

with only one teacher. Candidates with certificates and something like adequate training have not always been forthcoming, and the dearth of applicants in several cases has left the Board with only "Hobson's choice" in making the appointments. The scarcity in the supply of teachers is a matter that is exercising the minds of educational authorities in other districts besides ours. Indeed, the dearth of teachers, more especially of male teachers, is engaging public attention not only in this colony but at Home, and as an instance of this we may mention that one of the leading weeklies is offering prizes for the best papers dealing with this subject. When the proposed training colleges for teachers in the larger centres of the colony have been some time in operation we trust to have young teachers available for schools better equipped for their profession than in the past, and there may be an increase in their numbers; but this last is doubtful in the case of male teachers, unless the prospect of higher remuneration for their work is held out; for after all the main factor with most parents in determining what they are to do with their boys is the kind of living these boys may hope to make when they take their places among the workers of the world.

With regard to the work that has been done in the schools, we have found it, as usual, greatly varying in quality, and this must necessarily happen where we have teachers widely differing from one another in professional attainments, experience, and skill in teaching. Though not all highly trained and useful, the teachers as a body carry out their duties with diligence and earnestness of purpose, and are desirous of keeping themselves abreast of the times in all that pertains to successful school-keeping. To those that are seeking for the best for themselves and for their pupils, we have much pleasure in recommending an excellent shilling's worth in "The Aim and Method of the Reading Lesson," by Charles R. Long, an Inspector of Schools of the Education Department of Victoria. In the thirty pages of matter presented to them in this lecture teachers will find much that should be directly helpful to them in their teaching of the most useful and difficult subject of the school course, and they will also find references suggesting a wide field for investigation that should prove of the highest interest and profit.

From May to October Saturday classes for the training of teachers were held in Timaru. Brush drawing and modelling in plasticine were taught by Mr. William Greene. His classes were well attended, and sound progress was made by a large proportion of those that took up this work. The woodwork class for men was conducted by Mr. W. Parr, and his teaching was supplemented by a brief course of lessons in the kind of drawing that is necessary for such work. We have to thank Mr. George Simmers, M.A., Principal of the Timaru Boys' High School, for conducting these drawing lessons. A large class of men attended the course of instruction in military drill, the instructor in this class being Major George Crawshaw, first assistant in the Timaru Main School. At the close of the course in brush drawing and modelling an exhibition of work done by the teachers and by pupils of public and private schools in the district was held in the Timaru Main School. Through the kindness of Mr. Elliott, of the Christchurch School of Art, there were exhibited with the local work specimens of what was being done under his direction. Variety was given to the exhibition by the inclusion of specimens of needlework, of freehand drawing, and of writing. The exhibition served its purpose well. Visitors were delighted with what they saw; and teachers who availed themselves of the privilege of examining the work and of comparing their own or their pupils work with that done by others reaped much profit as well as pleasure from the exhibition. The proposal to hold the exhibition originated with Mr. Greene, and to him and a committee of the teachers attending the Saturday classes its success was due.

Towards the end of the year the Education Department issued the new syllabus. At once throughout the colony the requirements of the syllabus and the changes contemplated by its introduction formed the main topic of conversation wherever teachers met. Nor was the discussion confined to teachers. Newspaper-editors took up the theme, and opened their columns to correspondents that knew what they were writing about, and to others that did not. As the syllabus is now under revision, we do not intend to discuss its provisions at this time. We must say, however, that, as we did not join in the chorus of condemnation that in some quarters greeted its first appearance, so now we are not inclined to go all the way with those that talk in a sublime fashion of all that is to be accomplished under the new conditions. Much has been done in our schools for years past on lines that will easily fit in with the new requirements, for we have not been waiting for a new syllabus before introducing and encouraging sound methods of instruction, some of them old enough but fulsomely hailed now as new discoveries. Teachers who have been imbued with the spirit of Herbert Spencer's "Education," and who have not laid aside Currie's "Common School Education" as obsolete, need have no fear of the new syllabus. Clearness of aim, freshness of treatment arising from careful preparation of each day's work, sympathy with child-nature, brightness of manner, strenuous application, untiring industry, and common-sense will insure success now as they have done in the past.

We have, &c.,

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The Chairman, South Canterbury Education Board.