructor. Acquiescence is not knowledge, for it is easy to assent to many propositions without understanding them." I do not want Charles Kingsley's remark, "The master learned all the lessons and the scholars heard them," to be applicable to any of our schools.

Finally, let me draw the Board's attention to the fact that in this report I have pointed out defects—in order that they may be remedied—more freely than excellences. It must not therefore be forgotten that great credit is due to many teachers who are working with energy, enthusiasm, and success—teachers with whom it is a pleasure to be associated in their noble but arduous occupation. Much of the work done by the pupils was very fine, and progress of a most substantial kind has been made during the year.

I have, &c.,

W. H. VEREKER-BINDON, M.A., Inspector.

The Chairman, Board of Education, Wanganui.

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WELLINGTON.

SIR,—

Wellington, 24th February, 1891.

I have the honour to present my seventeenth annual report on the work and condition of the primary State schools of the Wellington District.

In June last the Education Board considerably acceded to the representation made in my last report, and appointed Mr. T. R. Fleming Assistant Inspector; and I have had the benefit of