

ments in answers are now required by the majority of teachers; but at a few schools the pernicious habit of indiscriminate answering is still allowed, and what may be called the “no-answer-at-all plague”—the habit of giving an answer that has nothing to do with the question, simply for the sake of saying something—is still sometimes found. “Second shots” and guesses never should be allowed; they both denote total absence of mental training and thought. In some cases better progress would be made if teachers took more pains to have a definite aim in their teaching. As Mr. Thring puts it, they should clear a little bit of ground at a time, in place of running about in an aimless way, pulling up weeds at random. Sometimes children are kept too long sitting in desks. We recommend that they always be required to stand in oral lessons, and would again point out that lazy attitudes never should be allowed, but that the pupils should be required to comport themselves in an intelligent way, like persons eager to learn.

DISCIPLINE.—We are pleased to be able to speak highly of the discipline of most of the schools in the district. At the examinations we generally found the pupils earnest in their work, attentive, and eager to please. Class motions were not always performed as well as might be expected. At our inspection visits, also, we generally found the discipline very satisfactory. Occasionally the need for less friction at change of lessons was apparent.

The manners of the pupils were, as a general rule, very pleasing.

We have, &c.,

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

W. E. SPENCER, M.A., B.Sc., Assistant Inspector.

The Chairman, Board of Education, Wanganui.

HAWKE'S BAY.

SIR,—

Education Office, Napier, 31st January, 1893.

The completion of the annual examinations enables me to submit for the information of the Board a general summary of the educational work of the district for the year 1892.

The standard examinations were closed early in December, but the revision of the pupil-teachers' papers, and the papers of the pupils in the upper division of the Gisborne District High School, was not completed until a few days ago.

SCHOOL SUPPLY.—The year just closed has been one of unusual activity in school extension. Since the date of my report a year ago, schools have been opened at Port Awanui and Waipiro, in Waiapu County; Tiniroto, in Cook County; Pukahu, in Hawke's Bay; Maharahara, in Waipawa County; and Wimbledon, in Patangata,—being an increase of six during the year.

There are now fifty-four schools in full working order, but fifty-three only have been examined, as the school at Wimbledon was not opened at the time of my last visit to the district. These schools are scattered over a wide extent of country, Port Awanui, the most northerly of them, being about 330 miles distant from Woodville by road. The opening of the two subsidised schools at Waipiro and Port Awanui has extended my work in a northerly direction by about sixty miles, these schools being situated in the midst of a Native district, where there are many Native children, and a number of Native schools. It seems to me a great pity that arrangements cannot be made to obviate the necessity of two Inspectors of Schools visiting this sparsely-populated district, when one could do the work quite as well, and at much less cost. At Port Awanui and Waipiro there are forty pupils, half of them being Natives, and for the examination and inspection of these I travelled more than 240 miles on horseback, at heavy expense and loss of valuable time, because the Native and public schools are not controlled by the same authority. In three of the six districts named, schoolhouses have been provided by the Board, and at Waipiro the residents themselves have made suitable school provision. At Tiniroto and Port Awanui a raupo whare and an iron shed have done duty as school-buildings, and the instruction of the children has been carried on under conditions which, I submit, ought not to be permitted anywhere. Both places are without out-offices; there are no desks for the children; and no arrangements have been made whereby water may be obtained at the school. I can only remark that the moral effects of conducting a school under conditions such as have been pointed out are disastrous.

In the large majority of districts the school accommodation, if not always sufficient, is suitable and well adapted to the modes of instruction now carried on. The fences, grounds, and out-offices are usually in good order and repair, and show that Committees and teachers give much careful attention and supervision to these important matters. In many instances the school-sites are planted with ornamental shrubs and English trees, which add greatly to the appearance of the school-buildings. The institution of “arbor-day” appears to have given a great impetus to tree-planting, and is likely to have a good effect upon the children. “Arbor-day” was duly kept last year at Napier (Hastings Street), Port Ahuriri, Patangata, Makaretu, Tolago Bay, Woodville, Patutahi, Takapau, and Norsewood, and many trees were planted in the schoolgrounds by the children, teachers, and members of the School Committees named.

The school-buildings at Te Karaka, Makauri, and Waerengakuri, in the Cook County, and at Mohaka, in Wairoa County, though they provide sufficient accommodation, are quite unsuitable for successful teaching. The buildings were originally erected at the expense of the residents to supply a temporary want, but the attendance now, especially at Makauri, warrants the erection of buildings suited to the requirements of the districts. Napier calls for a separate remark. The size of the main school, with its too limited space for recreation, is a subject of almost pressing importance. The infants' division, with an attendance of over four hundred children, occupies buildings standing on a quarter-acre section of land. On the same section are the out-offices and a caretaker's residence. The land not occupied by buildings is 56ft. by 28ft., and this is the quantity of playground provided for the physical and, in some measure, the moral training of the children. With all due deference,