

Of the sixty-three teachers on the staffs of the schools, twenty-four possess certificates, two licenses to teach, and fifteen have recorded success in examinations higher than that for the proficiency certificate. The teachers holding no special qualification are practically confined to the smallest schools.

*Efficiency.*—Of the forty schools that have been open during the year the large number of thirty-two were under sole teachers. Of these, ten failed to record a satisfactory result. The reason for this is the unusual number of recent changes of teachers, to whose inexperience the defects are mainly due. On the other hand, ten of such schools were recorded as good or very good. The quality of the instruction in the larger schools ranges from satisfactory to very good. All the five private schools were recorded as good or very good.

*Certificates.*—The number of pupils examined in S6 during the annual visits or at central examinations held in December was 105. Of these, seventy-three, or 70 per cent., were awarded proficiency certificates, and sixteen, or 15 per cent., competency certificates. In the larger schools the successes of the pupils of the standard were very numerous; and this is due not only to regular and skilful teaching, but largely to strictness in the classification of the pupils. In these same schools the pupils in the Fifth Standard prepare a complete course with thoroughness, and are not allowed to advance to the final standard unless there is good prospect of an advantageous result. The same conditions exist in the five private schools, in which, of twenty pupils, fifteen obtained proficiency certificates and four competency certificates.

*Classification.*—Emphasis has been laid on the necessity in all departments of school-work of grading the course and of insistence on thoroughness in all stages. The result of such method is to render more pleasant the work of the teacher and naturally to increase the interest of the scholar. Any teacher allowing any attempt at work for which the necessary preliminary preparation has been neglected deserves and receives adverse criticism. This principle is extended to the classification of the pupils, with the result that in general no child undergoes the mental strain and discouragement of the attempt to accomplish more than is reasonable. The teachers in both the public and private schools have co-operated in the effort to maintain a good standard. The result of wise management and attention to method has in a majority of the schools established a high standard of effort. It may be mentioned as a tribute to the work of the teachers that at the scholarship examination at the end of the year five Junior National Scholarships have been obtained, although in this small district only one was allowed under the previous system, and that the first and fifth places for the Dominion were included. A further illustration is supplied by the large number of pupils whose interest in education continues beyond the requirement of the final certificate, over a hundred attending the secondary classes at the beginning of the year.

*Quality of the Main Subjects.*—It is evident from these comments that the quality of instruction in the main subjects of the course in the majority of the schools reaches a commendable degree of merit. The reading follows a wide course, and is intelligently studied and expressed. Spelling and writing are also good. In composition the exercises, including answers to grammatical questions, are usually accurate, and the expression is fairly free. Oral composition varies in quality, but is generally a satisfactory feature of the schools. In arithmetic the results are creditable. Oral exercises receive due attention, and the instruction in numbers in the preparatory classes follows good methods and forms a sound basis for the standard-work. In geography the instruction follows methods by which the various branches are correlated, and both the detail and its relation are recognized. In drawing and history an attempt is made to cover the requirements of the syllabus, and both the treatment and the result are successful in a considerable number of schools.

*Physical Instruction.*—The teachers, in combination with those of the Grey District, received instruction in the new course during the month of February, and the exercises and organized games have been instituted very successfully in a large number of schools. The recent visits of the instructors have increased the interest, and have also afforded the schools a special opportunity to record good progress. In two towns the existence of municipal swimming-baths has enabled the school-children to take advantage of a useful form of physical training.

*Handwork.*—Some form of handwork has been included in practically all the schools. In those up to Grade II (under sole teachers) it is usual to find the subject, as a separate item of the course, confined to the preparatory division, where the use of sticks and bricks, paper-folding, and blackboard drawing are the chief features. In these schools drawing, including colour-work, takes its place, and the teachers are encouraged to embody practical work with other subjects. In the larger schools the handwork is usually confined under the standards, mainly in the form of carton-work, leading in the case of boys to woodwork in S5 and S6. The girls, where possible, learn cookery. Weaving and canvas-work have been largely introduced in connection with the needlework.

*Other Subjects.*—In nature-study, teachers of the smaller schools at least indicate the incidental lessons prompted by the requirements of other subjects. In the larger schools teaching of elementary science is included with good results. A reader on health is widely used. In a few rural districts school-gardens are maintained. The climatic conditions are, however, very discouraging. In singing, a number of schools prepare a suitable course of songs, and in a few ear-training and notation receive a pleasing amount of attention. Needlework is in nearly all cases very successfully mastered. During the past year a great deal of Red Cross work has also been accomplished. The schools of the district have combined to send a great deal of material for use in the hospitals at the front, and their efforts have been acknowledged in grateful terms by the staffs of those institutions.

As this is the last report relating to Westland as a separate district, and as my connection with it has lasted for twenty-two years, I desire to record my appreciation of the uniform interest shown in the work of the schools by the members of the Education Board and School Committees, and by the public of the district. As a result the educational machinery has worked smoothly and effectively. I have also to acknowledge the willing co-operation of the teaching staff, without whose devotedness the efficiency that exists could not have been reached or maintained.

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The Director of Education, Wellington.

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