

their school to the technical school, others come by train eighteen miles, and still others are country teachers, who have more or fewer miles to traverse before reaching the train.

The estimated capitation is £300 on all classes.

We propose to hold a wood-carving and, if possible, a model-drawing class during 1908.

Thanks are due to the following for assistance during the past year: Blenheim Borough Council, for use of gas-stove; Mr. A. McCallum, donation of flour; Messrs. Bythell and Wemyss, for donations of timber.

Mr. Bruce was granted leave to attend the Conference of Experts in Agriculture held in Wellington during the year. He took the opportunity to urge on the Department the claims of his district for assistance, and a substantial grant for chemicals and apparatus was the result.

STANDARD VII.—Nine schools had pupils of this grade, the total roll being twenty-seven. Of these twenty-six were present. Examinations held by me in Standard VII are understood to be simply progress examinations to the Civil Service Junior, the Standard VII pass being success in that examination. The head teachers of country schools who have pupils continuing at school beyond Standard VI find that better work is done when this definite proposal is set before them.

SCHOLARSHIPS.—“The Education Act Amendment Act, 1907,” does away with Queen’s Scholarships. The result is that Marlborough loses her chance of gaining these valuable scholarships, and receives no compensation. The competition goes to the larger districts, which have the number of Junior National Scholarships to which they are entitled increased. The fact that one of our pupils qualified in 1906 for a Queen’s Scholarship proves that the loss is not imaginary.

The Junior National Scholarship age-limit has been advanced to fourteen years, the papers being on the subjects of the Sixth Standard. The offering of university bursaries to all that gain “credit” on Junior University Scholarship papers is a pleasing step towards free education in the higher branches.

That University Bursaries, Senior Queen’s Scholarships, and Junior University Scholarships are all awarded on a test in which 1,500 marks are assigned to Latin, and only 600 to any such science as chemistry, is an anomaly. Of course, if Latin is reckoned to be worth two and a half sciences each science will be practically starved. The influence of this test reaches down to the primary school, and tends to undermine the most striking proposals in our syllabus. I do not think it advisable to give 1,500 marks to each science and 600 to Latin, but if that were done in this test the practical sciences would receive a stimulus that would be felt from end to end of these Islands.

Maine, in the United States, has a primary-school population of 132,415, and 13,450 are enrolled in free high schools. New Zealand has a primary-school population of 139,302, and 5,364 are obtaining free secondary tuition. Thus one State gives free higher education to about three pupils to our one, and glories in the fact that an unusual number of eminent men have graduated from its schools.

THE PUPIL-TEACHERS.—All the pupil-teachers that sat for examination succeeded in satisfying the examiners. It appears, however, that the instruction in practical work will not be entirely satisfactory till some direct reward is proposed to those on whom the duty of instruction falls.

In the State of Maine, America, they have what is called a School Improvement League. Committees enrolled under this are emulous to make their school the best in the country. They endow it with books, book-cases, apparatus, and the most approved furniture. They paint the walls in attractive tints, and adorn the rooms with statuary and pictures. They beautify the grounds. They consider it would be a misfortune to have some person of wealth contribute the entire sum necessary to make the improvements. Outgoing pupils are encouraged to leave some memento—a picture, a bust, &c. Finally, “No town should commence the work of school-improvement and then keep so still about it that no other town may profit thereby.” In New Zealand the inhabitants of our cities take pride in rearing handsome buildings, laying out public gardens, and adorning the town with statuary. In the country the people and committees might begin on the chief public building—the school. We shall be pleased to hear of the results of their efforts.

MR. SMITH’S RETIREMENT.—In 1890 he was called to Marlborough as Inspector and Secretary, offices which he held till 1904, when the warnings of age led him to lay aside the inspectorate. He continued, however, in the secretaryship until May of last year (1907), when he retired on superannuation. He brought to his work a sound common-sense, a saving grace of humour, an ever-ripening experience, and a uniform courtesy. As one who was his colleague in office during three and a half years, I wish him many seasons of autumntide—a wish that is tempered only by regret that the Superannuation Act allows emoluments so small as to make his pathway only raggedly smooth.

I gratefully acknowledge the general earnestness displayed by the teachers in their labours of the past year.

D. A. STRACHAN, Inspector.

The Chairman, Education Board, Marlborough.

NELSON.

SIR,—

Education Office, Nelson.

We have the honour to present our annual report on the schools of the Nelson Educational District for the year 1907.

One hundred and sixteen schools, six more than the number recorded last year, were at work during the last quarter of the present year. Nine new household schools have been established, but three others have ceased to exist. Some recently opened schools have not yet been examined by us, and through Matiri being closed at the time of the Inspector’s visit the pupils failed to attend examination, so that the total number of schools examined is 108.