

are in a satisfactory condition, the remaining thirty-five ranking below satisfactory. The majority of the schools are in the great middle class, doing good average work. The number of very good schools appears small; but, considering the increased demands made upon the teachers in adjusting themselves to new ideals, new methods, and new conditions, and considering the increased difficulty of gaining the highest marks under the application of new and radically different tests, it is gratifying that so many schools have maintained a standard above satisfactory. There is nothing very alarming in the fact that thirty-five schools are below the satisfactory limit. In comparatively few of these could better work be expected. The conditions have been such that good work was out of the question. Bad attendance, owing to the long distance many of the pupils have to travel; bad roads during a considerable portion of the year; changes of teacher; inability to procure suitable teachers, owing to the isolated nature of the districts and the smallness of the remuneration offered; these are some of the contributing causes to the unsatisfactory nature of the training received and given in some of our country schools. Must this condition hold? Is it possible to alter it? Will it always be the case that many of our backblocks schools will be but poorly manned? For after all the "teacher" difficulty is the most serious one. Actual experience shows that in small schools in charge of good, competent, earnest teachers more work can be covered in a given time than is possible in schools where the classes are larger and the conditions of attendance better. With regard to the possibility of finding teachers who will do this work better than it is in many cases being done at present, we venture to make a suggestion which, if carried into effect, might help towards the solution of what is one of the most vital problems which the Board has to face. The suggestion we make proceeds on the assumption that it will be rarely possible to obtain for out-of-the-way isolated schools the services of highly trained and fully competent teachers, and that we must be content to choose between teachers of no training at all, and those of training of a more or less complete kind. We think it might be possible to give this training in one or two of the larger of our outlying schools—such as, for example, Taihape, Kimbolton, and Raetihi. In such centres as these it should be possible to find young people who would be willing to take up the profession of teaching, but who cannot afford to go through all the preliminary expense involved in the regular course of training. Could not a limited number of such, two or three at each centre, be received as trainees on the understanding that, if they undergo a year's training to the satisfaction of the headmaster and of the Inspector, they will be given appointments to outlying schools adjacent to their homes? Some small increment might be added to the headmaster's salary for the extra work. Such teachers could be put on a further probation of a year in the schools to which they were appointed, and be made to understand that when they had obtained the necessary certificate, and had satisfied the Inspector as to their suitability for the profession, they would rank as teachers in full standing. It does not appear that the ordinary avenues of training will ever provide for such schools as we have been discussing, and it is unfair to the districts—unfair to the settlers, who at considerable sacrifice go forth as pioneers in new districts, that they should be left to the tender mercies of chance in the matter of teachers for their schools. The proposal we have made offers a solution of the difficulty, and it is worthy of the consideration of the Board.

SOME HINDRANCES TO SCHOOL-WORK.—It is well sometimes that the public should be brought face to face with some of the difficulties by which many of our teachers are beset in the carrying-out of their onerous duties. The work of teaching undoubtedly has its compensations, and teachers as a class are not unmindful of these; but the unfortunate part of the business is this, that in the eyes of a sometimes not too generous public the teacher's life appears a most joyous one, with not a sorrow, or pain or ache, or trouble to mar the sweetness of his lot. Here, as nearly always, the public makes one of its undiscerning blunders; for there is probably no other calling which demands the exercise of patience, long suffering, and self-sacrifice to the same extent as does that of teaching. We do not here wish to refer to the difficulties within the school; these are many and sometimes very irksome. Nor do we refer to the isolated nature of the life the teacher is often called upon to lead; that is a factor too often left out of reckoning altogether by those who imagine his lot to be one of unalloyed bliss. It is to difficulties tending to retard his work, and make it ten times more arduous than it need be that reference is now made. We have already referred to the indifference many parents show in regard to giving their children the full value of the opportunities for schooling offered them. Regardless of the future of the children they take them away as soon as ever the law permits or allows them, after they have reached the age limit, thereafter sending them to school for only a day now and again. This is a source of great annoyance to every earnest teacher. Not less so is the baneful practice that has grown up under our School Attendance Act of keeping the children at school just the requisite number of times required by the law. The extent to which this is done in some schools is most disheartening. It would be much better to close school one day every week, for then there would be the advantage gained of having all the delinquents absent on the same day. Here is a most serious difficulty, and it raises the question whether any option of absence at all should be given. Is it right that an absence of two half-days a week should be legalised? Another great difficulty which confronts many teachers in a fast-progressing district such as ours is the migration of scholars from one district to another. In some of the schools examined the school has altered to the extent of half its roll. What this means under present conditions only those know who have been brought face to face with the facts in the actual work of the schoolroom. The difficulty arising from these changes will be very greatly lessened when the practice of examining Standard VI and of making the promotions from class to class at the end of the year comes into operation. We trust the time is not far distant when this practice will be universal throughout the colony.

The work of the Infant Class, especially in the larger schools, is very seriously hampered by the admission of beginners at any and every time throughout the year. A great gain both to scholars and to teachers would be effected by the observance of stated times of admission for new primer pupils.