

teachers. Standards V. and VI. were not so strong in mapping and in the mathematical and physical division of their work, and increased attention should be given to these during the present year. History, grammar, and science do not flourish in the schools; the powers conferred on the teachers of selecting for themselves the historical subjects of instruction for their classes has certainly not improved the teaching of history in the schools—it is too often the standard of mediocrity rather than the standard of intelligence that is reached; whilst in Standard VI. the teaching of social economy as defined in the regulations is quite neglected. I regret that more fostering care is not given to the teaching of science in the Board's schools, such as is given in the Wellington District. Help such as the teachers in the latter district receive would encourage the practical teaching of science in all the larger schools. At present experimental science is attempted in only two schools, although nominally science is taught in all. Even good diagrams would be of some help, but simple scientific apparatus would be better. A little encouragement in either direction would prove of value to the schools at the present time. Grammar, though it has suffered somewhat, is still taught with fair success in the majority of schools. In the higher classes derivation and roots are too often "crammed" for examination purposes, but Standards III. and IV. usually prepare the requirements well. Oral and written tests are set without the intervention of printed cards, which tend, so I imagine, to limit the means of finding out the actual knowledge of the children in any subject. The additional subjects, as usual, are among the best work of the schools. Recitation, needlework, and drill are taught in most of them with commendable success. Swedish drill is taught in some and in all the larger ones. Dumb-bells and calisthenic rods are in common use for the physical training of both boys and girls. Sewing maintains a high standard of excellence, and it is taught, without exception, in all schools.

I am able to say very little as to the work of School Committees. Formerly members of Committees were always present on the day of examination, but, except in a few districts, I do not even know the name of a Chairman. Whether interest in school matters is dying remains to be seen, but it seems to me that Committees are less active in school matters than they were a few years ago. It may be they have less work to do now that schoolhouses have been built, grounds fenced, and schools organized and in working order. I would remind them, however, that their duties are by no means ended. School grounds need many improvements. Gymnastic apparatus has yet to be provided, drainage and sanitation require attention in many districts, and school attendance wants to be encouraged and fostered everywhere; and these can only be done effectively by means of local Committees working under proper guidance and control.

The tone and discipline of the schools continue satisfactory, and much may be set down to the credit of Committees. In one case a serious complaint was made against a school, but inquiry found the charge to be unfounded. The fullest attention is paid by me at each visit to a school to inquire into the morals of the pupils, and, considering the circumstances under which so many children are brought together, it is gratifying to report so much that is morally sound and good in the schools. The behaviour of the children at inspection and examination is generally commendable, and there is evidence that the moral training of the children receives the careful attention of teachers. The tabulations contain a summary of the examination results for each school, and of its general condition under the heading "Manners and Tone."

I have, &c.,

The Chairman, Board of Education, Napier.

H. HILL, Inspector.

MARLBOROUGH.

SIR,—

I have the honour to lay before you my fifth annual report on the public schools of Marlborough.

During the year 1895 sixty-three schools have been in operation in the district, this being an increase of eight upon the previous year, as one of the small schools reported as temporarily closed at the end of 1894 has not since been reopened. Of these, fifty-three were examined, with the results shown in the table accompanying this report. Five of the remaining schools had been recently opened at the date of the examination; two had been closed before that time; one remote school will be examined shortly; another (Stephen Island) is practically inaccessible; and the scholars from one household school in Queen Charlotte Sound could not reach the place appointed for the examination on account of tempestuous weather.

The number of children on the rolls of the schools at the date of their respective examinations was 2,169, being ninety more than were presented in 1894. The number absent from the examination was sixty-two—an increase of eleven. The number of scholars passing the examination (including those in Standards I. and II.) was 1,288, or 122 more than passed in the previous year. This is equivalent to an increase of 2 per cent. on the number examined, and 3 per cent. on the roll-number. The scholars in the class above Standard VI. number forty-eight, having increased by six; whilst the preparatory class numbered 599 this year, as against 634 in 1894. The proportion of scholars below Standard I. in the whole district is about 28 per cent. In the Board's schools (as distinguished from the aided and household schools) the proportion varies from 19 per cent. at Marshlands and Deep Creek to 42 per cent. at Cullensville. At the four largest schools in the district the proportion of scholars below Standard I. is—Blenheim, 28 per cent.; Picton, 32 per cent.; Grovetown, 24 per cent.; and Springlands, 41 per cent. The average for the whole colony, as given in the Minister's last report, was about 25 per cent. There is a gratifying diminution in the number of children above eight years of age not presented in Standard I. Last year these numbered 197. This year only ninety-two were detained in the preparatory class, and the reasons given for such detention were—"recently admitted," 34; "dull," 20; "irregular attendance," 18;