1880.

NEW ZEALAND.

EDUCATION.

REPORTS OF INSPECTORS OF SCHOOLS.

Presented to both Houses of the General Assembly by Command of His Excellency.

(It has not been thought necessary in all cases to print those portions of the Inspectors' reports which relate only to particular schools.)

AUCKLAND.

SIR,—

I have the honor to submit the following report for the year ended 31st December, 1879:—

The number of primary schools in the education district in the first quarter of 1879 was 186; in the second, 196; in the third, 199; and in the fourth quarter, 202. The number of schools taught half-time was 29. The attendance of the pupils is shown in the following table:—

Quarter ending	Number of Schools.	Roll Number.			Average Attendance.		
		M.	F.	Total.	M.	F.	Total.
March 31	186	6,272	5,500	11,772	5,096	4,401	9,497
June 30	196	6,657	5,904	12,561	5,309	4,510	9,819
September 30	199	6,865	6,039	12,904	5,345	4,494	9,839
December 31	202	7,334	6,625	13,959	5,711	4,977	10,688

The night schools in the December quarter were 8; average attendance, 104.

In former reports I have described the plan adopted here for the training of teachers. As the Minister of Education desires that information on the subject should be embodied in this report, I now proceed to give it.

The training of teachers is carried on by means of classes held in Auckland on two evenings of the week and on Saturdays, and by the actual work of teaching in the schools. A number of country teachers are allowed to seek improvement by means of correspondence with the masters of the training classes. Those who attend the training classes are pupil-teachers, the younger assistants, and probationers. Probationers are persons whom the Board consider likely to make useful teachers, but who have little or no experience as teachers. A few of them may be experienced teachers awaiting employment. An allowance towards his support is made to each probationer. The Saturday classes are attended by many country teachers who are unable to attend the evening classes. There are besides many pupil-teachers in the country schools. The head teachers of these schools are required to direct and assist the studies of their pupil-teachers, who come up annually for examination. The Board prepared regulations for the employment and training of pupil-teachers, which they intended to bring into force at the beginning of this year. This they have been unable to do in consequence of the regulations not being assented to by the Minister of Education.

I am very much inclined to be of opinion that the pupil-teacher system is not suited to the requirements of the day, and that it should be adopted only when the adoption is a necessity—that is, in places where classes for the instruction of young teachers cannot be formed. I think therefore that Boards should be allowed a certain amount of discretion in this matter; that it should not be made imperative on them to bring the system into operation all over their districts, whether it seems fit to them or not. I believe that the money paid to headmasters in and near large towns for instructing pupil-teachers would be much better laid out in providing classes in connection with the normal school, where one exists. Besides, the amount of study and instruction usually exacted under the pupil-teacher system would be unnecessary with the class of young people who would be pupil-teachers under the plan I shall presently submit. As regards cost, I find the allowance to the teachers of schools in and near Auckland for instructing pupil-teachers would amount to about £400 a year. Classes for their instruction could be carried on at a much less cost.

I am now, after mature consideration, of opinion that, so long as the pupil-teacher system continues, the passing with ease in the Sixth Standard should be made a condition of first employment; and that no one under the age of sixteen should be eligible for employment, though candidates might be allowed to come up for examination a year earlier. I would make three years the term for which pupil-teachers should serve. In the case of candidates of seventeen the term might be reduced to two years. This would bring them to the age of nineteen, when they could come up for examination in Class E, and might be eligible for admittance to a training-school. I venture to urge that there would be many advantages derived from the following out of this plan. It is evident that the further a candidate's education has proceeded before beginning to teach, the less necessity will there be for an injurious amount of study when the actual work of teaching has begun. A young teacher who has passed easily in the Sixth Standard will require but very light study to enable him to pass in Class E in three or two years.

Those engaged in the work of education, who know how many young people have broken down under the double strain of learning and teaching, will see at once how advantageous is a plan which reduces this strain to a minimum. It has also other advantages. It would reduce the number of candidates for teacherships, which is becoming almost appalling, and would insure to a considerable extent the selection of the fittest only. It was wise, I think, not to demand at first higher attainments than those required for passing the Fifth Standard; but I now believe the time has come for an alteration in this respect. I learn from a valuable report supplied to the Board by Mr. Josiah Martin, who has lately returned from a visit to Europe, that in Prussia pupil-teachers are not employed, and that no one is allowed to teach who has not gone through a long course of study. It is evident that we are not in a position to adopt such a plan here. But a step in that direction, which not only involves no extra expense, but causes a saving of money, is certainly worth taking. Many certificated teachers in this district have injured their health and impaired their usefulness by studying for higher grades. I really think some check should be put on this mania for going up for examination. It might be enacted, for instance, that two years should elapse between each step, or that leave to go up should be obtained from the Education Board of the district. The first duty of a teacher is to his pupils. I have reason to believe that many girls who are pupil-teachers injure their health by a too constant attendance at balls and parties. The necessity for frequent leave of absence is often brought about in this way. I think the Board will find it necessary to dispense with the services of teachers who thus render themselves unfit for their duties.

The system of examination for standards was not adopted in this district before last year (1879). Early last year notice was given to the various schools to hold themselves prepared for the standard examinations after the 30th June. From that date to the end of the year a number of schools were examined, with satisfactory results on the whole, considering the newness of the system to the teachers and pupils. It is not desirable, for obvious reasons, to give further particulars in this report. From the short experience we have had of the system here, it would appear that it may be of much advantage if worked judiciously by teachers and Inspectors, and that it may do wide-spread mischief if worked in another fashion. Teachers must have that conviction which begets deeds that to pass pupils in standards is not the be-all and end-all of their efforts; but that the standards really represent—as they profess to do—the minimum amount of knowledge which a child ought to have at the several stages. Inspectors may do much harm by adopting a mechanical method of passing pupils. The adoption of such a method makes the whole thing a delusion. To give an instance, let us take the Fourth Standard, after passing which many pupils leave school. A boy who has passed this standard should be able to write a neat and creditable letter, and should have a fair knowledge of accounts. Any one employing him has a right to expect so much. Let us suppose that the plan adopted by the Inspectors is that to pass in a certain number of subjects is to pass for the standard. The number of subjects in this standard is seven. If to pass in five subjects constitutes a pass for the standard, it is evident that a boy who had failed in composition and arithmetic may be armed with a certificate that he has passed the Fourth Standard. There is unfortunately a tendency in all these systems to become dull formalities, the original idea which gave them life getting crushed out by the dead weight of routine. I think it would help a good deal to neutralize the evils likely to arise, if Inspectors would lay great stress on composition in the standards where it is required. It is the best test whether a school has been taught intelligently or not. It cannot be learned by rote, like history for example, nor produced mechanically, as arithmetic often is. In a school where composition is good the master must have done something more than prepare his pupils for the standards. Of course it is presumed that original composition is taught, not merely that great hindrance to it—reproduction. A high percentage of passes in a school is, taken by itself, sometimes calculated to mislead. For instance, the percentage may be obtained by a large number passing in the First and Second Standards, though the higher standards may be defective. Again, in one school showing a higher percentage the pupils may have barely scraped through, while in another showing an apparently similar result they may have passed with ease. If the system of standards is to be prevented from becoming an organized hypocrisy, the most demoralizing of all shams, all Inspectors must be instructed to pass only those who can pass with ease, in the three higher standards at all events. Then the statement in the regulations that the standards are a test of the minimum attainments will have a meaning given to it which it has not now. The instructions to Inspectors (which are, I believe, the same as those adopted in other colonies) in reality amount to this: that the Inspectors are to be lenient (see Regulation 8).

The number of school libraries in this district is, as yet, but small. There can be no doubt that their influence will be good if due care is used in the choice of books. The number of public libraries in the district is 69. For some years some of these libraries have, I am aware, been procuring books suitable for young people as well as adults, and have thus in some measure been supplying the want of school libraries. There can, I think, be little doubt that these libraries have on the whole done good by diffusing knowledge and helping to sweeten the settler's life.

The Board have always assumed that it is the intention of the Education Act that both sexes should be instructed together, and this assumption has been acted on as a rule. To this rule, however, there

are some exceptions. A girls' school, under a mistress, has been established in one of the Thames districts. This was done at first because a building sufficient to accommodate both the boys and girls of the district could not be obtained. The Board were desirous to amalgamate the schools when they could do so; but, in compliance with the strong representation of the School Committee, the original arrangement was continued. This girls' school is attended by several young boys, and at the district boys' school many girls attend. At Mount Hobson, near Auckland, there is another girls' school taught by a mistress. At Onehunga the girls and boys are taught under the same roof, but in separate schoolrooms, and under separate teachers, a mistress and master respectively. In some of the largest schools taught by a master the girls are kept in a separate part of the building from the boys, when the numbers in each standard are so great as to require their being divided into two or more classes, and when, therefore, no increased expense is incurred by the separation.

The Board have always kept the question of cost in sight. When possible the separation of sexes in the playground is provided for. In providing retiring places, care is taken that those for the different divisions shall not be close together. The earth-closet is adopted in many cases.

It is impossible to state the ordinary area of a school site. The idea of the Board is that in country places there shall be at least five acres attached to each school, for school site and dwelling site. The money laid out in procuring roomy sites is often money saved. Apart from other considerations, when paddocks are provided into which pupils can turn their horses, many will come from comparatively long distances, and claims for nearer schools will then often be delayed or prevented. In the City of Auckland the sites are, for the most part, of no great extent; but, fortunately, some of the schools are placed near public recreation-grounds.

The principle of the construction of school-buildings which the Board adopt is to provide ten square feet of floor room for each pupil; to divide the building into class-rooms not more than 22 feet wide, and not less than 12 feet high to top of side-walls, with the roof open, or ceiled at some distance above the side-walls; each class-room to contain two large classes or about a hundred pupils. Sometimes a class-room is provided for half the number. Most of the class-rooms are fitted with glass doors. Tobin's ventilators are used, and windows of two sashes, each sash hung. The lighting is sometimes from one side and the end, and sometimes from two sides. Too much refining about how the light should fall does not seem desirable.

The principles which determine the number and quality of teachers in proportion to the size of the school are shown in the scale appended:—

B.—*Assistant Teachers.*

Average Attendance.	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	Pupil-Teachers.
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	
40 to 65	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1 pupil-teacher.
65 to 100	80	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	Or 2 pupil-teachers.
100 to 150	100	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	And 1 pupil-teacher; or 3 pupil-teachers.
150 to 200	120	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	And 3 „ „
200 to 250	140	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	„ 5 „ „
250 to 300	160	70	...	...	...	...	...	...	„ 5 „ „
300 to 350	180	80	60	...	...	...	...	...	„ 6 „ „
350 to 400	200	100	70	...	...	...	...	...	„ 7 „ „
400 to 500	225	110	80	60	...	...	...	...	„ 9 „ „
500 to 600	250	120	100	80	60	...	...	...	„ 10 „ „
600 to 700	250	130	110	100	80	70	...	...	„ 13 „ „
700 to 800	250	140	120	110	100	80	...	...	„ 15 „ „
800 to 900	250	150	130	120	110	90	80	60	„ 17 „ „

"With the sanction of the Board, two or more pupil-teachers or probationers may be employed under certain circumstances, instead of an assistant, provided that their joint salaries do not exceed that of an assistant. The employment of monitors in the actual teaching of the school will not be permitted. Preference of employment will, as a rule, be given to certificated and classified teachers. The salaries paid to uncertificated teachers shall be such as the Board may decide. This scale, so far as it affects the pay of assistant teachers and the number of assistants to be allowed to each school, shall be brought into operation as soon as it conveniently may be: provided that the Board may, if they think fit, modify the arrangement respecting the pay of assistants, and their number at any school. The first assistant at every large mixed school shall in every case be a man. If, for two consecutive quarters, the average attendance at a school shall be less than that for which the staff is calculated by the scale in force for the time being, the staff shall be reduced so as to conform to the requirements of the scale."

There has been an improvement in the state of the schools on the whole during the past year. The discipline of most of them is much stricter. It used to be a common belief, amounting almost to a creed, that a certain amount of disorder was necessary, and even praiseworthy. Teachers are coming to the conviction that it is easier to have silence and order than to apportion noise and confusion, a truth which some of the best of them were slow to learn; so hard do old superstitions die. Writing is better taught, though not, in some schools, as well as it ought to be, considering the pains that have been taken to point out the way. Some teachers will persist, on one pretext or another, in using copy-books not sanctioned by the Board; books in which the writing is much too small and too crowded. The old-fashioned, scratchy, small angular hand has not entirely disappeared. Three things should be

observed in writing—to write large, to finish every letter, to make every letter so that it cannot be mistaken for another. The effect of neglecting this last will be strikingly seen if a manuscript in a foreign language is given to be set up to a printer who do not understand that language. Many teachers are not particular enough, when using the black-board, to write in the manner pupils are required to write in their copybooks.

Reading also is better taught; but teachers as well as pupils have still much to learn. I wish to instance one, a common fault, in the hope of correcting it: "and" between two words is joined on to the first, and the "d" is frequently done to death altogether; thus, "John and James" becomes "Johnan James." I regret to have to say the misuse of the letter *h* is spreading. Teachers cannot be too strenuous in their efforts to eradicate this horrible disease. I am glad to say that composition is very fairly taught indeed in many of the schools. A great many pupils in the Third as well as the Fourth Standard can write very creditable letters. But this is not so in schools from which the pestilent heresy of reproduction has not been rooted out. It is astonishing what tenacity of life this stupid practice has. Teachers sometimes allege a dearth of subjects as an excuse for adopting it. There is no dearth of subjects; no one day is like another, something new happens every day. Nature, in her infinite variety, shows herself in a hundred different aspects on every day that passes. The very finding-out of subjects involves a valuable culture of the eye and ear; it trains the pupil not to see with dim eyes or to hear with dull ears. It aids the development of the observing powers, and quickens the apprehension. The unhappy reproducer cares for none of these things; he holds on after a bewildered fashion to the wretched clue given him, and when he drops it, as he often does, he becomes utterly helpless.

I cannot say that grammar is taught satisfactorily as a rule. This is rather surprising, seeing that instructions, simple and easily understood, how to teach elementary grammar have long since been issued by the Board. There ought to be no difficulty in teaching the small amount of grammar required by the standards. It is true that the Board have always discouraged the teaching of young children grammar from books. Many teachers seem unable to discriminate.

The amount of knowledge of geography shown by the pupils is rather disappointing. Few subjects are more interesting or more easily taught than elementary geography. I desire to call attention to the great inconvenience caused by maps of New Zealand being published which do not show the provincial districts. How the history and geography of the country are to be taught from these maps I do not understand. The provincial districts are as much political divisions of the country as the counties are, and are infinitely more important for educational purposes.

The method of teaching arithmetic has improved on the whole, though there is still much left to be desired in this respect.

The amount of history taught in the schools is still, I regret to say, but small.

As regards the laws of health, I may say, as I did last year, that the knowledge of them is becoming more generally diffused, and that I trust the efforts made here for some years to teach this subject may bear fruit in time. It is probable, at all events, that the next generation will not insist on adopting those effectual methods of shortening life which the present generation so consistently practises. In connection with this subject, I am glad to say that the teaching of gymnastics has been introduced here during the past year. Two instructors have been appointed, one for the Auckland district and one for the Thames. Already much good has been done by their instruction. I append a list of the apparatus supplied to the schools: Dumb-bells, rings, parallel bars, horizontal bar, bar-bells, poles, vaulting-horse, ladder-arch.

The teachers of singing at Auckland and the Thames continue to perform their duties in a satisfactory manner.

A drawing-master has been now appointed. He visits as yet only the schools in Auckland and its neighbourhood. He conducts a teachers' class on Saturdays.

Object-teaching is practised in all the schools in a more or less satisfactory manner.

Needlework is taught in most of the schools, and in a better fashion than formerly.

Not many teachers appreciate adequately the important duties devolved on them. It is not enough that they should preserve order in their schools, and teach the prescribed subjects well. They should do what in them lies to form the characters of their pupils. They should study to elevate and refine them by every means in their power; to imbue them with a love of truth, not only in matters of occurrence, but also in matters of opinion, thus teaching them to be thoughtful and moderate, as well as tolerant, in judging the opinions of others; to teach them that there are higher things than money-making; that plain living and high thinking are better than the vulgar display which often leads to dishonesty, and is the very opposite to real refinement. Teachers should also impress on their pupils that it is due to themselves as well as to others to be always courteous in their demeanour; that rudeness and boorishness are social crimes.

If any changes are made in the Education Act, it appears to me that it would be desirable to alter the ages between which pupils are admitted at the schools. These ages, in my opinion, would be sixteen and six. It is to the advantage of the State that as many of her citizens as possible should be well educated. Many pupils of the elementary schools will be prevented from fitting themselves to compete for the opportunities offered for procuring a higher culture, if they are hurried out of the schools at fifteen. In many cases they cannot obtain scholarships till sixteen; they may probably be unable to become pupil-teachers till sixteen. I dwell on these points because a disposition has been shown in some quarters to debar the cleverer children of the district schools from those advantages from which they should not be debarred, by insisting that the merest elementary education is enough for them, and that therefore they should be prevented from remaining at school after the age of fifteen. I think it is absurd to admit children under six years of age to any school, except to an elaborately organized infant school. Their presence in an ordinary district school is injurious to them, is a great hindrance to the school work, and is very expensive, for teachers and school space must be found for them. This is the end at which a saving should be made.

In my last year's report I called the attention of the Board to the danger that existed of the growth

of a turbulent law-defying element, from the encouragement given to insubordination by parents of pupils, and others who ought to be more alive to the danger of their conduct. This danger still exists. Often, when a teacher inflicts a well-deserved and not immoderate punishment, he is assailed by letters in the Press. He is perhaps summoned to Court, and numbers of people, including the police, busy themselves to procure his conviction. If he escapes a direct fine, he is most likely left to pay his own costs, amounting to some pounds. In fact, nothing can exceed the tenderness of all the world for the real culprit, who most likely did not get half his deserts, and their virtuous indignation at the cruelty of a man who has not shrunk from doing an unpleasant duty. Is it wonderful that teachers shrink from inflicting punishment? Is it surprising that what is called larrikinism grows apace where so many act as if it was their special vocation to encourage it? Public and Press, magistrates and police, will have to put forth all their strength if this evil growth is to be stopped. I feel that I should be neglecting my duty if I did not speak what I know on this matter—one of vital interest to the community.

I have, &c.,
R. J. O'Sullivan,
Inspector.

The Chairman, Board of Education, Auckland.

TARANAKI.

Although scarcely six months have elapsed since the visit of the Organizing Inspector, Mr. Pope, the results of that visit already visible are most satisfactory. Parents, children, teachers, and others are now aware that the Government and the Board are determined that education shall be efficient and sound, and not a varnish. I am glad to report that generally throughout the district the attendance, with a few exceptions, has been more regular and punctual. Nevertheless I was, in a few cases, displeased to find pupils whose names were given in as candidates for examinations absent themselves altogether, or partially, on the days I appointed for that purpose.

The registers and returns have been better kept and made than heretofore. There is, however, in some cases room for improvement. Drill and singing have in many cases been introduced very hopefully. Sewing has not been introduced in the manner I wished: it is strange the mothers will not take the trouble to give their daughters work to do in school, preferring, it seems, to get it done by machine.

I have visited all the schools twice, and some more frequently, since June last. The only school not strictly examined is the Huirangi School, which has been, from many causes known to the Board, closed for some months. At a recent visit, for the purpose of instructing a new and inexperienced teacher, I was glad to find the pupils had not lost much, and there was great promise of this school maintaining its high position under the new mistress.

The issue of good-conduct certificates by the Government, and of certificates of merit to each pupil who passes a standard, is having a beneficial effect.

[The rest of the report relates to individual schools.]

Wm. M. Crompton,
Inspector.

WANGANUI.

Sir,— Education Board Office, 25th February, 1880.

I have the honor to present my first general report on the state of education, under the new standards, in the schools under inspection in my district, for the year ending 31st December, 1879. Through the introduction of "The Education Act, 1877," and the various arrangements consequent upon it, great and important changes have taken place.

As one of the changes effected, we have now a uniform set of standards for all the schools in the colony, and so far well. But, in my view, until we have something like uniformity in the conducting of examinations by the several Inspectors, we shall not be able to form a fair and impartial estimate of the state of education in the various educational districts of the land. However, the field of the new standards is much too wide. It makes, as it seems to me, much too heavy demands both upon teachers and scholars, in order to secure a pass. I can say emphatically, from long and successful experience in working standards in Scotland, that the New Zealand ones are more rigorous in their demands than ever any of the Scotch standards were. Had the Scotch standards been as exacting as those of this country are, I could not have passed 99 per cent. in the essential subjects, as I invariably did. The school which I conducted was the largest in Edinburgh, the average attendance being about 1,200, and every child qualified by attendance was presented.

The Act, moreover, has created a greater and more widely-spread interest in the education of the young. In this district such has undoubtedly been the case, and consequently the number of scholars has been greatly increased, and the number of the schools largely added to, for whose inspection you hold me responsible.

At the outset, I have to report that, with the view of discouraging neither the teachers nor the scholars by expecting so much from them at first as is demanded in the new standards, I determined, throughout my examinations, to work the standards gradually and cautiously. It appeared to me almost impossible, all at once, properly to work the subjects to be learned under the new standards into the school course. Besides, I felt I was heavily handicapped by having seventeen schools in charge of either inexperienced or uncertified teachers. The modification determined upon was the following: If a scholar showed strength in a majority of the required subjects of the Third or of any of the three upper standards, I did not pluck him, although in one or two subjects he might show such weakness as to render him not entitled to a pass. I may add that the examinations were conducted throughout on one uniform plan. The members of the First, Second, and Third Standards were examined orally; and the members of the Fourth, Fifth, and Sixth Standards were examined, as far as possible, by means of written papers, which I received and valued at home.

STATISTICS.—The number of schools is 51; and the number of children on the books, 3,890. The average attendance at all the schools during the year was 2,577. The number present on the day of examination was 1,757 boys and 1,639 girls: in all, 3,396. Of this number there were 1,961 qualified, by attendance or otherwise, to be presented for individual examination in the standards; the remainder of the number (1,435) consisting of scholars who had been presented from one or other of the standard classes, but, from faulty classification, were found to be not qualified, and of the children too young to be presented even in Standard I. Passed in Standard I., 971; in Standard II., 495; in Standard III., 304; in Standard IV., 116; in Standard V., 42; and in Standard VI., 11: in all, 1,939. Passed in reading, 1950; in spelling and dictation, 1,892; in writing, 1,944; in arithmetic, 1,594; in grammar, 390; in geography, 752; in history, 377; in sewing, 576: in all, 9,475 passes. Percentage of passes in reading, 99·4; in spelling and dictation, 96·4; in writing, 99·1; in arithmetic, 81·2; in grammar, 79·2; in geography, 73; and in history, 77. The average age of children presented in Standard I. was nine and a half years; in Standard II., eleven and a half years; in Standard III., twelve years and five months; in Standard IV., twelve years and seven months; in Standard V., thirteen years and two months; and in Standard VI., fifteen years and eight months. It will be observed that the average age of the children in Standard I. is somewhat high. This high average is caused by not a few of them being above the age of fifteen years.

TEACHING STAFF.—The teaching staff employed in the schools was—(*a*) Certificated teachers, 38; (*b*) uncertificated teachers, 28; (*c*) pupil-teachers, 21: in all, 87.

Passing to the ordinary standard work, the reading comes first.

READING.—I am happy to be able to report favourably on the progress made during the year in the direction of good reading. However, the reading of the children in the upper standards lacks the intelligent and modulated expression which constitutes good reading. I have observed that in a new lesson the reading is generally taken first, instead of being taken last, when the scope of the lesson has been thoroughly mastered. But, if it be true, that a child cannot read intelligently what he does not understand, the proper method to follow would be to take the word-meaning and the scope of the lesson first. And then the teacher should read the passage, to set, in his own voice, the example of distinct and expressive utterance. Reading is an imitative art; and, as the power of imitation is strong in children, the clear, distinct, and expressive utterance of the teacher will quickly take effect on his pupils.

RECITATION.—I have to report unfavourably regarding this branch of the curriculum. Speaking generally, the passage learned was rendered in a mechanical and monotonous way. The children, too, seemed to be ill at ease, and betrayed ignorance of the allusions and the meanings of words occurring in the passage repeated, not recited. But in several of our best schools the recitation was very creditable, and betrayed careful preparation.

SPELLING.—Whenever, in any school, the reading-books in the lower standards had been ransacked by any teacher, and the harder passages exhaustively noted, and a list of the difficult and more uncommon words made for the repeated observation of the scholar, I always found the children worthy of a pass. On the whole, I have to report favourably upon the spelling and dictation. A simple dictation exercise, suited to the stage at which the boys being examined are, will do more to test the spelling than an abstract, a paraphrase, or even a letter will do. In any of these methods a knowing scholar can easily scheme to conquer a difficulty in spelling by the obvious expedient of shirking it; but in dictation he cannot palm off his spelling capacity for more than it is worth.

WRITING.—Writing, like reading, is an imitative art, and the teacher has to show the pupil how to write as well as how to read. The slate-writing of the First, Second, and Third Standards is generally and gradually improving. In most of the schools it is good, clean, and distinct; in others very good; and in some even beautiful. Exceptionally good writing on paper was shown to me in the majority of schools, but notably at the Sandon and Waverley Schools. I am glad that I can speak regarding this important subject in terms of praise; it is one of the best taught.

ARITHMETIC.—I regret to have to report that, in my district, arithmetic is the ugly hurdle that brings many a promising colt to grief, as will be seen from the above summary. Faulty notation or numeration, and carelessness in taking down the questions, were fruitful sources of failure. The children appeared, in very many cases, not to have been taught the value of numbers. In dictating sums to those in the lower standards, I did so according to the principle or power of numeration. It is important to read out, not occasionally, but always, the numbers denoted by the figures, and not the individual figures themselves. For example: 5,045 should be dictated five thousand and forty-five; not five thousand no hundreds and forty-five. Sums should not be dictated by single digits: thus, 137 should be dictated one hundred and thirty-seven, not one, three, seven. The value of recapitulation in numeration, or in the back work of arithmetic, appears not to be understood or appreciated in the great majority of the schools. But, as I am of opinion that large numbers, which seldom or never occur in the range of daily experience, suggest no idea to children—such numbers as millions, billions, and trillions—I confined myself to six figures in a line, when dictating to children in the Third Standard. The method adopted for examining this standard was to give a simple question requiring mere common sense, in addition to two plain-sailing ones, but I am sorry to say that the sense sum was too much for all who tried it, excepting a very small number belonging to our best schools. Any two of the three sums dictated, when correctly worked, or the correct working of the sense sum, constituted a pass. Invariably, such a question as—Find the value of 111 boxes of oranges if 1 cost 37s. 6d.—would puzzle most children in the Third Standard. The questions set for those in the upper standards, being based on the power of numeration, were, in the majority of cases, printed in words. Four sums were submitted to the Fourth Standard children, two requiring mere accuracy of work and two involving thought. Correct working of the two easy-going sums, or the correct solution of the more difficult of the sense sums, was reckoned the minimum pass. Generally, I have to report unfavourably on the result. Five sums, the correct working of three of which secured a pass, were submitted to the children in the Fifth Standard. The sense sums were invariably passed over. But, on the whole, the result was satisfactory. Six sums, the correct working of four of which gained a pass, were submitted

to those in the Sixth Standard. Failures were not unfrequent in the working of the questions demanding thoughtful intelligence; but the boys in the senior division of the Wanganui District High School took a firm grip of these, and solved them admirably. The papers handed in by them were models of neatness, arrangement, and accuracy of work. I may here impress upon teachers the necessity of the more systematic teaching of the principles of arithmetic. Generally speaking, arithmetic appears to be taught too much by mere rule. There is far too little inculcation of principle. But, taking into consideration that children, from nervousness and flurry, appear to lose their wits at the Inspector's examination, I am happy to be able to report that, on the whole, satisfactory progress has been made in arithmetical knowledge since last examination, although under different standards.

Mental Arithmetic.—I have to report that this important subject is, with one or two honorable exceptions, at the lowest ebb in the schools. Its power as a mental cultivator is not understood and not appreciated. Next year I hope to find it in its proper place in the curriculum. To the following questions I rarely got a correct answer: What sum will be required to pay the wages of ten men for one week at 2s. 4d. a day? Required the rent of a garden containing eight acres, at £7 16s. 6d. per acre? What is the cost of a yard of cloth when £4 15s. is paid for 5 yards? These questions were proposed to children in the upper standards. I consider the plan of giving simple questions involving some little thought about the way to solve them an excellent one. I mean to adopt it, but not exclusively, in future examinations. Other questions will be given with the view of bringing out whether the scholars have learned the simple rules of mental calculation, and can apply them quickly and readily. Good marks will be given for proficiency in mental calculation.

Grammar.—The elementary grammar prescribed to the children of the Third and Fourth Standards was not well got up, only a half or so of the scholars presented acquitting themselves creditably. And this was only accomplished under a lenient and patient examination, which may not be repeated. Acquaintance with the inflections was meagre at the best, and the pronoun seemed to be a part of speech with which they were altogether unacquainted. The boys of the Senior Division of the Wanganui District High School, however, should be mentioned by way of exception to this. The grammar exercises prescribed to the children of the Fifth and Sixth Standards, generally, indicated that the subject was pretty well understood. However, there is room for improvement in parsing and in the analysis of sentences.

Composition.—This is the least satisfactory portion of the essential work of the upper standards. The letter which the children of the Fourth Standard were required to write contained only morsels of the information they should have had on the subject prescribed, which was usually a popular one. There were, indeed, honorable exceptions. The style which a letter ought to take was generally well known and reproduced. More attention to the use of capitals, punctuation, and the framing of a simple sentence, will be expected and appreciated at next examination. A selected portion of verse was submitted to the presentees of the Fifth and Sixth Standards, and they were required to give the substance of it in their own words. The result showed in most cases that the exercise was a novel one to them, and that no little difficulty was felt in rendering the passage submitted in equivalent words of their own choosing.

Geography.—Notwithstanding the ample appliances with which the schools are furnished, I have to report somewhat unfavourably as to knowledge of geography. Speaking of the teaching of this subject in the Second and Third Standards, I may say that, whilst in one or two schools I found nothing to complain of, yet in most I saw evidence that the teaching had been of a too careless sort. The papers set for the upper standards contained three sections, but the pupils were allowed to answer questions from one section only. These sections fairly covered the field prescribed for each of the standards. Some excellent papers were handed in, but the majority did not indicate an intelligent grasp of the subject. It appeared to me, when revising the papers, that there was a tendency in the teaching to turn the attention of the children to parts of the subject not likely to be of much practical benefit to them. Map-drawing is a very effectual means of fixing details in the memory of the children, and I would recommend more frequent practice of it, if better results are to be got. A globe, in addition to present appliances, would be helpful.

History.—I have to report more favourably of the result of my examination in history than of that in geography. However, I was by no means favourably impressed with the appearance made by the children in the Third Standard. Considerable difference of opinion was frequently expressed by the teachers as to the extent of the field to be cultivated. Few schools attempted more than the chronological order of the periods, or a few unimportant events in the Norman or the Brunswick period. In the upper standards fair knowledge of the subject was occasionally displayed. As in geography, the papers set contained three sections, the pupils being allowed to answer questions from one section only. The papers worked not unfrequently gave indications of rote and cramming. At the same time some really good papers were given in. In several of the schools in which geography and history have been interestingly taught, I am pleased to be able to say that there has been a marked improvement in the knowledge of both geography and history, but especially of history.

Sewing.—I am happy to report that praiseworthy improvement, during the year, has been made in the girls' industrial education. Sewing is now taught generally and systematically. Almost every girl has a piece of work to show, on the day of my inspection, with her name and standard attached. Some very nice specimens of darning, mending, and patchwork were shown. In one of the schools (Turakina Valley) the boys produced specimens of sewed work, knitting, &c., second to few in my district for neatness of manipulation. A great impetus has been given to the teaching of such arts as sewing and knitting in, with one exception, all the schools in which there is a female teacher, by the judicious regulation that a reduction of 10 per cent. in the minimum number of marks for passing a standard shall be allowed, provided that the Inspector be satisfied with the efficient and systematic character of the work. If practicable, I purpose holding, in January, 1881, in Wanganui, an exhibition of sewed work from all parts of my district, when suitable prizes will be awarded to deserving pupils. In my view, this also will help to stimulate the girls to do their best to acquire proficiency in an art that is peculiarly their own.

REGISTERS.—I am sorry to have to report that at present there is no admission-book, or only a temporary makeshift in lieu of one. The Secretary informs me that it is the intention of the Central Department to furnish a proper one, in which to record full particulars of children admitted. I have frequently urged the importance of this, and I am glad that one is to be provided forthwith. The daily attendance registers are generally kept in a satisfactory manner, and, as a rule, I think they may be relied on as trustworthy and accurate. On the occasion of my visits without notice, a good many irregularities are discovered, that actually lead to pecuniary loss, both to the teachers and to the Board. These mistakes occur, I am persuaded, with the full intention on the part of the teachers to make perfectly accurate returns. On the other hand, I have not met with a single case in which the scholars not present were marked present. Such an act of falsification could of course be done only with the deliberate intention of increasing the average, and thereby the salary. Any teacher, even of a small school, may be one or two out on either side of the account; and I am satisfied that no Inspector, if he has had experience in marking registers, would impute it to anything but accident. In what I have said, I am by no means justifying laxity. On the contrary, I admit that even laxity, if continued, should be punished in some way or another. The chief defects to be met with in my district, in the keeping of registers, are want of date, headings, and daily summations. On one or two occasions, I discovered that the attendance had not been marked for the morning, or for the afternoon; the teacher saying in explanation that it was intended to mark both morning and afternoon attendances together, and that it was easy to remember if any child had been absent. Besides the chances of mistake that this mode involves, it is in direct violation of the rules printed on the cover of the registers. There can be no doubt that the uniform system of marking now adopted does produce trustworthy results. The regulations for marking registers are not at all difficult to observe, when the registers are marked and closed at the time set apart for that purpose in the time-table.

DRILL.—Drill is practised in 20 schools, the girls even partaking of its advantages. The exercises are generally simple extension motions and company drill. In precision and rapidity of movement, the Wanganui District High School for boys did admirably. The value of drill as a disciplinary agent, as well as a physical exercise, is admitted by all who have given it a fair trial. It is doing good service, in flattening round backs and "setting up" children, after leaning over their writing-desks. Many of the School Committees have provided apparatus for gymnastic exercises, which are thoroughly enjoyed by the children. I may express the hope that all the Committees will keep in view the benefit resulting from such exercises, and will not forget to provide the necessary apparatus.

SINGING.—Singing is taught in 20 schools with varying degrees of success, according to the methods followed. The others make no profession of it. I have been frequently struck at the rapidity with which the children can be made to read music as easily as an ordinary reading-book. In this respect, the Girls' District High School is ahead of all the others. In my view it is a decided gain to a boy or a girl to be taught to sing, with proper feeling and expression, even a good song or two. It is still better to acquire the ability to sing at sight. All are at one as to the effects of music; they are physical, emotional, and moral.

SCIENCE.—The teachers, in this young district, have not as yet gone very far outside the essential subjects necessary to secure a pass. However, a start in science has been made in the Wanganui District High School for boys, and in Foxton, Marton, Sandon, and Halcombe Schools. Good results are already apparent in the Wanganui District High School for boys and in the Foxton School. Text-books not being used, the children rely entirely upon oral instruction. The teacher appears to be the ordinary person by whom this oral instruction should be imparted; but existing circumstances seem to point towards the appointment of a special teacher for this subject, if appropriate illustrations and experiments are to be used.

DISCIPLINE.—Satisfactory improvement, in this essential requisite of standard work, has to be reported. The usual state of matters appeared to be good feeling between the teachers and the scholars: and, where pupil-teachers were employed, they showed their good sense in their willingness to strengthen the efforts of the teachers. Of the quietness and honesty with which the children performed the paper work of the examination, I would speak very emphatically, for it is a proof that the priceless habits of self-reliance and independent effort have been inculcated upon them with effect. However, only meagre attention, as yet, is given to the higher points of discipline. I shall be happy, in a future report, if I should be able to speak of much greater attention being paid to the inculcation of self-respect, self-control, politeness, cleanliness of person, truthfulness, purity of conduct, and refinement of speech; and to the training of the boys and girls in respectful behaviour towards each other, and towards their superiors, in all circumstances. At present there is much to be desired with regard to all these particulars.

PUPIL-TEACHERS.—During the year I have examined 27 pupil-teachers and candidates. Broadly speaking, their papers were neatly worked and showed good average ability. Marked improvement in reading was, without exception, apparent. Their recitation lacked feeling, and showed a want of appreciation of the meaning and scope of the passage. Arithmetic, with honorable exceptions, was generally weak and wanting in precision and method. Geography, grammar, and composition were better grasped than at the previous examination. Their knowledge of the principles and methods of school management, instruction in which is now from the first provided for in the new programme, was the weakest point in the examination. Judicious choice and careful supervision have done much to raise our pupil-teacher staff to its present important place in our school economy. Natural fitness and efficiency, in practically dealing with classes, are qualifications possessed by most of the pupil-teachers. They have a turn for teaching, and like it. A most important element in our school economy is smartness and precision, and our pupil-teachers possess that in no ordinary degree. Under the gentle influence of the female pupil-teachers, the standard examination is generally good in schools in which they are employed. I believe that, though the pupil-teacher system may be liable to abuse, it is the best opening, at present, into the teaching profession, and, as it has done good work in the past, so it has a brilliant future before it.

TEACHERS.—As a rule, the teachers have been earnest, energetic, and zealous in the discharge of

their duties. For the uniform courtesy and kindness with which I have been everywhere received by them I have to express my cordial acknowledgments. I do not know a class of persons who need sympathy more than teachers, especially Board teachers. For myself, it is a very unpleasant thing to have to report unfavourably upon a good teacher, as far as results are concerned; but I should consider myself unworthy of your confidence if I did not perform the disagreeable as well as the pleasant part of my work with equal impartiality.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.—In conclusion, I have to express my grateful sense of the courtesy and kindness with which you and the Board have treated me during the past year. I have also to express my gratitude to the members of the different School Committees for the considerate help they have rendered me, and I am bound to express my sense of the cordiality and confidence with which I have been everywhere and always received by the children in my district.

I have, &c.,
R. FOULIS, F.E.I.S.,
Inspector of Schools.

W. H. Watt, Esq., Chairman, Education Board, Wanganui.

N.B.—Acting upon your suggestion, I would very earnestly call the attention of School Committees, teachers, and parents generally, to the wide margin that exists between the number of children belonging to our schools and the number in average attendance. On the day of examination the number on the books was 3,890, while the average attendance for the year was only 2,577. School Committees and teachers can do much to narrow this margin, by exercising the compulsory power possessed for enforcing regular attendance. Irregularity of attendance is, in many of our schools, a very serious drawback and a great discouragement to earnest teachers. By the exercise of earnest effort, on the part of all concerned, to improve the average, the capitation grant would be augmented, and thereby the revenue of the Board.

WELLINGTON.

SIR,— Education Office, 31st March, 1880.

I have the honor to lay before you my sixth annual report on the state of primary education, and on the working condition of the Board schools, in the Wellington District.

INTRODUCTION.—I purpose in this report to give a less detailed statement than in former years of the internal working of the several schools, and of other technical matters in connection with them; and to touch upon such questions as naturally would be suggested in an intelligent inquiry into the state of education within the district. The ground, I think, will be covered by the following questions: Is the district fairly supplied with schools? Are the schools well attended? Is sufficient accommodation provided? Is the instruction sufficient, useful, and sound? Do any schools continue year after year in an unsatisfactory condition? Are the teachers competent, faithful, and respected in their office? Are the school properties suitable and locally cared for? Are the colonial standards likely to prove workable? Is the pupil-teacher system working satisfactorily? And, lastly, is there good reason for believing that the present cost of education is money well spent? It would be impossible for me to do this programme justice in the space within which my efforts must be confined; but I shall endeavour to put before your Board as much information as I can in the compass of this report. Where space does not allow me to go more into particulars you will permit me to draw tacitly upon a large practical experience for conclusions. In the early part of the year I paid a visit of inspection only to all the schools except two, which are generally inaccessible at that time of the year. I have since examined them all without exception, the examinations concluding on the 10th instant.

SCHOOLS ESTABLISHED.—The Wellington Education District includes the Counties of Wairarapa East, Wairarapa West, and the Hutt; and is that portion of the North Island lying east of the Tararua ranges, and south of a line drawn from the Manawatu Gorge to the East Coast at about right angles to the western boundary. One-half the children attending Board schools are resident in the city of Wellington. Leading from the city are two main roads—one going for about 130 miles through the Wairarapa Plain, and through the entire district northwards; and the other is the great western road, running for 35 miles, and leaving the district at the foot of the Paikakariki. Along these two main lines of road school centres are found for two-thirds of the remaining children in the district. The rest of the population is met with in the back country of Wellington City, in the smaller valleys which here and there diverge from the main routes, on the flanks of the Wairarapa Plain, and in the up-country clearings east of the Ruamahunga. In the city of Wellington 8 large schools are established—1 for boys only, 1 for girls only, 2 for infants only, and 3 for boys and girls mixed. On the main lines of road 18 schools are established, consisting of 8 district-town schools and 10 country schools. The up-country and outlying districts support 17 schools, 9 of them being very small. There are altogether 43 schools open, being an increase of 6 on my last return. Seven new schools were opened during the year, and 2 half-time schools amalgamated. The 43 schools may be thus classed: Eight city schools, each on an average attended by 345 children; 8 district town schools, each on an average attended by 201 children; 18 country schools, each on an average attended by 51 childen; 9 rural schools, each on an average attended by 26 children. All the 35 schools outside the city of Wellington are mixed; and, besides these State schools, there are no others, except one or two very small private-venture schools. In the city of Wellington, besides the College, which is the only public institution in this education district principally giving secondary education, there are a few small private-venture schools and two Roman Catholic schools self-supporting. We have now to consider whether the schools at present established are sufficient for the wants of the district. Eight large schools are established in the city of Wellington. The buildings of six of them are completed, and two others are about to be built. In addition to the eight schools, when completed, I think two more will be required, making ten altogether—an infant school in Ghuznee Street, on the land now leased as a temporary mixed school, and a large mixed school for boys, in a district not yet constituted, at or near the junction of Adelaide Road and Courtenay Place. The eight district-town schools meet the wants of the larger centres of population in the country. The schools at the Lower Hutt and Masterton are becoming crowded; and, as settle-

ments have been formed at Petone and Kuripuni, which are extensions of the larger townships, schools should be built within these extensions at Petone and Kuripuni, to meet the requirements of the increasing populations. Had the present Masterton School been more centrally situated, or had Petone been near the Lower Hutt School, I should in either case have recommended the enlargement of the present schools; but, under the existing circumstances, it would be better to meet the wishes of the settlers, and, in both cases, to erect other new schools. Public schools have been established in all districts where an average attendance of 25 children could be maintained, the centres of such districts being more than three miles from existing public schools. The Board have done more than this, for there are nine schools in the district, each with an average attendance of less than 25, seven of them being wholly supported by the Board, and two of them assisted by a grant of £4 per head on the attendance. It would appear to me that additional assisted schools might be established in the following places: Wadestown, Whiteman's Valley, Kaitoki, and the Taueru. By removing the Park Vale School near Waihakeke, that school would be convenient for the children of both the Park Vale and Waihakeke Districts. In the establishment of small schools in outlying country districts, very great care should be exercised, as the representations of the settlers are seldom realized. The very existence of a school is often jeopardized by the refusal of one or two settlers to associate with others in its management, or to contribute towards the support of an aided school. Sometimes the removal of one or two families from a district impoverishes the school. There should be 40 children in a district to warrant the Board undertaking the entire expense of building and supporting a school. On 40 children, an average of 25 may be relied on. I do not think the liberal offer made by the Board of £4 per head in aid of schools in outlying districts is generally known by settlers living in districts where made roads do not exist. There are comparatively poor settlers with five or seven children in each house living six or eight miles apart in the broken country of the Teramea and Moroa, for example, who are paying teachers 10s. per week to instruct their children. It seems a hard case that these settlers should be compelled to put up with such inferior instruction and to pay for it, without receiving any assistance from the State, although they contribute equally with others to the cost of education throughout the colony. I have been often impressed by the social influence which a school exercises in an up-country district. Children, whose lives heretofore seemed aimless, are brought together, they are dressed daily for school, they have set occupation, the school life interests alike pupils and parents. An educated person is an acquisition to the small community, and the school-building is the Areopagus of the district. Occasionally, however, there are men who manifest such utter indifference to mental development and social progress that they care nothing for their children except for the labour they can get out of them. Another generation, I feel sure, will not tolerate such crass ignorance, and the State will compel the performance of duties which a parent has no right to neglect.

Attendance.—The attendance continues largely on the increase. At the date of my visit 5,525 children were enrolled on the books, and 5,020 presented themselves for examination. This shows an increase since last examination of 935 on the rolls, and of 901 present at the examinations. I have examined during the past year nearly 2,000 more children than I examined two years ago within the same district. The average daily attendance compares favourably with that of other districts in or out of the colony, and yet it cannot be said that much more than one-half of the children attend really well, and fully reap the benefits which the schools afford them. The attendance at my visits on the examination days is exceedingly good, amounting to 91 per cent. of the whole. Still, one-half of the children are, more or less, irregular in their ordinary attendance; and in some school districts the evil is a considerable one. Next to bad teaching, there is no greater hindrance to the work of education; and I am persuaded that a large amount of public money is wasted so long as the attendance of children—for say at least 250 half-days in the year—is not made compulsory by the State. I have carefully collected a few statistics to show how badly some pupils attend who have been at school a year or two, who are of good age, in good schools, and in higher-standard work. The following are the results for nine such schools:—

	Number presented in Higher Standards.	Number who attended over 250 half-days.
Mount Cook Boys' School	201	157
Mount Cook Girls' School	180	118
Thorndon	235	170
Greytown	69	53
Pauatahanui	23	10
Fernridge	25	13
Waihinga	18	18
Featherston	84	65
Taita	36	25
Total	871	629

In these nine schools, 242 children out of 871 in the very prime of school life had made such poor attendances that no teacher could be expected to prepare them in the work of the year; and their work would necessarily be so broken as to be practically valueless. Except in the Hutt District, there are not many children in the country who do not attend school at all. But in the City of Wellington a number of children could be picked up from the streets any day sufficient to fill a large school. The compulsory clause is not put into force by the School Committees, who have hitherto had this excuse: that the school accommodation has never been large enough for the number who voluntarily attend. The abolition of school-fees has not tended to improve the attendance at school. When people paid for their education they valued it more. I have never been able to see why in this country education should either be free or the attendance voluntary. A fee might be charged, and attendance made compulsory. So strong is the popular sense of the value and necessity of education in the present day, that there is no fear of our present school system collapsing for want of popular support. The people, as a whole, demand education for their children, and are willing to pay for it. I am much pleased to observe, year by year, that the State schools are becoming more and more the common schools for the

whole community. Men of position and education are largely using the public primary schools in preference to any others. The class prejudice and the religious feeling which have hitherto been drawbacks to the establishment of large common schools will certainly in time either die out or be ignored. Why should not the first principles of economics be applied to school maintenance as well as to manufacturing industries or physical work? Why should the State in one form or another maintain two schools—to say nothing of a greater number—when one would do the work in every respect more thoroughly? With efficient management, strict supervision, healthy and well-ordered schoolrooms, and sound teaching, the danger of evil influence should not be deterrent to parents sending well-bred children to the common school; and, when all classes combine, this efficiency will be insisted on, and, further, then will be brought to bear the stronger elevating influence of the better-mannered children.

School Accommodation.—As a consequence of the large increase in the school attendance, the accommodation in some schools is becoming straitened. In many cases new schools or additions to buildings have already met the demands for increased accommodation. During the past few years the school-buildings and playgrounds have improved in character and up-keep. The country districts for the most part possess suitable properties. It is in the City of Wellington where much remains to be done to afford the accommodation required; although during the past year two large new schools have been built and three public rooms have been rented to meet immediate demands. If I include the school at Newtown, which has been opened since the beginning of the year, and the new school at Thorndon, now ready for occupation, the accommodation provided, and the increased accommodation immediately required, may be thus set down:—

School.	No. of Pupils for which Accommodation is already provided.	Attendance.	Accommodation required.	Area of Ground (approximately).
1. Thorndon...	600	450	...	¾ acre.
2. Thorndon Infants'	...	150	300	⅜ „
3. Terrace	250	300	...	1 „
4. Mount Cook Boys'	500	450	...	1 „
5. Mount Cook Girls'	350	400	200	⅛ „
6. Mount Cook Infants'	550	550	...	½ „
7. Te Aro	...	400	600	⅝ „
8. Newtown...	350	300	...	1 „
	2,600	3,000	1,100	

Tenders are about to be called for the new school, Willis Street, Te Aro. Temporary rooms are rented to relieve the pressure upon the Mount Cook Girls' School, and to afford accommodation for the Thorndon Infant School. The former being very inconvenient, the additions to the girls' school should be made without delay. The large temporary room in Courtenay Place, now occupied by the girls, would serve well for a time as the starting-ground for a new mixed school for that part of the city. The Terrace School accommodation is not adequate to the attendance; but, as two large schools hard by, capable of taking in extra accommodation, will shortly exist, enlargement may, for a time, be delayed. The building for the new infant school, Sydney Street, Thorndon, should be proceeded with at once, as the valuable site is lying idle. The Mount Cook Infant School is now fairly filled; and the proposed new infant school in Ghuznee Street to replace the present old temporary building will be required soon after the Willis Street School is completed. The immediate requirements then are—(1) The proposed new school, Willis Street; (2) the proposed infant school, Sydney Street; and (3) additions to Mount Cook Girls' School. With regard to the eight district-town schools—Clareville, Featherston, Upper Hutt, and Kaiwara have room enough and to spare. Greytown, Lower Hutt, and Masterton are fairly filled; but the accommodation will suffice for the winter. Additional space is required at Carterton; but the case is not urgent, as a temporary building, close at hand, is in use. All the eight district-town schools, except Kaiwara, possess at least an acre of land, each with ample room-space for teaching and residences for the teachers. All the eighteen country schools have accommodation sufficient for any increase likely to arise in a year. With the exception of four—Horokiwi, Porirua, Johnsonville, and Taita—they are each built in at least an acre of land; but teachers' residences are wanting at Opaki, Horokiwi, Judgeford, Ohariu, and Makara. In each of the nine smaller schools there is more than sufficient room for the children attending. All are held in suitable buildings, except Korokoro and Bideford, both of which are held in buildings lent to the Board as temporary schoolrooms. All these schools, except Korokoro and Bideford, possess at least an acre of land, and residences are attached to all those which are vested in the Board, Gladstone excepted. From this statement it is, I think, clear that, in existing schools, the country as a whole is fairly provided with sufficient accommodation for immediate wants; and that the City of Wellington requires additional space for at least 1,100 children.

Instruction.—The efficiency of a school must ordinarily be measured by a standard which is generally obtainable. The work of a school, in its several sections and subjects may be compared with that which is practically possible. In the best of schools some subjects are not so well taught as in others of an inferior order. For instance, in no school in the City of Wellington is writing so well taught as it is at Taita and Kaiwaiwai. Again, the junior classes at Matarawa are better instructed than the junior classes in the Thorndon School. The subjects of instruction are prescribed by Order in Council; but not one school in my district has covered, in its entirety, the whole groundwork of the standards prescribed. I shall find it necessary to go into further detail on the subject of the standards in another paragraph. I think the subjects of instruction now prescribed are more than sufficient; but that the quality, if not the extent, of the work is still, on the whole, very far from that which may be aimed at. I do not think the sudden crowding of subjects into the curriculum of the schools is calcu-

lated to raise the standard of efficiency in the more essential subjects. I am convinced that during the past year, from this cause alone, the character of the instruction in reading, writing, and arithmetic has deteriorated. Unless more time is allotted to the reading lesson during the next year than has been done during the past, I fear the results in this important subject will, in many schools, be disastrous. The schools as a whole are, I believe, continuing to do good useful work. In most of them the instruction is fairly sound, and the results satisfactory. Of the 43 schools, I consider there are 27 fairly satisfactory; and, of the rest, 10 are above the average in management and results, and 6 are far below the average, and are to be looked upon as unsatisfactory. Singing is taught in 15 schools, in 6 of which the instruction is good. Freehand drawing is taught in 33 schools, being well taught in 6. Very elementary instruction is given in the outlines of physics or physiology in 23 schools—the instruction being satisfactory in 8—but there has been very little real experimental teaching. Twenty-one schools teach sewing, the work being exceedingly good in 7, and best of all in the Mount Cook Girls' School, which alone presented the work for each standard, according to the form prescribed. Instruction in drill is given in 24 schools; and in 13, including all the boys' schools of the City of Wellington, the instruction is decidedly efficient. Of the eight schools in the City of Wellington, the Mount Cook Girls' School produced the best results at the late examination, having passed 250 candidates out of 289 presented. The Mount Cook Infant School fully maintains its high and widespread reputation. In the Thorndon Infant School instruction is satisfactorily given; but the special character of the Mount Cook Infant management is wanting. The Terrace School again produced good results, and it now ranks as one of the best of the city schools. The work throughout the Te Aro School has very much improved, and the results are satisfactory. The passes in the Thorndon School, this year, show a falling-off. The absence of the headmaster for six months, and the exceedingly crowded state of the building, will largely account for this. Owing to the high classification in the past, this school still contains the greatest number of Fifth and Sixth Standard children. At the time of my visit the working condition of the temporary Newtown School was thoroughly unsatisfactory. The teacher has since been removed, and I have every reason to believe the new school is now under good management. Owing to the change in the headmastership, the work of the Mount Cook Boys' School has been much disturbed. I think the present headmaster will raise its position; it now appears in good working order, and I trust the next examination will show improved results. In this and the Thorndon School, large classes presented in Standard IV., and many presented in other standards, failed altogether. I shall again touch on this subject in speaking of the standards. The work, however, in several classes, was manifestly defective in method and character. The condition of the eight City schools, at the time of my visit, may be thus summarized: Good, 3; satisfactory, 4; unsatisfactory, 1. The table of results, included in this report, will show the classification of each school. Of the eight district-town schools, a very striking improvement was manifest in the management and working results of the Greytown and Carterton Schools. Masterton is the only one which is at all unsatisfactory. Here a very large class of 40 candidates, for Standard IV., were unprepared; and much of the work, especially the writing, was of an inferior order. The discipline was also weak. The master is, nevertheless, hardworking and capable of doing good work. The instruction in the upper class, taught by himself, was, as usual, of a good order, especially the reading. Four extra subjects, and most of the ordinary subjects, were exceedingly well presented in the Featherston School, which ranks highest of the district-town schools. The work in the Carterton School was characterized by its exceeding neatness, and the writing was all that could be desired. All the candidates of Standards V. and VI. in Featherston and Carterton passed well. The condition of the eight district-town schools may be thus stated: Good, 2; satisfactory, 5; unsatisfactory, 1. Of the 18 country schools, that at Waihinga is the best taught. The writing at the Taita and Waihinga was excellent. The new schools at Mungaroa, Judgeford, and Park Vale are successfully established, and are all in good hands. Tawa, Pauatahanui, Fernridge, and Matarawa continue to do very creditable work. The remaining schools are more or less satisfactory, except Karori, Makara, and Johnsonville. At Karori the discipline and management were, as usual, weak, and the instruction in the upper classes exceedingly defective. At Makara the instruction generally is of the poorest order. The condition of the eighteen country schools may be thus summed up: Good, 3; satisfactory, 10; unsatisfactory, 3. Of the nine remaining small schools, two—Gladstone and Tenui—although they are by no means in an unsatisfactory condition, showed a falling-off from last year's results. The schools at Kaiwaiwai and Korokoro had improved very much. The condition of the whole may be thus stated: Good, 1; satisfactory, 7; unsatisfactory, 1. I am sorry to find there is much unsound teaching and bad method in the instruction of the lower-standard, and sometimes, especially in arithmetic, in the higher-standard, work of large schools. This arises partly from want of knowledge or training on the part of the subordinate teachers, and partly on account of weaknesses in the management. Among the many causes of failure in preparing for standard examinations the following may be enumerated: Bad classification at starting; want of reclassification, say every quarter; omission of parts of the programme, such as the composition required for Standard III., certain rules in arithmetic for Standard IV., and numeration; the subjects not having been covered in time to allow for revision and sufficient practice; bad judgment in estimating the amount and style of work required; the unsound character of the teaching, say in copy-writing and pronunciation; method of instruction by junior teachers not criticised by the headmaster; want of frequent test examinations by headmaster; work ill-conditioned; discipline weak; absence of oral and class inductive teaching; leaning too much on text-books; bad methods (especially in arithmetic); and pupils not being practised in answering examination-papers as to neatness, order, and quantity. In home-lesson work there is sometimes no variety whatever, and the exercise-books are often in very bad form. I fear many head-teachers are too much in their seats, and too seldom in front of classes giving instructions either to aid the pupils or to guide the teachers. Much valuable time appears to be frittered away in attending to visitors, in petty matters which could be committed to messengers or pupil-teachers, and in the keeping of registers and making-up of returns. I recommend the City School Committees to hold annually, as in Dunedin, an exhibition of school work, and to give prizes for, say, neat exercise-books, drawings, sewing, map-drawing, writing; and, if possible, for mental

arithmetic, recitations, gymnastics, running, swimming. The same might be done at three other centres for the Wairarapa, Hutt, and Porirua Districts respectively. These contests would create a good deal of useful emulation.

TABLE OF RESULTS.—Although in this report the work of each school is not set forth in detail, the following tables show the status of each. The number returned in each standard includes all in the school, old and new passes—children who failed to pass a higher standard and absentees being credited with their last classification. All absentees not previously classed are returned as below Standard I.

Wellington City Schools.

No.	School.	On Books.	Present at Examination.	Over 8 Years of Age.	Classed in Standards.	Standards in which Classed.						No. presented in Standards.	No. passed in Standards.
						I.	II.	III.	IV.	V.	VI.		
1	Thorndon (Mixed) ...	455	436	400	349	86	83	103	25	31	21	362	195
2	Te Aro (Mixed) ...	386	356	206	210	61	62	54	20	12	1	215	178
3	Terrace (Mixed) ...	284	278	223	240	30	64	62	45	30	9	239	192
4	Mount Cook Boys' ...	453	402	406	356	114	110	97	6	23	6	366	241
5	Mount Cook Girls' ...	365	326	329	304	81	112	53	35	22	1	289	250
6	Newtown (Mixed)* ...	114	86	45	34	12	13	9	...	...	...	40	29
7	Thorndon Infants'* ...	154	123	...	4	4	...	...	...	...	...	4	4
8	Mount Cook Infants'...	552	493	...	58	58	...	...	...	...	...	63	58
	Total	2,763	2,500	1,609	1,555	446	444	378	131	118	38	1,578	1,147

* New schools opened in temporary buildings at the time of inspection. The new building at Newtown has since been opened, and there are now 300 children on the books.

District-Town Schools.

No.	School.	On Books.	Present at Examination.	Over 8 years of Age.	Classed in Standards.	Standards in which Classed.						No. presented in Standards.	No. passed in Standards.
						I.	II.	III.	IV.	V.	VI.		
1	Masterton...	334	320	194	172	54	53	45	10	7	3	158	98
2	Clareville	110	100	64	61	20	11	21	6	3	...	58	52
3	Carterton	253	224	177	155	60	41	35	6	10	3	150	122
4	Greytown	245	228	178	145	45	37	35	17	7	4	149	116
5	Featherston	194	160	106	120	34	27	22	14	12	11	116	87
6	Upper Hutt	132	130	87	91	17	23	33	10	6	2	94	72
7	Lower Hutt	212	193	139	128	31	44	29	12	7	5	129	91
8	Kaiwara	130	108	69	68	16	21	26	2	3	...	69	50
	Total	1,610	1,463	1,014	940	277	257	246	77	55	28	923	688

Country Schools (Average Attendance of 25 and over).

						I.	II.	III.	IV.	V.	VI.		
1	Horokiwi	38	37	26	25	3	14	5	2	1	...	29	20
2	Pauatahanui...	53	48	34	36	11	7	8	6	2	2	33	30
3	Judgeford (new school) ...	31	31	13	13	7	4	2	...	...	...	13	13
4	Porirua	37	37	23	28	12	10	2	2	2	...	28	13
5	Tawa	81	80	52	63	15	14	19	7	5	3	61	43
6	Johnsonville...	49	48	27	21	9	4	5	1	1	1	22	14
7	Ohariu	53	48	41	38	6	15	10	3	3	1	38	25
8	Makara	49	46	34	37	11	13	11	1	1	...	39	27
9	Karori	84	67	52	51	20	23	7	...	1	...	50	28
10	Taita	82	75	55	51	15	13	9	8	5	1	46	42
11	Maungaroa (new school) ...	44	43	18	17	9	7	1	...	...	...	18	16
12	Waihinga	31	30	25	23	3	3	8	1	7	1	22	20
13	Kaitara	43	36	33	33	7	11	11	4	...	...	37	32
14	Matarawa	48	42	33	33	13	13	7	...	...	...	33	31
15	Park Vale (new school) ...	37	36	23	7	1	5	...	1	...	...	6	6
16	Fernridge	71	60	47	40	9	9	13	6	3	...	41	30
17	Opaki	33	33	21	26	5	3	16	1	...	1	28	23
18	Mauriceville...	56	56	42	31	11	12	8	...	...	...	32	25
	Total	920	853	599	573	167	180	142	43	31	10	576	438

Rural Schools (Average Attendance less than 25).

No.	School.	On Books.	Present at Examination.	Over 8 years of Age.	Classed in Standards.	Standards in which Classed.						No. presented in Standards.	No. passed in Standards.
						I.	II.	III.	IV.	V.	VI.		
1	Korokoro	25	24	18	17	4	4	5	3	1	...	16	15
2	Wainuiomata	32	26	14	12	2	3	3	2	2	...	14	9
3	Tauherenikau	24	22	12	14	7	5	...	2	...	...	15	8
4	Kaiwaiwai	28	28	25	23	5	5	6	5	1	1	23	20
5	Waingawa	33	23	21	23	3	5	9	4	2	...	17	10
6	Gladstone	26	23	18	15	5	7	...	3	...	...	14	12
7	Bideford (new school) ...	18	17	7	8	5	3	...	...	...	...	9	8
8	Eketahuna (new school) ...	19	19	12	11	7	1	3	...	...	...	15	10
9	Tenui	27	22	20	17	...	7	5	1	4	...	17	12
	Total	232	204	147	140	38	40	31	20	10	1	140	104

Summary.

District.	No. of Schools.	Average No. on Books.	Total No. on Books.	Total No. present at Examination.	Total No. over 8 years.	No. classed in Standards.	Standards in which Classed.						No. presented in Standards.	No. passed in Standards.
							I.	II.	III.	IV.	V.	VI.		
Wellington City...	8	345	2,763	2,500	1,609	1,550	446	444	378	131	118	38	1,578	1,147
District-town ...	8	201	1,610	1,463	1,014	945	277	257	246	77	55	28	923	688
Country ...	18	51	920	853	599	573	167	180	142	43	31	10	576	438
Rural	9	26	232	204	147	140	38	40	31	20	10	1	140	104
Total this year...	43	128	5,525	5,020	3,369	3,208	928	921	797	271	214	77	3,217	2,377
Total last year...	37	124	4,590	4,119	2,868	2,510	707	826	462	287	144	84		
Increase ...	6	4	935	901	501	698	221	95	335	–16	70	–7		

Highest Passes in Standards.—In compliance with the regulations of the Board, I present a list of the pupils, boys and girls separately, who have gained the highest number of marks in the three highest standards. The following is the prize-list:—

Standard VI. (Highest).

	Name.	School.	Age. yrs. mo.	Marks.
Boys—1.	David Craig ...	Featherston ...	11 10 ...	140
2.	Thomas Moore ...	Carterton ...	14 6 ...	135
3.	Edgar Deverill ...	Mount Cook Boys' ...	13 0 ...	134
4.	Thomas Corlett ...	Lower Hutt ...	14 1 ...	131
4.	Henry Jones ...	Mount Cook Boys' ...	14 0 ...	131
Girls—1.	Charlotte Jackson ...	Featherston ...	15 5 ...	157
2.	Charlotte Cox ...	Featherston ...	15 3 ...	156
3.	Phœbe Myers ...	Thorndon ...	13 4 ...	152
4.	Elizabeth Tait ...	Featherston ...	11 11 ...	143
	Standard V.			
Boys—1.	Herbert Phillips ...	Mount Cook Boys' ...	13 6 ...	166
2.	Byron Brown ...	Mount Cook Boys' ...	13 2 ...	160
Girls—1.	Olivia Payne ...	Terrace ...	16 5 ...	176
2.	Annie Denton ...	Terrace ...	14 1 ...	175
	Standard IV.			
Boys—1.	Fritz Kummer ...	Fernridge ...	13 5 ...	174
2.	Frederick Ahlgren ...	Te Aro ...	12 3 ...	172
Girls—1.	Elizabeth Hornblow ...	Greytown ...	10 11 ...	165
2.	Violet Hazelden ...	Mount Cook Girls' ...	14 1 ...	155

The following candidates were next to the prize-winners, and deserve honorable mention:—

Standard VI.—Boys: Charles Harris, Thorndon, 129; George Anderson, Thorndon, 127. Girls: Grace Osborne, Terrace, 137; Ellen Wallace, Mount Cook Girls', 135.

Standard V.—Boys: Robert Renner, Terrace, 158; William Hanlon, Waihinga, 155. Girls: Alice Cox, Featherston, 163; Annie Fitchett, Mount Cook Girls', 160.

Standard IV.—Boys: William Gavin, Terrace, 151; Duncan McGregor, Fernridge, 146. Girls Annie Craig, Featherston, 154; Martha Carter, Carterton, 147.

Unsatisfactory Schools.—There are six schools classed unsatisfactory—namely, Newtown, Masterton, Karori, Makara, Johnsonville, and Tauherenikau. Of these, an entire change has been made in the management at Newtown and Johnsonville; and they may therefore be dismissed with the hope that they will show very different results at the next examination. The Tauherenikau School is under a new teacher who will be expected to do better another year. Masterton School has been under the present headmaster for the past three years, and the reports have not hitherto been unsatisfactory. I attribute his failure this year to errors of judgment, to trusting too much to subordinates, and to irregular habits by which he loses the respect of his scholars, and occasionally incapacitates himself from work. It is evident that he must in future do better. The Karori and Makara Schools have been in an unsatisfactory condition for several years. The discipline, management, and teaching are helplessly weak. Under good management the Karori School might have been in as good condition as either the Taita or Tawa Flat Schools. It is now little better than a racket-ground for infants. So long as the Makara Schools were worked on the half-time system, I accepted to some extent the plea of the master, that his energies were worn out in travel, and that the time for work in each school was too short. Now that the schools are amalgamated, it is clear that he cannot produce good work.

Teachers.—How much depends on the character, disposition, education, and example of the teacher! Every school differs, in some respects, from all other schools, the difference being mainly attributable to the individual character of the teacher. The position of the teacher, both in relation to his scholars and in his social relation to the people amongst whom he labours, is very much of his own making, and depends for the most part on his own personal worth. So far as I have opportunities of judging, and as far as I can gather from the members of School Committees, the teachers are faithful in the discharge of their duties. If teachers fail in producing good results, it is not from idleness, but from want of judgment, want of training, or from sheer incapacity; and of these cases, I have already shown, there are very few. Teachers are, however, occasionally to be met with who have loose notions of their position, and think that such matters as excesses in their habits and living beyond their means are to be thought nothing of, if they do their duty in the school. Parents who intrust their children at an impressionable time of life to the school-teacher *in loco parentis* will naturally look for good example of life and manners in those who have the care of their offspring. The teacher, then, if he wishes to win the respect of his pupils and their parents, will be a bright and honest example, and, in all his acts, an honorable man, sensible of his responsibility and mindful of his influence. Further, I think teachers should manifest towards each other greater kindliness of heart, and less jealousy of each other's successes; also, on the other hand, the successful teacher should wear his laurels modestly. There is room, I think, for greater *esprit de corps* and fellowship. I have observed, not without pain, that, in the cases in which some men have broken down, the circumstances have not always called forth expressions of regret on the part of their fellow-teachers. Matters which taint the character of one teacher bring more or less discredit on the whole body; nay, more, the success of one teacher in any locality adds to the credit of the whole service. These remarks are made not without reason; but I am pleased to say there are many teachers who evince no reticence when their advice is asked for, who ever lend a helping hand, and who have been the means of largely benefiting the service by practically training others in their work. The training college for teachers, Hobson Street, will shortly be opened; and I hope many of our teachers, whose experience is limited, will have an opportunity afforded them of acquiring more knowledge of modern methods. Teachers of some up-country schools often see nothing outside their own work year by year. As an instance of this state of things, one teacher at the last examination did not know that the colonial standards were in force. She had worked by the old standards, and, being a competent and hard-working teacher, her scholars passed well. The position of the teacher throughout the civilized world is now an honorable one; and although he may not meet with as much gratitude as his work deserves, he has the satisfaction of feeling that he is engaged in bringing into play mental energies which can never be annihilated, and which will probably be largely and usefully reproductive.

Buildings and Playgrounds.—The planning of school-buildings and the laying-out of the school grounds are very important elements in a school system; and, as schools become more generally established, attention will be more directed to the consideration of improved designs in buildings, furniture, and appliances. For the past few years much of my spare time has been given to these subjects in their practical application to this district. The general principles of school architecture should be known by all who take part in the instruction and management of schools. In countries where education is advanced, as, for example, in Germany, France, the United States, Holland, Switzerland, and England, very great improvements have been made during the past few years in school plans, lighting, ventilation, furniture, and apparatus. In this district many of these improvements are already introduced; but very much remains to be done in certain directions, some of which I shall indicate. School grounds should have as large a clear space as possible for playground; and, except in rural schools, two gravelled yards at the back, with separate outhouses for boys and girls. The playground should be level, planted, and provided with rotary and vibrating swings, parallel bars, and spring-boards, and inclined-planes for infants; water should be laid on so as to be accessible to children in the playground, and sheds should be provided so as to save the schoolroom from rough usage in wet weather, and to give shelter or shade to the children at any time. In the City of Wellington, the Terrace School is the only one with any pretensions to an appointed playground, and it is deficient in some respects. And, as to the rest of the schools, they are all (except Clareville) more or less unprovided with the surroundings of a well-ordered and well-furnished playground. At Featherston wet-weather sheds and a horizontal-bar are erected. The buildings are improving year by year in convenience and style. The new structures at Thorndon, Newtown, Mount Cook, Kaiwara, Tawa Flat, and Upper Hutt form a marked contrast to those which formerly existed. Except in rural districts, I believe it is bad economy, in a public sense, to allow the buildings to be used for any other purpose than the work of primary secular education under the same teachers, who should be held responsible for the fair wear-and-tear of the building and the well-ordered condition of the rooms. A schoolroom should be kept as clean, as neat, and as attractive as a home; and how can this be done if the order is liable to rude disturbance, and the responsibility is divided or removed? I can assure the Board that the annual damage to school-

furniture, fencing, and other property is very considerable; and the annoyance to teachers from this cause is painful. If I ask why a pane of glass is broken, or a roller off a map, or an ugly word scribbled on an outhouse, the answer is, "I cannot tell; I am unable to trace these matters, because once a week such and such a meeting is held." In large schools we now build rooms for the School Committee to hold their meetings in; and besides these rooms none others should be used for any other than their legitimate purpose. Plans of school-buildings should emanate from the Board alone, and no alterations in plans or furniture should be made without the consent of the Board; for so little regard is paid to organization that in one case the local authorities spoiled the working order of a school by putting a chimney on what was considered a more sheltered side; in a second case the desks were screwed to the floor in chapel-form, and a rostrum erected; and in a third case the intention (happily frustrated) was to put a brick-chimney, which had to be taken down because it smoked, right in the centre of the floor of a country schoolroom. The schools are generally sufficiently high and well-ventilated; the lighting is, on the whole, good; and the furniture improving in style. In the country, parallel desks prevail; in the city, dual desks. I think there is great room for improvement in the neatness and order of many schoolrooms: they should be washed out oftener, and swept and dusted daily. Some, on the other hand, are models of neatness.

Colonial Standards.—The examination was made this year, for the first time, in the new colonial standards, and their practical working for the next few years will be watched with interest. In this district a system of standards of gradual growth, working without hitch, and, though comprehensive, without undue pressure upon either teachers or scholars, gave way to standards drawn up for the whole colony. Suddenly there was launched upon districts, prepared or unprepared, a full and difficult programme, more comprehensive and more ambitious in aim than any in the British Empire. My district was, after five years' initiation, prepared for an ordinary emergency; but this was a trying one. As already stated, not a single school fully and entirely covered the ground of the schedule, although many teachers put forth extraordinary efforts to do so. One at least of the headmasters of the city schools taught, throughout the year, singing and drill out of ordinary school-hours. Not only teachers of small schools, where the multiplicity of subjects in all standards makes it so difficult to find time for all, but many teachers of large schools complain of the difficulty of giving sufficient time to the more useful subjects, now that the teaching of singing, drawing, drill, science, and sewing, is no longer optional. I think two mistakes have been made—one, in launching the whole scheme at once without giving time for the more gradual introduction of additional subjects; and another, by including the additional subjects within the standards. The English plan of treating them, and making provision for their being taught, as extra and optional subjects would, I am sure, work better and be far less expensive. Besides, without a very great expenditure of public money, and possibly not then, teachers will very seldom be found who are competent to teach many of these subjects; and drawing taught by a teacher who has never received special instruction under an art teacher, or chemistry taught by one who has never performed the simplest practical experiment, is a screaming farce. Then, again, if extra subjects are included in the standards, they must form a part of the pass made by each pupil; and, if they form a part of the pass, there is either the extreme difficulty of testing the knowledge of each pupil in each subject, or the manifest unfairness of giving pupils, who have no faculty for acquiring a knowledge of a given subject, the same consideration in marks as those who show a special faculty for it. Although I have confined my examinations well within the standard programme, I found that very large classes of pupils in three of the largest schools failed altogether to meet the requirements of Standard IV. In nearly every school, the passes in this standard were fewer in proportion to the numbers presented than the passes made in any other standard; and in really good schools the candidates passed with very low marks. I am of opinion that the standard programme is not evenly cast, and that Standard IV. is too high and at too great an interval from Standard III. There are also many points of detail in which I think the colonial standards will require amendment. I will briefly enumerate a few of them. Arithmetic in Standard I., and, indeed, in all the standards, is too high compared with the rest of the work. The geography in most of the standards is ill-defined. In the earlier standards it is too rambling, and, where defined, leads to cram. Geography and history should either make one sectional subject in both higher and lower standards; or they should not rank in lower-standard work as subjects of the same value, in constituting a pass, as reading and arithmetic. In cases of pupils presented for standards who are, say, a year under age (and this age should be defined), they should not be allowed to pass if very weak in any one subject, especially a First standard candidate. As the rule is now laid down, an infant of six years, in some cases, would be able to pass Standard I. in reading, writing, and spelling, though he might not be able to add three and five. In the working and interpretation of the standards I have, as far as appeared to me allowable, exercised a good deal of discretion. I have, in fact, tried to make them workable. Also I have been careful to see (1) that no child passes who is not fairly qualified; and (2) that no child is held back who is fairly up to the work of a higher standard.

Pupil-Teacher System.—The pupil-teacher system is, on the whole, working well; but there are one or two matters touching the pupil-teacher system to which I wish to draw the attention of the Board. Except in a few country schools, there has been no difficulty in finding candidates—at least female candidates; but they should be chosen for their presence and energy as well as for their attainments. I think the age at which pupil-teachers are taken should now be raised to fourteen or even fifteen. I beg also to recommend the initiation of an entirely new plan for the training and tuition of pupil-teachers residing in or sufficiently near the City of Wellington. According to present arrangements, the pupil-teachers generally assemble for their instruction-class immediately after afternoon school, when, on a hot day especially, both pupil-teachers and their masters are wearied with the fatigue of the day. Many of them are young girls, on whom the strain of work tells materially. They meet in the deoxydized air of one of the schoolrooms, and, I fear, the tendency is to drag languidly through the work, and the results cannot be as good as they might be. Now that the Normal School is available, and it can be approached easily from any part of the town by tramway, the pupil-teachers could all assemble two three evenings in the week, from six to eight: they would come fresh to their class; the emulation of numbers would be beneficial; the cost of instruction would be less; and the instruction itself probably better directed. I feel sure the head-teachers would gladly be relieved of the duty of

instructing their pupil-teachers, the payment awarded being hardly earned. The head-teachers would then have more time out of school-hours for making up returns and attending to matters for which ordinary school-time cannot be sacrificed.

Scholarship Examination.—There are now in the schools 77 children passed in Standard VI., of whom 32 are pupils who passed last year. The examination for scholarships may be made not only useful for determining the prize-winners; it might also serve as a higher-standard pass. I should like to see, especially if Standard VI. is made lower, certificates issued to all who make half-marks in the scholarship examination. I think no examiner should be master in any school from which candidates are or may be sent; also that examiners should be men who are practically engaged in education, or else they are apt either to be too lenient or to expect to find men's heads on boys' shoulders. The late report is open to some criticism: it appears as the joint production of two gentlemen—it is really the joint production of the two acting as separate examiners in subjects chosen by each. Again, the report makes no mention of the fact that the competition was open to candidates from all schools in the district, pupils actually attending both from the Wellington College and from private schools; nor does the report state that all the eight scholarships were gained by pupils from the primary schools. Further, reading and writing were examined and reported on by one examiner only; and the report of that one examiner is strangely hypercritical, and contrasts unfavourably for the candidates with that of his coadjutor. Again, the conviction will force itself upon one's mind that in matters such as spelling and arithmetic, which are incontestably matters of fact, the candidates did well; but in subjects such as writing and reading, which are more dependent on the judgment, if not the taste, of the examiner, the candidates are considered to have done badly as a whole. I can assure the Board and the examiner that boys and girls form their letters and cross their *t*s in First Standard work, and that, in most schools, even infants sound the letter *h*. But is it fair to give marks for, and thus criticize, the fast writing of boys in grammar and history papers? Should not specimen writing have been asked for? The examiners have not made a single mark or note on the papers, so that I am unable to check their marking. I have looked through the papers and asked my clerk to count up the cases of *i*s not dotted and *t*'s not crossed. He finds that no candidate had failed to cross the *t*s, and only one had been remiss in dotting three *i*s. I looked hurriedly through all the papers and could not see a single case of omission. I consider the writing as good as could fairly be expected. The rest of the report is equally unsatisfactory, but I have not time to go into it. Considering the low marks awarded by the examiner in reading and writing, it is, I think, surprising that eight candidates from the primary schools were found who succeeded in making more than two-thirds of the total maximum marks.

Conclusion.—I believe the state of education within the district is, on the whole, healthy. I was much pleased at a late visit to the College on the breaking-up day, to find that boys who had gained scholarships in the primary schools were well to the front. I have attached to this report a specimen of the papers given in arithmetic, geography, and history in the higher-standard work. They will be a guide to teachers, and will indicate the calibre of the work. There is a fear on the part of some that the brains of children are being unduly taxed. The matter must rest very much in the hands of the teachers, who are advised to exercise a wise discretion in presenting children for standards. Certainly many children are presented at a tender age, and sometimes they are unnecessarily pressed forward too soon for a pass in the First Standard. I have everywhere discouraged it. No pressure has been brought upon teachers to present children whose attendance or age does not admit of them becoming good candidates. Less and lighter home work might be given in some schools, and to children under nine none need be given. In future no child who is one year under age will be allowed to pass unless he is well up to the standard in all important subjects, and weak arithmetic or reading will in such cases be fatal. Owing to pressure of work, I must discontinue at my next examination the passing by marks in Standard IV.; the candidates will be passed by sections, as in the three lower standards. In Standards V. and VI. the system of marks in force will be retained. I will therefore ask the Board to allow the four prizes usually awarded in Standard IV. to be given as additional prizes in Standard V. next year. In concluding my report, I trust the rising generation, when grown up, will cherish in the future the institutions to which they will then be so much indebted; that the dull ignorance, which is still so common and so obstructive to national progress, will give place to universal intelligence and a love of the pursuit of knowledge as one of the highest aims of life; and that the development of our faculties and the exercise of them for useful purposes will give a return to the State, on any necessary outlay that education may cost, far greater than our legislators could expect.

I have, &c.,

Robert Lee,
Inspector of Schools.

The Hon. C. J. Pharazyn,
Chairman, Education Board, Wellington.

HAWKE'S BAY.

Sir,— Education Board, Napier, 31st December, 1879.

I have the honor to submit to you my general report upon the condition of education in this district for the year ending 31st December, 1879. I am pleased to be able to state that great activity has been manifested in supplying deficiencies of accommodation in most of the school districts under the Board. The old buildings called by way of respect schoolhouses have been replaced in a number of districts by airy and commodious buildings; and few schoolhouses now remain where the curtain-like cobwebs covering the windows and ceiling give evidence of neglect and decrepitude. The school-rooms are, on the whole, well provided with good and substantial apparatus; and the district begins to manifest signs of educational vitality. In addition to the number of school-buildings now in course of erection, the growing population at Patutahi, Waerengahika, Wainui, Wallingford, and at the Victoria and Heretaunga Settlements in the Forty-Mile Bush, will make it necessary to provide accommodation in these districts. Already applications for schools have been received from Wallingford, Wainui, and

Waerengahika, and the other places are merely waiting until meetings can be called to settle upon suitable school sites. Whilst on the question of accommodation, I cannot help again expressing my opinion that special arrangements ought to be made by the Education Department for educating the children residing in scattered districts, and for whom the Board cannot be expected to provide a teacher so long as the grant for such children is at the same rate on the average attendance as for those attending the schools in large centres of population.

I am pleased to notice that the attendance at the district schools has greatly improved during the year. The number on the registers at the close of the year is stated in the returns as 1,438 males and 1,259 females, making a total of 2,697. At the corresponding period of last year there were 1,065 males and 920 females, or a difference of 712 children, or nearly 36 per cent. I attribute much of this increase to the growing interest manifested by School Committees, who have in several instances enforced the compulsory clause of the Education Act. I anticipate that by the end of March, 1880, the numbers attending at the district schools will not be far short of three thousand, as Committees have in nearly all instances intimated their determination of enforcing the compulsory clause at the opening of the school year. It is to be hoped that clause 89 will be so modified as to assist them in their endeavours by defining the minimum number of attendances to be made by every child of school age. I have elsewhere pointed out that 250 attendances can be made in little more than half a year, and children must make these attendances at school every year if their education is to be of any value to them. It is not only in connection with the attendance of children that I notice much improvement in the work of the district Committees. A new aspect has come over many of the school grounds: where eighteen months ago I found untidiness and neglect, I now find neat school grounds, well-arranged conveniences for both sexes, and in several instances sites planted with trees and shrubs. This is as it should be, and I hope that the next few months will find every school under the Board possessing school grounds well fenced, and as neat and precise as the schoolhouses themselves. The work is easy of accomplishment if only Committees will determine that neatness and order shall be the normal condition of their schools.

I now pass on to the work of the teachers, and here I would draw special attention to the effects already produced by the introduction of a number of trained and certificated teachers into our schools. I know no pleasure greater than to walk into a well-conducted school, where the first glance is sufficient to judge the hard-working and conscientious teacher. Everything is as it should be; there is no fear; there are happy faces from young and old, and eyes speaking cheerful work. There are no leaves and bits of paper lying about, no copybooks lying here and slates there; but order reigns supreme. It is in the schoolroom of a good teacher that the reality of youthful training is manifested, where alone can be seen the difference between the training of a child and the teaching, wrongly so called, of those who teach for the money they can earn rather than for the good they do. When I wrote last year, the teachers employed in the various schools were like men groping their way in the dark. Their knowledge of school work was limited to the doings of their own schoolrooms. They were generally earnest men, but they had a mountain of difficulties to encounter. These difficulties have been gradually vanishing; but there still remains the question, What of the teachers? Are they improving? I must confess a great improvement is apparent even here. The opportunity which the Board afforded to the teachers to visit the Napier District School and receive that technical instruction which I have more than once pointed out as indispensable if we would have efficient teachers in our schools, has done wonders in this direction. I greatly regret that the Government has not seen fit to continue the training grant for another year, for, from my personal knowledge, no money has been spent in this district to better advantage. Another such meeting of teachers as that which assembled in June last year would give an advantage to all our teachers not possessed by the students of training colleges, for the reason that the former come into direct contact with work which they have been required to do as heads of schools, and are better able to appreciate points of organization and general management.

I have visited each school at least twice during the year. One of my visits is made without notice, when I judge of the general capabilities of the teachers, and allot marks for my recommendation to the Education Department, as it is not the man who passes the highest percentage in the examinations that is always the most deserving; and my aim is to find out the trainer as well as the teacher, and this can only be done by a visit of inspection. As yet very few of the teachers know the difference between teaching and training, and they will never know it unless they make teaching a study as well as a profession. It is an easy matter for persons to become teachers, but only those who know the progress of development of child life, as applied to the mind, can hope to become trainers. To tell is not to train, any more than the repetition of a hundred lines of prose or poetry constitutes knowledge; and until the teachers have learned to appreciate the difference between teaching and training, information and knowledge, the education in our schools, whatever other improvements there may be, will be imperfect.

In the examination of the district schools 2,237 were present on the days of examination, of whom 1,164 were not capable of being presented for examination in Standard I. The examination was strictly in accordance with the standard requirements of the Education Department, and every child who has passed in the standards has obtained 60 per cent. of the total possible marks.

The following table shows the number of children who passed in each standard:—

Table No. I.

Passed Standard I.	Standard II.	Standard III.	Standard IV.	Standard V.	Standard VI.	Total passed.
429	390	189	65	Nil	Nil	1,073

In Table IV. (not printed) of the returns, which gives the classifications in standards of all the children in attendance at the district schools for the December quarter, the numbers preparing for the standards are stated to be,—

Table No. II.

Too young for Standard I.	Preparing for Standard I.	Standard II.	Standard III.	Standard IV.	Standard V.	Standard VI.	Total.
647	717	536	463	238	69	Nil	2,697

From the first table the actual condition of education is seen in the district schools at the date of my examinations from September to December, 1879; and from the second table, the probable number who will be presented for examination in the standards next year.

Compared as percentages the following results are obtained:—

1. That according to Table I., which gives the result of my examination, more than 52 per cent. of the children attending the district schools were not capable at the close of the year of being presented in Standard I.:—19·1 per cent. passed in Standard I.; 17·4 per cent. passed in Standard II.; 8·4 per cent. passed in Standard III.; 2·9 per cent. passed in Standard IV.; and none in Standard V. or VI.

2. That according to Table II., which accounts for all the children attending the district schools in December, 1879, 52 per cent. are below Standard I., of whom 26·5 per cent. are preparing for it; 19·8 per cent. are preparing for Standard II.; 17·2 per cent. are preparing for Standard III.; 8·9 per cent. are preparing for Standard IV.; 2·5 per cent. are preparing for Standard V.; and none for Standard VI.

Although these figures show the results of education in this district to be far from satisfactory, they do not show the actual state of affairs until compared with the ages of the children attending the schools. In Table No. IV., to which reference has already been made, the ages of the children are thus stated: Under five, 218; between five and seven, 612; between seven and ten, 907; between ten and thirteen, 712; between thirteen and fifteen, 214; fifteen years, 34: total, 2,697—or 30·6 per cent. of children below seven years of age; 33·5 per cent. of children between seven and ten years of age; 26·6 per cent. of children between ten and thirteen years of age; 7·9 per cent. of children between thirteen and fifteen years of age; 1·3 per cent. of children over fifteen years of age.

Now, if we consider that children at seven years of age ought to be capable of being presented in Standard I., it will be found that in the district schools of Hawke's Bay there are 22 per cent. more children below Standard I. than ought to be there; 14 per cent. of whom ought to be distributed in Standards I. to IV., and 8 per cent. in Standards V. and VI. This state of affairs is far from encouraging, and it shows what has to be done in this district to bring up the education to the requirements of the Old Country, where the difficulties of school attendance are much greater than here. I do not fear but that the teachers in the district will strive to cope with this low state of education, now they know it to exist, and as the conditions have so much altered in their favour. The difficulties of school accommodation and appliances have in the greater number of instances become things of the past, and it rests with the teachers themselves whether their schools continue to show such low results or not. A great change must come over the working of some of the teachers. Instead of entering the schools without knowing what the lessons of the day have to be, it will be necessary for them to prepare the work beforehand. No lesson to be given in the school should be left unprepared by the teacher; but, to judge from some of the answers given by the children on the days of examination, one is inclined to question whether many of the teachers ever think of their children and the lessons they have to teach from the time of closing in the afternoon till the opening on the following day. I must express the pleasure I felt during my examinations at Woodville, Danevirke, Gisborne, and Wairoa Schools, when the teachers brought to me notes of the lessons that had been given in one or more of the extra subjects; but I should have been more pleased had notes been handed to me on the various subjects required for the standard examinations, as they are certainly as important, and require quite as much preparation to teach well, as any of the extra subjects.

I now proceed to deal specially with the work of the teachers. Among the various subjects examined by me, those required for passing the standard examination naturally claim first attention.

Reading.—This subject, like most of those examined, is taught with some degree of success, but the great failing of too many of the teachers is in permitting children to pass too rapidly from one book to another. There are books to read and books to learn, and both are good in their way. I have found children who could not write a single letter or put down a figure on a slate, read, or pretend to do so, from No. V. Royal Reader. That the children knew nothing of what they read is certain from replies given by them in response to my questions; but this is only one of many instances where the teachers forego their own notions of teaching in order to please foolish and over-anxious parents. So that "John" and "Jane" can gabble through a book, what matters it whether it is understood or not? "The master knows nothing of his business if John and and Jane are not immediately drafted into a higher class!" I hope the teachers whose children pretend to read out of Royal Readers Nos. III. and IV., and yet can barely pass the requirements of Standard I., will take this kindly warning, for they only are responsible when the examination comes round, and they only are to blame if they allow outsiders to intrude into their work, which should be sacred to teachers who know anything of their profession.

Dictation and Spelling.—These subjects are subsidiary to reading, and should be looked upon as such by teachers. In the Napier, Gisborne, Havelock, Taradale, and Kaikora District Schools, they are systematically taught with marked success. It appears to be forgotten for what purposes dictation and spelling should be employed. A new word cannot have been acquired until the learner is able to spell and write it down correctly. To spell it correctly shows the power of distinguishing the printed word, but to write it correctly shows that the eye has also learnt to distinguish the word in its script form. In numberless instances children can distinguish the words in their printed form and yet they are unable to write them correctly in script; hence the value of spelling and dictation lessons

as tests and aids to a reading lesson where new words are being acquired or old ones familiarized. If teachers generally would keep in mind the necessity of subjecting the dictation and spelling lessons to the reading lessons, and using them as tests only to find out whether the lesson has been received (and no lesson is given until it is received), I, for one, should not be under the necessity of chronicling the numberless errors in spelling during the examinations for standards for scholarships, and even for pupil-teachers.

Arithmetic.—In several of the schools the arithmetic is well taught. As no children were tested beyond the requirements of Standard IV., the questions set were comparatively elementary; yet a great number of failures have been recorded. In all schools where mistresses have charge, the arithmetic was very weak. This was especially the case at Norsewood and Meanee, where hardly a child passed in the subject. Why teachers set ten, fifteen, and even twenty sums upon a blackboard, and expect children to work them, without having some definite object in view, I am at a loss to understand. When children have such examples set before them of working to kill time—for the answers cannot possibly be examined—it is not to be wondered at that they grow up careless and indifferent in other things besides arithmetic.

History.—Of all subjects, history is the worst taught in our schools. There appears no marrow in the dead bones of history, at least children cannot find it, and teachers, with one or two worthy exceptions, do not attempt to seek it for them. I earnestly hope some modification will take place in the teaching of this subject. How is it we go to the unknown and work to the known, or to the abstract and attempt to work to the concrete? Who can wonder that the study of history is so lifeless in our schools, when children are taken to Julius Cæsar's invasions to obtain their first ideas of what history is? If we would have history understood and appreciated by children, why not commence the study of the subject at our very doors? Do not history and geography begin at home, and extend in a constantly-enlarging circle, the one into the unknown past, the other into the extended present? I do not blame teachers for the sad results: they are directed to their work in a left-handed manner, and who can wonder if the results are so unsatisfactory?

Geography.—No subject affords better opportunities of being taught in the concrete than geography. It is essentially a subject acquired by the aid of the perceptive faculties; and yet I find but little intelligent teaching in our schools. In the upper classes of the Napier District School the subject is well taught, and fairly so at Havelock, Waipawa, Waipukurau, Taradale, and Gisborne; but nowhere else has it been my lot to realize the fact that children are being trained in the subject. I confess that many children examined by me could write down on their slates the names of half a dozen rivers in America, or even the principal capes of Africa, but where the rivers or capes are to be found in these continents is out of the question. It is this system of cramming children with unobjective and unmeaning words that cramps the intellect and stifles that natural taste for inquiry which is the characteristic of all young children. There is no excuse in our schools for geography not being well taught. Maps and globes are to be found in every school, together with pictorial illustrations; and relief globes and maps in others: but I wish it were possible for the Board to have a large outline map of New Zealand sketched on the floor in front of the desks of all the district schools. No orographical map could be used so effectively for training the intelligence of the children, and all difficulties would vanish in describing the situation of towns, lines of railroads, and such other points as are deemed necessary for children to know.

Grammar.—My remarks upon history will apply equally well to grammar. Every time that I hear children repeat, parrot-like, the definitions of the parts of speech, I cannot help feeling that a cruel wrong has been perpetrated upon them. A definition is the resultant of a certain state of knowledge, and will vary in proportion to the knowledge possessed by those from whom the definition is asked; and yet if I ask, "What is a noun?" I receive the answer nine times out of ten, "A noun is the name of a person, place, or thing, as John, London, book;" and for a pronoun, "A simple substitute for a noun." These are definitions given to children to be committed to memory on purpose to prepare for the grammar in Standard III., but for my part I prefer to receive the children's own conceptions of nouns and pronouns however simply they may be stated.

Extra Subjects.—In addition to the ordinary subjects to which reference has just been made, most of the schools had taken up the optional subjects of singing and repetition, and in several instances elementary science. I am unable to say much in favour of the repetition. It was generally correctly said, but so lifeless and expressionless that I could not give much credit either to the teachers or children, except in the Hampden District School, where the boys in Standards III. and IV. repeated "David's Lament on the Death of Absalom," in an admirable and effective manner. In a number of schools great progress has been made in singing. At the Matawhero, Napier, Waipawa, Taradale, and Woodville Schools, the singing is capitally taught, and fairly so at Ormond, Gisborne, and Wairoa. It was hardly to be expected that any extra subjects, except poetry and singing, would be attempted the first year; but at Woodville elementary mechanics had been prepared by the senior boys, and a few lessons on the "Laws of Health" at Gisborne. At both places the results were encouraging.

Sewing.—Compared with last year, I find that there is an increase of 300 children in the numbers learning to sew in the district schools. The mistresses in several schools complained to me that they were unable to obtain sewing materials, but I am inclined to think the fault rests with themselves, judging from the excellent sewing which was shown at Woodville, Waipukurau, and Napier, where the mistresses take an interest in their work. It is only necessary to see the sewing specimens forwarded by the competitors for Captain Russell's sewing prizes to realize what can be done even by young girls, if sewing mistresses have only the will to make the attempt. At my next annual examination I intend to implicitly follow Regulation 10, specifying the sewing in the different standards.

Infant Schools.—And now a few words on behalf of our infants. I am pleased to find that the number of infants attending our district schools is rapidly increasing, and I only wish it were possible for the Education Board to provide a small room in every school, where they could be efficiently taught. If we desire to produce any permanent effects upon little children, it must be done when they are young, just as is done with plants and animals. In the larger towns, as at Napier and Gisborne, the infants' school has become a necessity. In these places a very fair beginning has already been made;

and I hope to be able to find at my next visit that the *kindergarten* system, as adapted to colonial schools, is in full operation. Without making any further remarks upon the benefits to be derived from fostering a system of infant training in our schools, I will conclude my report by quoting a few lines from the Blue Book (1869–70) of the Committee of Council on Education in England, wherein it is clearly shown the close connection that exists between an efficient system of infant and adult education. The report says, "The class of school which makes the most special provision for the separate instruction of infants, and numbers the largest proportion of infants on its registers, is at the same time found to present the smallest proportion of scholars above ten years of age in the lowest standards. No figures which we could quote would demonstrate more conclusively the necessity of making a careful organization of infants' schools the basis of an efficient system of national education."

I have, &c.,

J. D. Ormond, Esq.,
Chairman, Hawke's Bay Education Board.

H. Hill, B.A.,
Inspector of Schools.

MARLBOROUGH.

Sir,—

I have the honor to lay before you my report for 1879. I have as yet had but little opportunity of observing the methods of teaching pursued in the Marlborough schools, the whole of my time during March and part of April having been occupied in putting the scholars through a trial examination in the work of the new standards, with the view of preparing both teachers and scholars for the annual examination just completed, the results of which may be summed up as follows:—

Seventeen schools have been examined, three others—Canvasstown, Wairau Valley, and Omaka—being closed, the two former temporarily, the latter, as I understand, permanently. There were 984 scholars on the rolls of the schools examined, 883 being present at my examination; 609 were presented for standard, 458 of whom passed, giving a percentage of about 75 for the whole district. As a rule, the teachers do not seem to have erred in placing their scholars too low, the proportion of failures being much greater in the higher than in the lower standards. The percentage of passes in the Fifth Standard, for instance, was only 42, that in the First and Second Standards being 85. No more than 11 candidates passed in Standard VI., which is intentionally made difficult, and to obtain a pass in which very full answers must be given.

On the whole, I see no reason for altering the favourable estimate of the Marlborough teachers that I formed on my first visit. Without exception they have loyally striven to fulfil the manifold requirements of the new order of things, and, in several instances (which will be pointed out in the detailed notice of each school), with more success than I had anticipated. But my apprehensions as to the possible evil effect of requiring several additional subjects to be taught by a body of men who had already enough to do, have been fully justified by the result. For example, in two branches which admit of being very accurately tested—arithmetic and spelling—there has been a very palpable falling-off, extending even to the most advanced scholars in some of the leading schools. The great prominence given in the standards to such subjects as geography and history has also tended to distract the attention of teachers from what I must still term the essentials of an elementary education. This is, perhaps, most noticeable in history, on the teaching of which an amount of pains has evidently been bestowed altogether disproportionate to its importance. It is, indeed, my deliberate opinion that the sooner this subject is abandoned in primary schools the better. To begin with, it is so uninteresting to the children of New Zealand that, after the teacher has done his best, nine scholars out of ten really know about the matter hardly anything worth remembering. The patriotic feeling that causes the English schoolboy to read with such relish the story of British triumphs and progress is, naturally, feeble among those born and bred in this country. Nor is the ghastly record of the crimes of the half-savage Norman and Plantagenet Kings, or of the tyranny of the Tudors and Stuarts, which forms the staple of our little school epitomes of history, pleasant or profitable reading for the young. Add to this the almost insuperable difficulty of getting a "History of England" that shall not give offence—and reasonable offence—to hundreds of parents, on religious grounds, and a strong case will have been made out for cutting history out of our school course.

The teaching of drawing is being gradually introduced into the Marlborough schools, but only two or three teachers have as yet begun to teach singing by note.

Sewing now forms part of the regular school course, wherever a mistress is employed.

There is a striking irregularity in the handwriting of the different schools. Indeed, judging from the pride with which several indifferent specimens of calligraphy have been exhibited to me, I begin to suspect that some of the teachers hardly know what really good writing means. The difference between the penmanship at Kaituna, Waitohi, or Renwick, for instance, and much of the work I see elsewhere, is one not merely of degree, but of kind. It is to be feared, also, that the pressure of a multiplicity of subjects has driven some teachers to revert to the bad old plan of attempting to teach writing while giving a lesson in something else. Yet the one indispensable condition of success, either in teaching or learning this art, is the taking of great pains.

The study of elementary science, which is new to all the scholars, and, apparently, to some of the teachers, has been taken up by both with a spirit and interest that are altogether lacking when history has to be dealt with. The want of a suitable text-book, specially adapted to the requirements of the regulations, has been well supplied by Curnow and Morison's Science Primer, the first seventy pages of which will be taken up next year. To provide the schools with even the least costly apparatus would obviously involve too great an expenditure; but I would suggest that the Board should procure a single set of apparatus, which might be passed round from school to school. Twelve months would give a month's use to every master in the district who is at present teaching science.

Fully agreeing with several of my fellow-inspectors that the accumulation of masses of undigested and, indeed, indigestible statistics is a nuisance to be abated, I have been at some pains to make my record of the results of the late examination as short and as simple as possible. I trust that I have omitted nothing that either the Board or the bulk of the general public really wish to know. Those

who thirst for further details are referred to the record of the passes and failures of each child in each subject, a copy of which has been left at every school in the district.

* * * * * * * *

More than one attempt has been made, both by the teachers and by a portion of the outside public, to muzzle Inspectors, either by causing detailed reports of each school, such as the foregoing, to be treated as confidential, or by suppressing them altogether. It would be interesting to inquire how some even of the best of the Marlborough teachers would fare if either of these notable reforms were adopted. The most cursory comparison of the foregoing pages with the tabulated statement will suffice to show how inaccurate and how damaging would be some of the conclusions formed by the public, if left with no better guide than the bare record of passes and failures. It is only by taking into account the extenuating circumstances—which I have carefully pointed out—such as irregularity of attendance, or the numerical weakness of the teaching staff, that several deserving teachers would escape condemnation.

Although, unfortunately, in a few instances, the publication of unpalatable truths must inflict pain, the balance of advantage from the publicity of detailed reports seems to me to be largely in favour of the schoolmaster.

I have, &c.,

W. C. Hodgson,

Inspector of Schools for the District of Marlborough.

The Chairman, Marlborough Education Board.

NELSON.

Sir,— 31st December, 1879.

I have the honor to lay before you my report on the public schools in the Nelson District for the year ending 31st December, 1879.

Numbers.—The number of schools in this district is now 60, three new schools—Waimangaroa, Black's Point, and Toi-Toi Valley—having been opened during the past year; four more—Brightwater, Rockville, Central Buller, and Stanley Brook—being ready for opening. The number on the rolls during the last quarter of 1878 was 3,525; during the corresponding quarter of 1879 it was 3,737, the working average for the same periods being 2,770 and 2,935 respectively.

Inspection and Examination.—During the year all the schools, with one exception, have been examined twice, the first being only a preliminary examination, made with the object of familiarizing teachers and scholars with the work of the new standards. The results of the final examination are recorded in the tabular statement appended to this report.

Result of Examination under Standards.—No good purpose would be served by the reiteration of my opinion as to the relative merits and demerits of the present as compared with the former system of examination. The matter is settled, for some time at least. Let it suffice to say that every requirement of the regulations, however minute, has been fulfilled by me, so far as I am aware, with an almost Chinese fidelity. In Standard I., for example, I have been careful not to exceed the regulation limit of three columns in setting addition sums; and in Standard III., while giving sums in compound long division, I have refrained (as admonished) from setting even the easiest sums in compound long multiplication; and so on throughout. Although the prescribed tests have been thus rigidly applied, the percentage of passes, 78, is satisfactory. Conclusions drawn from the tabulated record of passes will, however, be erroneous in many cases, for this reason, if for no other: that teachers have necessarily been allowed, at the outset of the new scheme, to determine what scholars shall be presented, and under what standards. Although sufficiently absurd inferences may always be drawn from a mere inspection of the lists of passes and failures, the margin of error will undoubtedly be lessened at next examination. As it is, several schools, that have succeeded in passing less than 60 per cent. of those presented, are notoriously better taught than some that show 90 to 100 per cent. For this result I do not hold myself in the least resposible. If the shoe frequently pinches, I did not manufacture it, my duty now being simply to apply it to all alike. The docility which which the bulk of our teachers have adapted their style of instruction to the requirements of the standards should gratify the most ardent admirer of uniformity. The paring-down process is already almost completed; and the few teachers who have been imprudent enough to impart any instruction that does not tell directly on the standard work are not likely to repeat such an irregularity.

Age of Scholars presented for the Lower Standards.—It is impossible to pass unnoticed the startling fact that, a quarter of a century after the establishment of a system of free education in this district, a considerable proportion of the scholars presented for the First Standard are over nine, and not a few over eleven, years old. The requirements for a pass in this standard being merely the ability "to read common words of two syllables," and to work correctly three little sums in addition and multiplication—a task that has been accomplished with ease by hundreds of children of seven years old—the only possible conclusion is that a large section of the population is still practically untouched by our school system. The school-rolls fully acquit the teachers of all blame in the matter. Most of these overgrown laggards—the torment of the schoolmaster—have not entered a school, it will be found, until the last nine months. And they are relatively quite as numerous in our best as in our most backward schools—in the country as in the town. I found, for instance, in the second division of Bridge Street School, 33 children over nine and 9 over eleven years old presented for Standard I.; in Haven Road there were 37 over nine and 11 over eleven years. Motueka presented 25, Richmond Boys' 8, in the First Standard, all over nine. It is clear that few, if any, of these neglected children can now stay long enough at school to get an education of any real value.

Discipline and Moral Tone.—Frequent mention of these most important matters will be made in my detailed notice of each school, where, also, a general expression of approval will be found. In no respect, indeed, have our schools improved more during the last two or three years than in their discipline. Orders are now obeyed with far more promptitude than they were formerly; and, although the absolute silence for which the stricter sect of Inspectors and examiners stickles has not yet been attained, what noise is now heard is, for the most part, the noise of work. It is, moreover, very ques-

tionable whether the severe and continuous repression, by means of which alone perfect stillness can be enforced, is not too high a price to pay. As to the moral tone of our schools, I shall do what I can to correct a very general misconception. There seems to be a strange want of plain speaking on this subject. To put it shortly: the moral tone of our school children will be just as good, or just as bad, as that of the homes from which they come. And yet it has got to be a generally-accepted doctrine that the teachers of our primary schools are to be held solely responsible for the misdeeds of their scholars. And a portion of the Press, with a suspicious readiness to write what is sure to be popular, is careful to point out, whenever a lad is caught using bad language or robbing a hen-roost, how defective the training in our public schools must be. It would be about as reasonable to fall foul of the clergy or the police. It is high time that the blame should be put on the right shoulders, and that parents should be reminded that they cannot thus cast their responsibilities upon a body of public servants who have already quite enough to do without bearing this additional burden. Do the fault-finders ever seriously consider how small is the portion of each day during which the scholar is under the supervision of the teacher? Deducting holidays, the actual school-hours amount to about twenty a week throughout the year, or less than an eighth of the total number of hours in each week. Is it not clear that this fraction of time—mainly taken up, as it ever must be, with purely mechanical instruction—is far too little to enable the most skilful and zealous of teachers to undo the harm that has been done elsewhere? It is not in our schools, or under the watchful supervision of our teachers, that boys learn to swear, to smoke, and to pilfer. The seminaries where these and kindred habits are acquired—in our towns at least—are the street-corners, where groups of lads, who ought to be at home, may be seen lounging of an evening, uncared-for by those who add to the sin of neglect of a plain duty, the meanness of blaming the innocent teacher. Unless well seconded by parents, a schoolmaster can do but little towards effecting a permanent reformation. The blackguard who is sent to him to be cured is merely a suppressed blackguard while under the master's eye, and will speedily relapse when the check is withdrawn. Good conduct, like charity, should begin at home; and it is not too much to hope that a better feeling may hereafter prevail on this point, so that parents may habitually co-operate with teachers in their efforts to improve schoolboy morality, and may even be brought to understand that, in condemning the morals of school children, they also stand self-condemned. Surely it is obvious that the primary school is but one out of many humanizing agencies, and that it can only perform its part effectively when working in conjunction with these.

I have, &c.,
W. C. Hodgson,
Inspector of Schools, Nelson District.

The Chairman, Nelson Education Board.

WESTLAND.

Sir,— Hokitika, 21st January, 1880.

I have the honor to submit my report for the year 1879.

All the schools, excepting those in the southern part of the district, have been visited at least twice during the year, one visit being made without notice, for the purpose of observing the work of the schools under ordinary conditions, and the other, of which due notice was given, for the purpose of holding the annual result examination. I have also made prolonged visits to several schools to assist teachers in improving their organization and methods of teaching.

I took charge of one important school for several weeks, in order that it might not be closed during the interval between the departure of one head-teacher and the arrival of his successor. The remainder of my time has been employed in preparing examination papers for, and supervising, the first scholarship examination; in supervising, at the request of the Inspector-General, the examination of teachers in March last; in preparing papers for the examination of the schools according to the new standards, and papers for the pupil-teachers' examination; in examining and marking the work of scholars and pupil-teachers, preparing and tabulating the results of both, and in rendering assistance to the Secretary. Travelling has also necessarily consumed a considerable amount of my time.

The past year has been one of severe trial for the cause of education in this district. The effect of the changes the Board was compelled to make at the close of last year, although clearly foreseen, had only begun to be felt at the date of my last report. Twelve teachers who were then in your service have since left the district, and obtained more profitable situations in other parts of the colony. Many of these were among the most efficient teachers in the district; and, even assuming that their successors are persons of equal ability, the occurrence of so many changes in the school staffs, each change being attended by a longer or shorter interregnum, cannot but have had a retarding effect upon the general progress of schools so affected. There is scarcely a school of any importance that has not suffered more or less from this cause, and others have been similarly straitened through the illness of some member of their staffs. The experiment of half-time schools also has completely failed, the inhabitants of all the districts in which such schools were established having, after six months' trial, elected to take advantage of the 88th clause of the Act, and to establish full-time schools. It is much to be regretted, however, that in only one instance, as far as I know, have the inhabitants done anything towards augmenting the miserable pittance which the capitation allowance usually affords to the teachers, a pittance with which no properly-qualified person can be expected to be satisfied, while teachers are so much in demand in all parts of the colony. These half-time schools will necessarily compare most unfavourably with the other schools, since for the first half of the year they were working up to the limited programme recommended by me in my last report for use in such schools. From the time of their re-establishment as full-time schools they have, of course, taken up the ordinary work; but, as there was in nearly all cases an interval of from one to three months between the abandoning of the half-time system and the commencement of work under the 88th clause, little or nothing could be expected in the direction of improvement, and it is therefore not surprising that in these schools the majority of the children in the classes above the third have failed to pass at the late examination. Considering the impossibility of retaining the services of efficient male teachers for

such schools, I strongly advise the Board to build small cottages, and, as vacancies arise in the future, to invite applications from female teachers, who perhaps might be induced to accept such appointments, if suitable residences were provided in addition to the salaries which such schools afford. Possibly these schools might supply an outlet for the pupil-teachers who, at the expiration of the present year, will have completed their term of service.

In the regulations relating to the examination of schools under the Act it is provided that all scholars in "fair attendance" shall be expected to pass at least one standard every year. In the absence of any more definite instructions I have assumed an attendance of 75 per cent. of the possible number to be a "fair attendance," and all scholars who failed at the late examination, and whose attendance fell below that amount, have been excluded from the table attached to this report. The number of children so excluded in the case of each school is recorded in another part of the report.

Upon taking a general view of the present condition of elementary education in Westland, I am satisfied that, on the whole, there is much that is gratifying in the prospect. Notwithstanding the departure of many excellent teachers, and the temporary arrest of progress which every change of teachers necessarily involves, the majority of the schools have done remarkably well at the recent examination. In nearly all cases where the results are unsatisfactory it can be shown that the want of efficiency is mainly due to circumstances beyond the control of the present teachers. Thus, at Stafford, the failures in the Sixth and Fifth Standards are owing to the fact of the late headmaster's promoting nearly all the children after the last examination, although instructed to retain them in the same standards in consequence of the change of programme. I have therefore entered opposite each school, under the head of "Remarks," a statement of any circumstances that have come to my knowledge which have acted unfavourably upon its progress.

The complaint made in my last report, and which, indeed, runs more or less through all reports of the same nature, respecting irregularity of attendance, might be repeated in nearly the same words on this occasion. The average number of half-day attendances for each pupil in the district (exclusive of those schools which have been working as half-time schools) is 319, or about three-fourths of the total number possible. In other words, considerably less than half of the civil year has been employed in school work, the remainder having been absorbed in Sundays, holidays, and absence. It is worthy of remark that the best attendance in the district is at the Greenstone, which has been under the 88th clause all the year.

The number of children examined this year up to the present time is 2,378, which is 253 less than the number examined in 1878. This difference is caused partly by the closing of five schools since the last report, partly by the absence of a greater number of children on the day of examination, and partly by the exclusion of 46 children from the return, who, not having been in "fair attendance," failed at the examination. The average attendance for the December quarter shows a considerable increase on the corresponding quarter of 1878 in all schools excepting four.

The following table shows the numbers presented and passed in the various standards for the years 1878 and 1879. I have included the return for 1878 in order to facilitate comparison, and also to give me an opportunity of correcting an error which crept into my last report, and which was not discovered until after its publication:—

Table showing Number of Scholars presented and passed in the various Standards.

Standards.	1878.		1879.		Percentage of Passes in each Standard.		Percentage of Passes to total number examined.	
	Presented.	Passed.	Presented.	Passed.	1878.	1879.	1878.	1879.
VI.	34	33	26	22	97·05	84·61	1·25	·93
V.	130	116	95	81	89·23	85·26	4·40	3·43
IV.	247	193	167	152	78·13	91·01	7·33	6·44
III.	310	243	275	245	78·38	89·09	9·23	10·38
II.	375	303	375	366	88·53	97·60	12·61	15·51
I.	387	362	420	411	93·54	97·85	13·75	17·42
Below Standard I.	1,148	1,148	1,001	1,001	100·00	100·00	43·63	42·43
Totals	2,631	2,398	2,359	2,278			92·20	96·54

Scholars not in "Fair Attendance," excluded from above Table.

Schools.	Standard VI.	Standard V.	Standard IV.	Standard III.	Standard II.	Standard I.	Totals.
Stafford	1	2	...	3	...	...	6
Goldsborough	...	1	5	2	...	...	8
Kumara	...	...	1	...	2	...	3
Greymouth	...	...	...	1	...	...	1
Hokitika	...	...	2	1	...	...	3
Kanieri	...	...	...	4	...	...	4
Upper Crossing	...	...	1	1	...	...	2
Brunnerton	...	...	...	...	6	1	7
Ross	...	...	2	1	...	...	3
Donoghue's	...	...	...	...	1	...	1
Hatter's Terrace	...	...	...	...	...	1	1
Ahaura	...	...	2	1	3	1	7
Totals	1	3	13	14	12	3	46

I will now make some remarks upon the treatment of the several subjects of the programme.

Reading, as a general rule, is carefully taught, and particularly at the larger schools, where simultaneous reading is more constantly practised. In the upper classes it nearly always possesses the qualities of fluency and correct pronunciation, and not unfrequently considerable niceties of intonation and expression. I very rarely find it necessary to reduce the marks assigned to this subject. Intelligent answers to questions on the subject of the reading lessons are generally obtainable from most of the scholars, although several in the Sixth Standard informed me that "a mansion in Belgravia" (referred to in p. 287, No. 6 Royal Reader) signified "a residence in European Turkey."

Recitation, which was at one time confined to the three lowest classes, has now been introduced into all. It is, therefore, more than ever important that this branch of instruction should be most carefully attended to in the earliest stages; otherwise bad habits will be contracted which it will be difficult, if not impossible, to overcome in the higher classes. It is a common experience to find children repeating such lines as "O 'appy, 'appy 'ummin'-bird," varied by "O wappy yappy yummin'-bird;" and such defects are naturally more marked in the few cases where the teachers themselves have acquired a habit of incorrect pronunciation; and perhaps the reason why the recitation of the upper classes is sometimes inferior may be found in the fact that the pupils in those classes were not accustomed when younger to the careful repetition of rhymes. In the case of infant classes the manner in which they repeat their rhymes affords a very fair criterion of the quality of their other training. I have invariably observed that, when this part of the infant programme is satisfactory, very little fault can be found with the remainder of the work.

Spelling.—Considerable improvement is noticeable in this subject, though when the attention of the scholars is not immediately directed to it (as for instance in their written papers on various subjects) numerous and flagrant errors in orthography occur.

Arithmetic.—This subject is very carefully and successfully taught at the best schools, though even in these there is room for improvement in the direction of the comprehension of principles. There are some teachers who seem to lack the power of dealing with this subject in an intelligent manner, especially in the upper standards. There are seven schools where the number of passes in this subject is small.

Geography is the subject which produces fewer failures than any other in the programme. Mapping from memory was introduced this year, but very poor results were obtained, excepting from Hokitika, Kanieri, and Ross, which produced some really good specimens.

History was fairly represented in most schools, but the meagre nature of the text-book employed necessitates a narrow range of questions, and the answers are generally word for word reproductions of the few lines devoted to each event in the text-book. Thus, the stereotyped answer to any question about the Constitutions of Clarendon was—"A difficulty about the trial of clergymen arose between the Primate and the King, and the Constitutions of Clarendon were drawn up to arrange matters."

Grammar.—In this subject great progress has been made. I introduced some novelties in the style of the examination this year, which, though entirely unexpected, were as a rule very fairly dealt with. The corrections of false grammar were, in some cases, remarkably well given, together with reasons for the same, and in a few schools the derivations of words were given with considerable accuracy.

Mental Arithmetic was also successfully treated, and produced very few failures.

Writing in most cases, especially in the larger schools, showed considerable improvement, both in the character of the writing and in the cleanliness of the copybooks. In some of the small schools, however, the reverse is the case, the books being defaced with blots, and exhibiting no traces of supervision or correction. Admitting that the teachers of these small schools, being generally unassisted, have great difficulties to contend with in the management of their classes, yet the importance of this subject demands that more care should be bestowed upon it, and, if not every lesson, at least every other lesson should receive the undivided attention of the master, and the black-board should be more freely used in pointing out and correcting the malformation of letters, &c. Another fruitful source of bad writing is the practice of allowing children to advance too rapidly through a series of copybooks, this being often unwisely permitted by the teacher, in deference to the wishes of parents. The best results in writing are obtained where the copybooks of Vere Foster are intelligently and systematically used, and the work constantly and thoroughly supervised. By the use of Darnell's copybooks most children may in time learn writing of some kind, but with Vere Foster's they must be taught. In order to encourage a neat style of writing and figuring, I gave notice that a bonus of from 5 to 15 per cent. of the marks gained at the written examinations would be allowed for cleanliness and neatness of writing and arrangement.

Needlework.—Some very good work of this kind is being done at all the schools having female assistants. At the larger schools I have made a practice of requesting the Committees to obtain the assistance of some ladies to examine the needlework, and I desire to tender my thanks to those ladies who at Greymouth, Hokitika, Kumara, and Ross rendered me such valuable assistance. I think it would be an improvement if, in addition to showing work done before the examination, a small piece of calico or other material were handed to each of the girls, and they were directed to execute upon it, then and there, some portion of the work included in the programme of their respective standards. At present there is nothing to show how much time has been expended on the production of any piece of work, how often it has been unpicked, or how much assistance has been received from the teacher, to say nothing about the fixing expected in the upper classes. Moreover, the practice of having the work intended for the examination carefully washed should be discontinued, as it is surely of some importance that the children should be taught to keep their work clean while it is in hand, and as the lavatories attached to all such schools afford every facility for cleanliness on the part of the scholars.

Discipline.—The order and discipline of nearly all the schools are quite as good as can be expected, or perhaps desired. In some it is remarkably good, as at Hokitika, Ross, Greymouth, Kanieri, Kumara, and Stafford, nor can any great fault be found in this respect with more than two or three in the district. Class and desk drill, which, when habitually practised, have a wonderful effect

in creating and maintaining order, are gradually spreading into the smaller schools, and wherever they are well carried out a considerable amount of time is saved, and confusion avoided.

Military Drill has been attempted at only four of our schools—namely, Greytown, Ross, Kanieri, and Kumara. At the first-named the boys of the three upper classes are taught company drill, and execute their movements with admirable precision. At Ross the boys and girls are instructed in squad drill, the boys in one squad and the girls in another, and both acquit themselves very creditably. At Kanieri and Kumara a commencement has been made, but the roughness of the ground and the short time that can be devoted to this subject have not permitted such progress as has been made in the two schools first named.

Elementary Science.—In addition to the ordinary subjects of the programme, 30 pupils were presented at the Hokitika School for examination in human anatomy and physiology. Of these, 20 passed, with an average of 59·2 per cent. of the possible marks: the average for the whole class being 55·5 per cent. Considering that this was the result of less than six months' work, it may be described as highly satisfactory, and promises well for the future. Some of the papers were remarkably good, two gaining 88·8 per cent. of the total marks, and nearly all showing a considerable knowledge of the subject. At Kumara 20 scholars were presented for examination in elementary astronomy. Of this number, however, only three passed with an average of 71 per cent. of the possible marks, the average for the whole class being 35·5 per cent. In this case it is fair to mention that the headmaster was appointed some time after the commencement of the new year, and did not take charge of the school until the beginning of May. I received notice from the teacher of the Marsden School of his intention to present a class for examination in electricity, but I found the children so deplorably deficient in the ordinary school work that I declined to submit to them the paper which I had prepared on this subject. The Board having procured a supply of the necessary text-books, I think that all schools having two or more adult teachers should be required to take up some branch of elementary science during the coming year. All such schools are already provided with Johnston's Diagrams, and with the explanatory handbooks belonging to them. Experience has proved, in one case at least, that this can be done without injury to the general work of the school, and the instruction so given might be made to agree with the proposed addition to the pupil-teachers' programme.

Vocal Music is taught with great success at Ross and Hokitika. The upper classes at these schools sang at sight a piece of music previously unknown to them. They are moreover well grounded on the theory of the science, and the lower classes receive instruction in vocal music suited to their capacities. At Kumara also this subject receives attention, and the upper classes execute some rounds and part songs from their books with considerable ability. The teacher complains that her efforts in this direction are much hampered by the unwillingness of the parents to provide their children with the needful books. Singing in unison, by ear only, is practised in the infant and junior departments of all the best schools, and at Greymouth the whole of the children in the infant and lower standards sing rounds and part songs entirely by ear, in a manner which speaks volumes for the patience and perseverance of their teacher. There are several teachers in the service of the Board who are able to give instruction in this subject, but who have not yet begun to do so. I think that the Board should give some encouragement to teachers by offering a small annual bonus for the successful teaching of music, and if this is done it will be only fair to make the regulation respecting it retrospective, for the benefit of those teachers who have already introduced music into their schools. While on this subject I desire to suggest the propriety of making some arrangements whereby instruction in vocal music may be given at Greymouth and Hokitika to all the teachers and pupil-teachers in the district, within easy distance of one of those places. The classes might be held on Friday afternoon and Saturdays; all teachers unacquainted with this subject should be expected, and pupil-teachers desired, to attend, the Board paying the coach fares of those coming from a distance, and, of course, of the persons giving the instruction. Perhaps drawing might be included in this arrangement.

Results.—The table of results shows the relative conditions of the various schools as regards such matters as can be (as it were) weighed and measured; but in education, as in Nature, the imponderable elements are those which exert the most permanent influence and produce the most important results. However well the mental powers may be trained and developed, the outcome will assuredly be, to say the least, disappointing, unless the moral perceptions are also brought into activity, and honorable feelings implanted and fostered. Whether a school passes 50 or 100 per cent. of its scholars will be a matter of little moment to the community twenty or thirty years hence; but it is in the highest degree important that the rising generation should be trained to the exercise of the virtues of truthfulness, forbearance, self-denial, &c., and not suffered to grow up as tolerably intelligent savages. Much has certainly been done in the direction of moral training, though no doubt more remains to be accomplished. The general prevalence of a good moral tone in most of the schools is evident, among other slighter indications, in the almost entire absence of attempts at copying and prompting at the examination. Four years ago the practice was by no means uncommon, and on several occasions children were dismissed from the examination on this account. This year I did not observe a single case of this kind. The behaviour of children while at their play and on their way to and from school is also an indication of the nature and extent of the teacher's moral influence over his scholars; and in these respects some parts of this district may be esteemed fortunate, especially when the powerful counteracting influence arising from the culpable neglect of too many parents is taken into consideration: a neglect which, among other things, shows itself in the common practice of allowing children to run about the streets, and haunt the doors of publichouses at all hours of the night. In connection with this subject, I must say that I do not consider that sufficient care is taken in any of our schools to exercise a proper supervision of the children during play-time and midday recess. On one occasion I found, on a wet day at dinner-time, the children at one of our largest schools playing noisily in all parts of the building without any appearance of supervision. This is not as it should be, especially under a mixed system; and with the staffs now employed in such schools it is surely not too much to expect that arrangements should be made by which one adult and one pupil-teacher, at least, should always be on the premises during the dinner hour. At small country schools, where many children come from a distance and bring their

dinners with them, some arrangement of a similar kind should be made. Such children should not be allowed to leave the school ground without permission from the teacher, who should make some arrangement for their proper supervision during his own absence. I have too much reason to believe that in one case a serious evil has resulted from the absence of any such supervision.

Corporal Punishment.—Certain occurrences during the past year convince me that it is highly desirable, if not absolutely necessary, that the Board should establish some principle upon which corporal punishment should be administered in their schools. The hardening and brutalizing effect of the frequent and indiscriminate application of this kind of punishment is universally admitted: at the same time very few will be bold enough to assert that it can be entirely discarded. There will always be a few unruly spirits whom no other mode of punishment will control; but, at the same time, it may be confidently asserted that any boy who cannot be subdued without frequent applications of the cane, is unfit to associate with the bulk of his schoolmates, and, in fact, places himself in the class for which such wise provision has been made in clause 87 of the Act, and that any pupil who cannot be made to conform to the discipline of the school without frequent resort to corporal punishment should be expelled, as provided for in the clause alluded to. At the same time, there are cases where this punishment, wisely and dispassionately administered, will have the very best effect—frequently that of completely changing for the better the disposition, or at any rate the behaviour, of its object. By these considerations I have been induced to draw up a few regulations upon this important matter, and I would further venture to suggest that, if adopted, the teacher who keeps himself strictly within the bounds prescribed shall, in the event of his being the object of any legal proceedings in connection with this part of his duty, be indemnified by the Board for any loss he may thereby sustain. The very knowledge that this will be done will probably diminish the chances of such proceedings being taken, since they are too frequently resorted to out of a feeling of spite, and for the express purpose of inflicting pecuniary loss upon the teacher.

Promotion in Standards.—By the present regulations teachers are compelled to advance to a higher standard any scholar who passes, however barely, the standard in which he is examined. Now, in view of the self-evident truth that the mental capacities of children are as various as their physical constitutions, it is reasonable to expect that in all schools, but especially in large schools, there will be some scholars who are positively unable to keep pace with the rest of their class; yet, if such pupils happen to pass, they must, according to existing regulations, be presented in a higher standard at the following examination. As a matter of principle the instruction given to any class must be suited to the capacities of the bulk of the class, and, as in these days of competition and emulation teachers' reputations are to a certain extent staked upon the results they produce, there is a growing feeling that to be compelled to promote pupils who are evidently much inferior in capacity to the rest of their class is to incur the discredit of certain failure in the case of such pupils, which it is unjust that they should suffer, at the same time that it is prejudicial to the true interests of the scholars so promoted. It seems to me only reasonable that something should be left to the discretion of the teacher, and that in such cases it should be permissible for a teacher to retain exceptionally backward scholars in the same standards for a part or the whole of the following year, provided that the permission of the Inspector be first obtained, who, from his knowledge of the performance of each scholar at the examination, would be able to judge whether such a course would be advisable in the interests of the scholars themselves, and could give or withhold his consent accordingly. Before the establishment of the present system your Board's regulations provided for such cases, and permission was occasionally given to retain scholars in their old standards. Now, however, it only remains for the Inspector to conform as strictly as possible to the regulations framed for his guidance, and no such relief is possible, but when the time arrives for a revision of the existing regulations it is to be hoped that some provision for such cases will be introduced.

Uniformity of Examinations.—To the modern system of bringing all elementary education under a strict uniformity of operation no doubt many objections may be urged, such, for instance, as the strong inducement held out to teachers to ignore education in its true sense, and to aim at results, and nothing but results. As, however, it has been adopted in all parts of the world pretending to any advancement in civilization, it must be presumed, and, indeed, there is no doubt, that its advantages by far outweigh its disadvantages. But the uniformity to which so many and some sound objections have been made will be very much more objectionable if it be only apparent, and not, as nearly as may be, absolute; inasmuch as the inferences drawn from the returns forwarded to the department must necessarily be, not merely unreliable, but positively and mischievously misleading. In any system of elementary education such as that now prevailing in New Zealand, it is above everything important that the Minister of Education should be in a position to compare the quality of the work done in any one school or district with that in any other. At present, no doubt, very wide differences exist between the methods of examination followed by the several Inspectors, not only in their interpretations of the standards, but in their methods of marking, or otherwise recording the value of, the work of the scholars examined. As long as this is the case, the Minister of Education may read in one report that 90 per cent. of the scholars in a certain standard passed, and in another that 70 per cent. passed in the same standard; but he will be as much in the dark as to the relative efficiency of the schools in the two districts as though nothing whatever had been said upon the subject: nay, he may be absolutely deceived, since it is quite possible that the district showing the lower percentage might be in a higher state of efficiency than the other. This is only one instance of the erroneous impressions that might be conveyed to the mind of the Minister and of the public at large by the perusal of the several Boards' reports; and for this, at any rate, it appears to me that a remedy might easily be found. The following is a sketch of a scheme by which the annual result examinations might be brought to a nearer approximation to uniformity, and the risk of doing an injustice to any teachers reduced to a minimum.

The result examinations, for obvious reasons, should be arranged to terminate as nearly as possible at the end of the year. A set of "pattern" papers, for each subject and every standard, should be prepared annually at the department and forwarded to the Inspectors. The patterns should show the number and nature of the questions to be framed by the Inspector, together with the number

of marks to be awarded for each correct answer, and some scale of reduced marks for answers not strictly correct, but showing more or less knowledge of the subject under treatment. The percentage of marks necessary to constitute a pass should also be strictly defined, and in every case the average percentage of marks gained in each class should be recorded, as well as the percentage of passes, the latter alone, as I have frequently had occasion to point out, being very misleading and utterly untrustworthy as a criterion of the relative merits of schools. For instance, assuming that 50 per cent. of the possible marks (or, where marks are not at present recorded, that four correct answers out of seven) constitute a "pass," two schools might be credited with the same number of "passes," and the inference would be that they were equally efficient. Yet in one case a little over the 50 per cent. of marks (or four correct answers) might have been recorded, and in the other 90 per cent. of marks (or six or seven correct answers). It has been remarked by one of our Inspectors that this method of examination reduces the Inspector to the position of a "mere recording clerk," and no doubt it does for the time; but surely it is better that, since this record is demanded, and is absolutely necessary, it should at least have the merit of being reliable for the only purpose it can possibly serve—namely, as a means of comparing the state of elementary education in different parts of the colony. Moreover, while following strictly the method of examination supposed to be prescribed, it would be quite competent, and indeed more necessary than ever, for the Inspector to report as fully as heretofore upon the many important elements of an intelligent education which it is impossible to reduce to tables, or to prescribe in the standards—the mere examination of schools being, as another Inspector has remarked, the least important part of his duties.

In this, as in my last, report I have abandoned the practice of making a separate statement about each school, and have therefore conformed to the almost universal custom in this and the neighbouring colonies. I have been led by experience to the conclusion that the practice of so doing is productive of more harm than good, particularly if it be the unpleasant duty of the Inspector to find fault with anything connected with the working and management of the schools. The report, being generally published in the newspaper circulating in the district, is read and commented on by parents in the presence of their children, thereby lessening, perhaps, their respect for their teacher, and, as a consequence, the influence of the teacher over his pupils. It, moreover, gives a handle to any person who may be unfriendly to the former, which may be, and often is, used to his disadvantage. Any shortcomings or irregularities observed by an Inspector must of course be reported and promptly remedied; but such reports should be of a confidential nature, and not made public property at the risk of lowering the teacher in the eyes of his scholars, or of unnecessarily wounding his self-esteem. If any teacher is unfit for his position he should be removed as soon as possible; but to the last day of his holding office his authority should be acknowledged and upheld. I have, therefore, in this report given only general results, and have made, as a rule, only general remarks. I shall not fail, however, to point out to the Committee, to the Board, or to both, anything which strikes me as requiring reform in any school in the district; but this will be done in a separate and confidential report, which I suggest should only be communicated to the parties immediately interested. This portion of the report will also contain suggestions respecting any repairs or alterations required, and will draw attention to any deficiency in school apparatus or furniture.

Pupil-Teachers.—Following the course adopted last year, I examined all the pupil-teachers at the same time as the schools in which they are serving. The number of pupil-teachers examined was 32, of which number 6 females were examined for admission to the first class, 12 females and 3 males for the second class, 4 females and 2 males for the third class, and 3 females and 2 males for the fourth class. Tables are appended showing the names of the pupil-teachers arranged in the order of merit in their respective classes, and the marks obtained by each in every subject. One pupil-teacher entered for the second class failed to pass the examination, and has since resigned. One female pupil-teacher entered for the third class also failed; but I recommend that she be allowed another year's trial, remaining, meantime, in the fourth class. One female pupil-teacher entered for the fourth class failed, and, as this is the second time she has been examined with the same result, I cannot recommend the retention of her services in the capacity of a pupil-teacher. One male pupil-teacher entered for the fourth class also failed to pass; but, as this is his first examination, and as I am of opinion that he is not solely to blame for this failure, I recommend that he also be allowed to have another trial. The regulations hitherto in force in this district with regard to the employment, training, and payment of pupil-teachers, which were framed to meet the circumstances of the district nearly five years ago, appear to me to require remodelling; and the programme of instruction must also be amended, to bring it more into harmony with the Government standards and the teachers' examinations. I have therefore prepared a new set of regulations for your consideration, in which I have, among other alterations, suggested an increase of pay to pupil-teachers of the second and first classes, together with a small bonus to be paid to such as pass their examinations with credit. With regard to pupil-teachers, the important question, how to dispose of them at the expiration of their term of service, is beginning to press for an answer. At the expiration of the year now current five pupil-teachers will have completed their apprenticeship, and in the following year fourteen more will have done the same, and, as far as any existing regulations go, they will then cease to have any legal claim on the Board; but it is nevertheless the duty of the Board, both in the interests of the pupil-teachers and of the district generally, to make some provision for their future training, and, when that has been accomplished, to secure their services for a term of years at a fixed salary, in order that the district may receive something like an equivalent for the cost of their education.

By the terms of Reg. X. 3, pupil-teachers from any district having no training institute are entitled to admission to any training school in the colony on the same terms and conditions as those within the district in which such training school is situated. But there are two serious obstacles in the way of taking advantage of this clause. 1st. The great expense of sending pupil-teachers to a distance, and the cost of maintaining them while there, would have to be added to the fees payable for admission, thereby rendering the training of pupil-teachers a very costly process. 2nd. The want of uniformity in the programme of instruction for pupil-teachers in the different education districts

would have the effect of placing pupil-teachers from another district at considerable disadvantage in the training school. Even if these two difficulties were overcome there would still remain the very natural reluctance of the parents and friends of the pupil-teachers to send them so far from home for so long a time. It only remains, then, to devise some plan for carrying on the training of our pupil-teachers in the district. One great advantage to be derived from training our own teachers is the effect it would probably have in preventing such frequent changes in the teaching staffs of our schools. Vacancies would be gradually filled up by teachers trained on the spot, whose parents and relatives are permanently settled in this district. These teachers would be less likely to look elsewhere for employment, which would necessarily remove them from their homes, than those appointed from a distance, to whom a very small increase of salary is a sufficient inducement to leave the district. It is, therefore, my opinion that immediate provision should be made to meet this very pressing want, and I shall be glad to receive instructions to draw up a plan for the Board's consideration at your next, or an early, meeting.

Since the Board was compelled, by financial difficulties, to abandon the scale of staffs and salaries formerly in force, much inconvenience has been experienced from the absence of any settled plan of allotting staffs to schools; and applications have been made from time to time which could not be satisfactorily dealt with. I believe it is absolutely necessary to adopt some fixed scale, so that Committees may know when they are entitled to demand an increase, or other change, in the staffs of their schools. I have, therefore, after carefully examining the scales at present in force in other educational districts, drawn up a scheme for your consideration.

It is also highly desirable that salaries should be fixed upon some regular scale; but I have not ventured to approach this portion of the subject, which must be entirely based upon the probable revenue of the Board. When, however, it is dealt with, I strongly advise the adoption of a bonus for classification similar to that in force in Otago. This would act as a powerful incentive to study and self-improvement on the part of the teachers.

I have, &c.,
JOHN SMITH,
Inspector of Schools.

Gerhard Mueller, Esq.,
Chairman of Education Board, Westland.

NORTH CANTERBURY.

1. MR. RESTELL'S REPORT.

SIR,— Education Office, Christchurch, 29th March, 1880.

I have the honor to submit herewith a return of the number of scholars passed in each standard under the new regulations, as per Schedule I. annexed to this report. This being the first year's test under these regulations, I have given the number passed in each standard, those scholars failing in a higher one being classed as passed lower, according to their fitness.

I have also the honor to report that, in accordance with the same regulations (framed under "The Education Act, 1877"), I have "as far as practicable made two visits to each school" in my district during the year 1879—"one for general inspection, the other for examination in the standards prescribed." The number of visits has, when necessary, or when convenient to my route, considerably exceeded the number required by the regulations, amounting in several instances to four or five visits to different country districts during the year; some few less accessible, Kaikoura, Hurunui, Port Levy, &c., having, however, each had only one visit for inspection and examination. The number of scholars examined has been 6,135 in 55 schools, in 48 districts; the number presented in standards has been 3,761, of whom 3,368 have passed as presented, giving the general percentage of 89. These results would seem much greater than those of last year, but for circumstances requiring some explanation. I subjoin a summary of results for 1878 and 1879:—

——	Presented in Standards.	Passed as Presented.	Percentage of Success.
1878—Old	3,984	2,841	71
1879—New	3,761	3,368	89

The following is a comparison of the total numbers passed, or classed as passed, in each standard in each year:—

——	VI.	V.	IV.	III.	II.	I.
Old regulations, 1878 ...	61	178	321	641	867	969
New regulations, 1879 ...	37	99	300	786	1,084	1,503

In the three higher standards the numbers passed are less, in the three lower greater, than in 1878; fewer in the higher standards having been presented this year under the new regulations to pass, as allowed, the same grades as before, most of the elder scholars in these grades having left school. The proportion of the gross attendance remaining below Standard I. bears a favourable comparison with that of last year, being only 2,326 out of 6,135 examined, or about two-fifths, this year, against 3,116 out of 6,153, or more than one-half, last year. A reference to Schedule I. will show that there is still far too large a proportion of this class in several schools whose infants' department is

still in an imperfect state of organization, and far below the attainable efficiency. There are a number of efficient country district schools in which this proportion is less than *one-fourth*, which will, I hope, in time, prove to be the maximum under the improving conduct of our infant schools. The test in the new standards not having been permitted to commence till July 1st, has limited the period for the examinations to only six months of this year, thus giving most of the schools a full year or more for the preparation for passing. A lenient regulation of the Board, in accordance with the suggestion of the Inspectors, permitted teachers to present their scholars in grades not lower under the new than those last passed under the old regulations, although the difference in the difficulty of the "pass" work would not, at the most, average that of about half a year throughout the several standards. These circumstances have allowed a desirable condensation of the classification, and full scope for teachers and their scholars thoroughly verifying the requirements. It is not surprising, therefore, that unusually high results have been very generally attained, and that most schools have gained a full or even the maximum percentage of passes in work so little more difficult than passing the same standards over again: in fact, excepting where there have been some very untoward obstacles, it is a disgraceful failure if some approximation to this result has not been attained. I cannot too strongly reprobate the attempt to make capital out of so ordinary a success, by teachers who do, and committees who do not, fully understand its nothingness. The high percentages accepted by casual observers as those of one year often cover the failure of the former year, and even of several previous ones. It is of very little merit for a school to obtain a high percentage in one year in work the scholars passed, or should have passed, a year ago. In one instance, no scholar long resident in the district passed higher than Standard III. after failing in the Fifth and Fourth in several previous examinations, but the scholars attained a high percentage in the same or lower grades than they had passed two or more years ago; and the Committee were dazzled by the result. The length of time remaining in a given standard, and the average age at which scholars usually pass it, should serve as some guide to Committees interested in the success of their schools. The following is a comparison and mean average for passing each standard, deduced from the reports of two different Inspectors (my colleague, Mr. Edge, and myself):—

——	VI.	V.	IV.	III.	II.	I.
Old regulations { Average age	13·7	12·8	11·4	10·5	9·5	7·4
Old regulations { Average age	13·2	12·5	11·9	10·6	9·5	8·1
1878—Mean average, nearly	13½	12½	11½	10½	9½	7¾

Hence it appears that the above mean average age in each standard was a fair result under the old regulations in 1878.

The first year under the new regulations is not a strict criterion, because a large proportion of the scholars were considerably in advance of the standards passed, or even nearly equal to a lenient test in higher ones; but the following is the result in my own district:—

——	VI.	V.	IV.	III.	II.	I.
1879—New regulations, average age ...	13·8	13·1	12·8	11·8	10·4	9·0

Allowing that these averages are obtained from the "age last birthday" supplied in the teachers' lists, it may be fairly assumed that the true average age is some six months older than those quoted above. Two causes combine to represent the apparent proficiency lower, or, in other words, the average age, quoted above, greater, than for the last year: these are, the scholars passing the same grade again, but under the new regulations, and somewhat more difficult than under the old; also, that this year I have, at some additional pains, ascertained the average per standard passed, instead of, as in previous years, per standard in which presented. The former shows the result as to general proficiency, the latter that of the different teachers' own estimate of the proficiency of their respective scholars.

It is interesting, as well as important, to observe the remarkably exceptional ages at which the standards have been passed:—

——	I.	II.	III.	IV.	V.	VI.
Lowest age	6	7	7	10	10	12
Greatest age	13	14	15	15	16	17

I have two scholars, aged nine "last birthday," who also passed IV.—that is, barely passed Standard IV.; but the above minimum ages relate only to scholars who passed well, with ease, a strict test in their respective standards, and whom, although I am unwilling to see scholars pushed on into work too difficult at their tender years, yet I could not conscientiously refuse to pass.

The greatest age at which other scholars pass also calls for serious attention. It indicates some instances of cruel neglect by some parents or guardians of these children's education; and I cannot feel surprised at the neglect and backwardness indicated when I see children of school age toiling like beasts of burden from early morning and during school hours, or becoming "too tired to learn," as

many schoolmasters have complained; or, worse than all, revelling in the dirt of the creek or the gutter for the greater part of the day, or on most days of the week, and thus becoming habituated to idleness—the parent of vice, the foster-parent of evil instincts. I can at once indicate families whose children from either of the above causes—excessive industry or thorough idleness—are receiving little, if any, education; and I am also led to infer that a much greater amount of truant-playing has been going on last year than has been generally supposed. These circumstances lead me to recommend the adoption of the compulsory clauses in those very districts in which the swollen numbers obscure the necessity for the adoption of this measure—I mean in the city and suburbs of Christchurch.

For the present year, all circumstances considered, I think the following a reasonable average age as an estimate of the efficient working of the standard routine, although many scholars will pass much younger:—

——	VI.	V.	IV.	III.	II.	I.
Average age for classes passing	14	13	12	10½	9	8

The average age result should prove an important criterion, stimulus, and corrective; a comparison of the age of scholars who pass with the ordinary age, will, to some extent, test the merit of the full percentage of passes. The low average age in the higher standards, if out of proportion with the rest of the school, often indicates scholarship preparation and excessive attention to the advanced scholars, to the neglect of the rest of the school; but not so where the ages and the numbers passed are in steady gradation throughout all classes. The discrepancy as to the large schools passing the lowest standards older or later than in the outside districts is under correction, and the results are beginning to approximate in schools of better organization. A tendency formerly existed to retain in school, to swell the number passing the highest standards, scholars up to sixteen or seventeen years of age—(even now instances occur)—whose instruction drew off the teachers' attention from those who most needed it; but the number passed does not seem so much to excel when the age and the length of time on the roll are considered. Another important criterion of the average age is that it tests the leniency, strictness, or unusual severity of the examiner, and corrects the imputation of it; for, if throughout a district this average of those passing does not exceed an ascertained standard, the tests cannot have been too strict, much less can they have been severe. It would be very satisfactory by means of this result to compare the general proficiency of the different provincial districts. Among the most satisfactory features observable during the past year are the acquirement of greater skill in the speciality of infants' school organization, and the development of the pupil-teacher system. There is still a difficulty, but less than in former years, in finding teachers competent to supply any vacancy in the infants' school staff; but the new buildings, with very few exceptions, are being better adapted to the teaching of the infants' classes, and teachers are paying greater attention to the organization, supervision, and teaching of this department.

The training of and the work done by the pupil-teacher have now attained a much higher efficiency than in the earlier years of this institution. The fourth-year pupil-teacher of 1879 is a great improvement upon the generality of those of 1875—the first year of the full operation of the system—till then only in its infancy; the instruction of the pupil-teachers, and their private study, are better carried out; the papers done by some of them would be creditable to trained students and other candidates for certificates, and their teaching, where they have had competent training, is far in advance of that of novices, little, if any, of whose energies have been directed to the acquirement of skill in the conduct and control of a school, or even of a class. I find a pupil-teacher ably conducting the infants' school, as at West Christchurch, Woodend, &c., &c., and efficiently conducting, controlling, and teaching classes of forty or fifty scholars in several large schools, doing the work better and at about half the pay of assistants in the same schools. The "little pupil-teacher" is almost a myth—an inspection of the stalwart youths at the recent examination would correct the idea; some few are small at first, but most of them rapidly outgrow this cause of complaint. The efficiency of their work is mostly placed at a premium by the examination results, and there can be no doubt that they are, next to the teachers who train them, the cheapest and most efficient arm of the service. Had we twice as many of them, and equally as good as those we have, our schools would be cheaper and better taught; and there is no fear of their overstocking the supply of teachers, since the majority of them find other provision or occupation, and make the most intelligent housekeepers, mechanics, clerks, and business men. There are, however, unfortunately some lamentable failures, year by year, of pupil-teachers from the same schools, which afford an irrefragable proof of their inefficient training. It is worthy of observation that, while uniform regulations have been made for the examinations for certificates and standards throughout the colony, yet that, probably in deference to the recent provision by the several Education Boards for the training and instruction of the pupil-teachers in their respective districts, this important link in the educational system is on so different a footing that possibly a third-year pupil-teacher in one may be equivalent to a "fourth" in another, or a "second" in some other provincial district. I would respectfully suggest that the time has now come for placing the pupil-teacher system on a similar footing throughout the colony, and that a great economy of time and money would be effected by their examination upon a uniform basis. I have, &c.,

J. P. Restell,
Inspector of Schools.

John Inglis, Esq., Chairman, Board of Education, North Canterbury.

2. Mr. Edge's Report.

Sir,— Education Office, Christchurch, 16th March, 1880.

I have the honor to submit the following general report for the year 1879:—

Sixty-three schools were in operation during the whole year, or some portion of it. Of these, 58 were visited twice, and all, Broughton and Dunsandel excepted, were fully examined for results. Of the schools not visited twice, two were new schools opened during the last quarter of the year, two were closed when I was in their respective neighbourhoods, and Broughton, a small aided school in the Rakaia District, was not visited.

New and suitable schools have been opened at Irwell, Kyle, Charteris Bay, Gebbie's Pass Road, Chertsey, Seafield, Tinwald, and Dunsandel; already those at the two latter places are too small for the ordinary attendance. Important additions have been made at several other places to schools and teachers' residences. On the whole, the school-buildings are in very fair condition, and well supplied with furniture and the usual teaching appliances. Several teachers are to be complimented for the clean and orderly appearance of their schools, but in some instances I noticed that very little care is apparently taken of the buildings, furniture, maps, &c. When I pointed this out to the teachers in charge, some excused themselves on the plea that they were only recently appointed, and found things in their present state when they arrived, and others on the ground that the schoolroom was used for entertainments, lodge meetings, &c., and that the damage was done on those occasions. I think it would be advisable to have an inventory of the furniture and apparatus at present in use in each school prepared, one copy to be retained in the school, and the other forwarded to the office. Such a return would be found useful in the case of applications for fresh supplies. The arrangements in connection with the out-offices of some of the town and country schools are not quite satisfactory. In some places the grounds are practically open to every passer-by, and the teachers complain that they find it almost impossible to keep the buildings clean and the walls free from writing.

The examinations for results commenced on the first day of July, and were continued till the end of the year. This year, out of an enrolment of 7,443, the number present on the day of examination was 5,883, or 79 per cent. of those enrolled. The percentage present is slightly lower than last year, but this is attributable to the fact that the weather during at least two months of the year was unfavourable for inspection duties. Of the total number examined, 3,499 were presented in standards.

The following table shows the number presented in each standard, the average age, the number passed, and the percentage gained:—

Standard.	No. Presented.	Average Age.	No. Passed.	Percentage.
VI.	19	13·5	8	42
V.	121	13·1	108	89
IV.	380	12·4	274	80
III.	772	11·4	640	82
II.	1,039	10·3	980	94
I.	1,168	8·8	1,072	91

A comparison of this table with that in my last report giving similar information will show that a very considerable improvement has taken place in the percentages gained in the various standards; while at the same time the average ages, except in Standard VI., are much higher than last year. The following extract from a circular issued in April last, on the joint representation of Mr. Restell and myself, will explain this seeming anomaly: "In order to facilitate the re-classifying of the schools under the new standards, teachers will be allowed to present children for the same standard under the new regulations as they passed at the last previous examination under the old." Head-teachers in my district differed very much in the way in which they took advantage of this concession. Some failed to put forward any new candidates for Standard I., and presented several children in the standards they passed in 1877, although they failed in a higher in 1878. Other teachers, after a careful examination of their schools, presented a fair proportion from the infant classes for Standard I., and throughout the higher standards kept back only those who, either from irregular attendance or other sufficient cause, were unfit for examination in a standard higher than that previously passed. Of the schools examined, 31 passed 90 per cent. or over, and only 3 below 50. The percentages, however, are not a true test of the relative value of the schools in the district, as, at the time of examination, there were in several of those gaining high percentages very few children above the Second Standard.

Admitting that the issue of the circular just referred to may have had the effect of keeping back some children; yet, when the average ages of the various standards are considered, it can scarcely be deemed satisfactory to find not quite 2 per cent. passing above Standard IV., and over 40 per cent. below Standard I. At present, seeing that the teachers are required to classify their pupils according to their attainments, without regard to age, there is really no age test in operation; but I think that, unless in exceptional cases, children should be expected to pass the very moderate requirements of Standard I. at eight years of age. At Ashburton, where the accommodation for the junior classes is inadequate and far from suitable, 56 children—about one-third of those in ordinary attendance in this portion of the school—whose average age was 7·8, found no difficulty in passing the First Standard. In making this special reference to Ashburton, I do not wish it to be considered that I think that school a model one; but I do think that what is accomplished there might reasonably be expected at Colombo Road and East Christchurch, where the buildings afford every convenience for complete organization.

The "standard system" has now been in force in Canterbury for a number of years, and I must say that the more I see of its working the better I like it. I do not mean for one moment to assert that the system is faultless, or that the mere passing of children in their respective standards is the great "consummation of school-life—the all-in-all of modern education;" but, at the same time, I fail

to see why, supposing the system to be intelligently carried out both by teachers and examiners, there should be any antagonism between it and the moral culture of our children. Under this system every scholar above the infants has a direct interest in the result of the examination; the minimum, not the maximum, requirements for each standard are properly defined for the teachers, and intelligent parents are enabled to form a fairly-reliable estimate of their children's progress.

Irregular attendance is still the greatest difficulty with which teachers have to contend, and until parents are compelled to send their children to school with a reasonable degree of regularity no appreciable change can be expected in the quality of the results. Compulsion is not pleasant, but I see no other remedy. It is unreasonable to expect teachers to efficiently prepare children for the requirements of the present standards who are practically but half-time attendants. Some teachers adopt the plan of sending notes to the parents of the absentees, and in such schools the attendance is fairly regular and constant. With regard to the number of children of school age who are receiving no instruction, I cannot say that I possess any reliable information; but, from inquiry and observation, it appears to me that a carefully-compiled return would show that the number is by no means small.

In the great majority of the schools in my district the teachers are performing their onerous duties zealously. In a few, however, no improvement has taken place, nor do I see much promise of any. There are at present several uncertificated teachers employed, some in charge of schools, others in the position of assistants. Many of them deserve commendation for their work, and fully intend to come up for examination during the present month. To those who have no such intention I would point out that, unless they make some effort to qualify themselves, they cannot expect to retain their positions.

In a previous part of this report I pointed out that there was still a large number of children below Standard I.—over 40 per cent. of the enrolment. This is far from satisfactory, and is, in my opinion, due to the fact that, with but few exceptions, head-teachers pay very little attention to the junior classes of their schools. In the case of schools with an average attendance of over 70 scholars, the infant classes are invariably taken by a pupil-teacher or unskilled assistant, under nominal supervision. These classes are more difficult to manage and interest than those preparing for the higher standards, and should, therefore, receive some share of the skilled teaching in every well-organized school. Of course, in the town schools, where there are separate infant departments under efficient mistresses, there ought to be very little necessity for a head-master's interference. In small schools, where the classes range from the alphabet to Standard VI., a teacher's position is a very difficult one, and it is often a matter of surprise to me that, considering the manifold requirements of the standards, so much good work is done. In some small, and in several of the larger, country schools the boys and girls examined in the higher standards acquitted themselves very creditably, and generally speaking their papers were well arranged and accurate, comparing very favourably in these respects with the work of the same standards in the town schools.

Some slight improvement is noticeable in the time-tables, but in some schools they are evidently more for ornament than use. Classes should be judiciously combined for some lessons, and more attention paid to the sequence of subjects. The daily and summary registers in nearly all schools are carefully kept, and, as far as I have been able to ascertain, correctly marked. In several instances the class lists were carelessly and inaccurately prepared. More attention should be paid to this, and to the filling-in of the columns provided for "age," "time since admission," "standard last passed," in the daily registers.

In 38 schools due provision is made for the teaching of singing, and in a fair proportion of them teachers and scholars take a great interest in the subject. Drawing is taught in 5 schools with marked success, and in several others indifferently. I have every reason to believe that the books recently issued will be found of great assistance to teachers, and cause this subject to be more generally and intelligently taught.

From every school with a Fourth Standard I received a syllabus of the first year's course in elementary science. So far, I cannot say much for the results of the instruction. If teachers would endeavour to gain some knowledge of what they profess to teach, the progress of their pupils would be much more satisfactory. I happened to visit some schools during the science hour, and the lessons were evidently given without any previous preparation.

The pupil-teachers, on the whole, are industrious and attentive to their duties, affording good promise of future usefulness. Greater attention should be paid by head-teachers to the style and quality of the class-teaching of their pupil-teachers. A rearrangement of the Pupil-Teacher Syllabus is required, so as to provide for instruction in science, and, when possible, in singing and drawing.

Extra subjects, as a rule, are not taught in the district. East Christchurch, Ashburton, and Lower Heathcote, were the only schools in which any instruction was given in subjects beyond the standard programme.

Order and discipline are generally good; but some teachers, although fair disciplinarians, do not pay sufficient attention to class movements and school-drill. It is pleasing to be able to testify to the thoroughly satisfactory behaviour of the children while under examination.

I have, &c.,

W. L. Edge,
Inspector of Schools.

J. Inglis, Esq.,
Chairman, North Canterbury Board of Education.

SOUTH CANTERBURY.

Sir,— Timaru, March, 1880.

I have the honor to submit my general report on the work of inspection for the year 1879.

The past year has been one of exceptional activity in educational matters in the district. Twelve new schools have been opened, and most of those previously in existence have been enlarged or otherwise improved; and important changes have been made in the teaching-staff and organization of all the

larger schools. The large amount of office-work thus created—though, in many cases, coming fairly within the Inspector's duties—has prevented my devoting so much time as might be desired to the work of inspection, and some of the examinations and reports have been unavoidably delayed. With the exception, however, of those opened late in the year, all schools have been thoroughly examined, and most have received one or more visits of simple inspection.

In compiling a summary of the results of the annual standard examinations it would be scarcely desirable to include the schools that have been recently started, all of which are doing good work, though the standard of attainment is necessarily very low. The following table shows the general results of the annual examinations in standards of those schools which have been in full work during the year :—

School.	Number on Roll.	Average Attendance.	Present at Examination.	Classification after Examination Passed in Standards.							Number Examined in Standard.	Number Passed as Examined.	Percentage of Passes.	Percentage in Three Higher Standards.	Percentage in Three Lower Standards.	Percentage below Standard I.
				VI.	V.	IV.	III.	II.	I.	O.						
Geraldine ...	180	127	142	...	8	13	11	32	30	48	96	72	75	15	51	34
Hunter ...	26	15	16	...	...	2	1	1	6	6	10	9	90	12	50	38
Hook ...	30	25	24	...	1	1	0	5	0	17	7	6	85·7	8	21	71
Milford ...	64	48	52	...	2	3	15	9	8	15	37	22	59·4	10	61	29
Otaio ...	40	31	31	...	...	...	2	4	9	16	15	15	100	...	48	52
Pareora ...	56	40	46	...	2	2	11	14	7	10	39	20	51·3	8	70	22
Pleasant Point ...	163	125	131	...	...	13	12	24	26	56	78	67	85·8	10	47	43
Pleasant Valley ...	59	46	54	...	...	...	4	17	11	22	32	32	100	...	59	41
Rangitata Island ...	37	29	32	...	...	...	4	5	9	14	18	18	100	...	56	44
Scotsburn ...	27	18	23	...	...	...	2	5	8	8	15	13	86·6	...	65	35
Temuka ...	323	197	227	...	8	19	36	39	40	85	157	124	78·9	12	51	37
Timaru ...	1,019	796	835	7	25	58	67	160	118	400	471	435	92·3	11	41	48
Waihi Bush ...	99	71	84	...	4	4	5	32	10	29	58	41	70·6	10	56	34
Waimate ...	413	289	339	1	5	11	19	85	92	126	225	207	91·5	5	58	37
Waitohi Flat ...	68	43	50	...	...	1	9	11	9	20	32	20	62·5	2	58	40
Washdyke ...	51	35	43	...	...	3	9	11	2	18	35	21	60	7	51	42
Winchester ...	103	68	64	...	2	8	14	14	9	17	49	37	75·5	16	58	26
Totals ...	2,758	2,003	2,193	8	57	138	221	468	394	907	1,374	1,159	84·3	9	50	41

From this table it will be seen that, of the 2,193 scholars examined in these schools, 907, or 41·3 per cent., failed to satisfy the requirements of Standard I.; 394, or 17·9 per cent., passed Standard I.; 468, or 21·3 per cent., passed Standard II.; 221, or 10·0 per cent., passed Standard III.; 133, or 6·2 per cent., passed Standard IV.; 57, or 2·6 per cent., passed Standard V.; 8, or 0·3 per cent., passed Standard VI. And, further, that, for every 100 scholars examined, 9 passed in the fairly-advanced work of the three higher standards; 50 passed in the preparatory work of the three lower standards; and 41 in their attainments were classed as infants.

These results in themselves cannot be considered satisfactory, but they must not be taken as showing the capabilities of our schools. The past year's examinations were the first series conducted under the new Government standards, which differ so essentially from those hitherto in force both in difficulty and range of subjects that teachers have found it no easy matter to conform to their requirements, and much time otherwise available for general advancement has been devoted to perfecting the new work. Taking into account the change of standards, and the many changes in the organization of the schools themselves, I consider the work produced satisfactory. Our schools are now in most respects well appointed, and I anticipate a great improvement in the results of the current year's work.

In the following remarks on our school-work I purpose noticing only such matters as appear to call for some comment. To several schools my remarks may not apply. A good number of our teachers possess a thorough knowledge of their profession, and are doing excellent work; but others have not had the advantage of special training, and may perhaps be benefited by having their attention drawn to common causes of failure.

Reading in a few schools is well taught, but generally teachers appear to work from the commencement without a just conception of its principles. They appear to aim at imparting an accurate knowledge of the sounds and meanings of words only. Personally, I attach little importance to teaching the meanings of words in reading. A thorough knowledge of the force and meaning of a word can only be obtained by a process of gradual approximation. What I desire in reading is that the sentences and phrases should be given in such a manner as to convey their meaning to the hearer. Thus, in the first stage, it is not unusual to hear a scholar repeat, "The – snow – lies – thick – upon – the – ground – and – the – poor – little – birds – hop – about, – seeking – in – vain – for – food." Or, what is worse still, "The snow lies – thick upon the – ground and the – poor – little birds hop – about seeking in – vain for – food." The child cannot possibly understand the meaning of what is being read until it has been taught to divide the matter intelligently, somewhat as follows: "The snow – lies thick upon the ground, – and – the poor little birds – hop about, – seeking in vain – for food." This plan, if perfected and extended in the higher standards, will imperceptibly lead to intelligent and expressive reading.

Spelling, being a more mechanical process, and easily tested, is generally thoroughly good.

The requirements in arithmetic have been considerably raised by the introduction of the new standards, and have caused a large proportion of failures, but I am well satisfied with the manner in which the subject is taught. With a few exceptions, the mechanical work is very accurate, and the scholars in the higher standards show an intelligent comprehension of principles, and readily apply them to the solution of simple problems.

Writing is generally very satisfactory. I must, however, enter my strongest protest against the use of Vere Foster's copybooks, which, from the fact of their being specially recommended in the Government regulations, are coming into general use. I cannot see how writing can be taught from them. Their supposed superiority appears to be based on discarding, as unnecessary, any systematic formation of letters, and the pupil is supposed to gain a fluent hand by a process of pure imitation, and gradually improved scribbling. I do not object to the use of an advanced book of the series after a correct, formal hand has been acquired; but for all the earlier stages I would advocate the use of books giving a more systematic formation of letters. The formal hand thus acquired will in after practice be greatly modified, but the rapid style then adopted should be always thoroughly legible; while, if correct forms have never been taught, the writing is likely to degenerate into an illegible succession of fluent dashes. I have noticed that, where good results in writing have been obtained with the use of Foster's books, his system has never been followed, the formation of the letters being taught according to the old plan.

The oral answers to questions on etymology and syntax, and the written parsing and analysis of sentences, show that the elements of grammar are well taught; but the scholars appear quite unable to apply their grammatical knowledge to composition. In almost every instance composition is beyond examination. In all the written answers of the higher standards facts are stated without grammatical connection or intelligent sequence; and in the direct exercises in composition the pupils utterly fail both in formation of ideas and in ability to express them. The subject is certainly one presenting some difficulty, and one in which the results are of slow attainment; but it presents no insuperable difficulties where it is systematically taken. I would suggest that in all the earlier stages the subject should be taught orally, with the aid of the black-board—the ideas or headings of the subject being first elicited from the class and noted on the board, these headings then to be arranged in some natural order, and afterwards drafted into sentences. If this or any similar course is systematically followed the scholars should in a short time acquire the power and habit of intelligently treating any simple subject.

The teaching of history presents considerable difficulty to some teachers, but under the arrangement in the new standards the subject is being more efficiently taught.

The results in geography are very good, but there is a tendency to depend too much upon the acquisition of facts from a text-book, in place of intelligent oral teaching from the globe or maps. I cannot too strongly urge the necessity of oral teaching in this class of subjects in all the earlier stages. I would not admit the use of a text-book in grammar, geography, or history until the Fourth Standard is reached, and in the subsequent stages the lessons set from the text-book should be regularly supplemented by oral teaching.

Repetition of poetry has quite failed in what I conceive to be its most important use. In most cases it is literally repetition, and of equal value with the repetition of selections from the vocabulary of an unknown tongue—in a few cases the meaning of the words are taught, and the allusions explained; and in a very few instances it is made an elocutionary exercise. These latter are only means to an end, the end being a thorough appreciation of the spirit and moving power of some of our simpler classical poetry. In the absence of direct religious and moral teaching, I know of no simpler and more powerful means of elevating and refining the feelings and principles of the scholars.

Elementary science, drawing, and singing have been introduced and faithfully taught where teachers have themselves possessed the necessary knowledge of the subjects; but the results of the first year's work have seldom been worth recording.

Particular care has been taken to test the value of the object lessons given under the new regulations, and in only three cases could the results be recognized as of the slightest value. In the majority of cases where a course of lessons has been given the primary object has apparently been to teach a number of facts, and the results could more readily have been obtained by giving the scholar a list of facts to be learned by rote. An object-lesson properly given will of course convey valuable information, but its primary object should be to develop the perceptive and reasoning powers of the child, to cultivate his powers of observation and comparison, and generally to brighten his intelligence. These lessons, properly given, should have a most salutary effect in correcting the mental dyspepsia which is commonly apparent.

The introduction of the so-called extra subjects has called forth much adverse criticism, but I must accord them my full support. It appears to me that any opposition on the part of teachers and the public arises from a misconception of the force and use of these subjects in the school syllabus. The amount of direct knowledge of these subjects actually imparted is necessarily very small, and is of secondary importance; but the value of the lessons, as a means of true education, in developing the intelligence and quickening the perception can scarcely be over-estimated. It is the greatest fallacy possible to suppose that the introduction of every extra subject adds so much independent work to the arduous duties of the teacher. They are simple, but effective, aids to the regular school work, and every teacher who from experience knows their value would continue to use them in the intelligent development of the mind if they were expunged from the syllabus. Many teachers, having hitherto had no opportunity of acquiring a knowledge of these extra subjects, see no immediate results from the indifferent teaching they are able to give—they, consequently, have no just conception of a child's capabilities in the matter, and become indifferent. But this apathy in the acquirement of a knowledge of the new subjects will, I think, rapidly disappear. The aim of education, even in its most restricted sense, is the development of the intellectual powers of the child, and an efficient teacher must be prepared to master any aid to this end. To meet the difficulty it is proposed to form Saturday classes in Timaru, for a short course of instruction in science, drawing, and vocal music.

Great difference of opinion exists as to the value of home-lessons, and I am constantly asked for advice in the matter. In most schools I think far too much reliance is placed on this work. Even if the capabilities of children were fairly equal, the home influences, and facilities for home study, vary so considerably that the work produced is very unequal. In some cases, from lack of time or interest, the lessons are badly examined, and in others the time devoted to thorough correction might possibly produce better results if devoted to class-teaching. It is not the length of time spent in school work,

but the strength of the mental effort put forth by the scholars, that gives the value to the work done. If the five or six school hours are well employed, and the lessons previously arranged and systematically given, there will be little need for making home-lessons more than a mental recreation. In too many cases home work is made to cover the defects of perfunctory or desultory instruction during school hours. In such cases better results would be shown if the time given by the scholars to home-lessons were spent by the teacher in preparing the next day's work.

I am happy to be able to record a marked improvement in the general attendance, though the evil of irregular attendance is still great. The obstacles in the way of strictly enforcing the compulsory clauses of the Act are being gradually overcome, and will probably soon give way altogether before the growing feeling in favour of the system. In the meantime much may be done by the teachers themselves to remedy the existing evil. Good work is always valued, and a master who makes his school work attractive and valuable will secure a comparatively high average attendance; and where the teaching is thoroughly systematic and effective the duration of the school course may be considerably shortened.

I cannot close my report without deploring the apparent necessity for ostracizing religious and moral instruction from our schools. A child possesses religious instincts, which are ever showing themselves, and waiting for development; and, apart from the loss of a powerful means of religious and moral training, I am convinced that the simple fact of tacitly ignoring these instincts or principles must have a very injurious effect.

I have, &c.,

HENRY W. HAMMOND,
Inspector of Schools.

H. Belfield, Esq., Chairman, Board of Education, South Canterbury.

OTAGO.

I. MR. PETRIE'S REPORT.

SIR,— Dunedin, 5th February, 1880.

I have the honor to submit the following report for the year 1879:—

During the year I made sixty-eight surprise visits in the central and northern parts of the district, and examined, according to the regulations of the Education Department, 43 schools, including all the district high schools, and most of the largest schools in the district. In many of the last Mr. Taylor accompanied me, and rendered me very great assistance. Surprise visits were paid to all the rural schools, except one or two which happened to be closed when I was in the neighbourhood. As soon as the surprise visits were finished, the systematic examination began, and it was continued to the close of the year. In all, 54 schools have not been examined; the work being now much greater than two Inspectors can overtake unaided.

STATISTICS FOR THE YEAR.—The following table shows—(1) the number of pupils presented and examined in each standard; (2) the number of pupils who passed in each standard; (3) the number of pupils who failed in each standard; (4) the percentage of passes to the number presented in each standard; and (5) the average age of all the pupils presented in each standard. The table includes the work of Mr. Inspector Taylor, as well as my own:—

Standard.	Present.	Passed.	Failed.	Percentage.	Average Age.
I.	1,913	1,512	401	79	9·0
II.	1,880	1,630	250	87	10·5
III.	1,489	1,099	390	74	11·6
IV.	933	638	295	68	12·9
V.	439	324	115	74	13·7
VI.	133	118	15	89	14·5

The total number examined during the half-year was 6,787, of whom 5,321 passed the standard for which they were presented, and 1,466 failed, giving 78·4 as the gross percentage of passes. In all, 82 schools were examined, of which all had classes in Standards I. and II., 79 had classes in Standard III., 72 in Standard IV., 42 in Standard V., and 12 in Standard VI. The ages at which the several standards are passed appear to me very high, more particularly in Standards I. and II. In Victoria the first or lowest standard has to be passed, on the average, at the age of seven and a half years, and a fine is imposed for every month by which that age is exceeded; the result is that the average age of those who pass Standard I. is rarely above seven years and six months. An examination of the tables appended to my report and Mr. Taylor's will show that, in the largest schools, where the division of labour is most complete and circumstances are most favourable to progress, the ages are as high as, and often higher than, in small schools much less advantageously situated. Once the First Standard has been passed, the foregoing table discloses a satisfactory amount of progress. Roughly speaking, one standard is mastered for every advance of one year in the average age of the scholars—a result of which few will be disposed to complain. The tables of the present report are not comparable with those in former ones, as there has been an entire change in recording the results of the standard examinations. There has been a considerable increase in the number of pupils presented in Standards V. and VI.

ORGANIZATION.—The great majority of the schools I have visited are suitably organized and satisfactorily managed. An honest attempt has been made to carry the work on in accordance with the regulations laid down by the Education Department, and most of the teachers deserve great credit for the readiness and spirit with which they have laboured to carry out what the department requires. This has, in truth, been no easy task, for the requirements of the present course of instruction are, in many cases, hard to overtake. In schools taught by a single teacher, and having scholars as far

advanced as Standard V., the greatest difficulty has been experienced in adapting the time-table to the code, so great is the number of subjects, and of the distinct grades into which each is subdivided. In such schools I must candidly confess that I consider the number of independent lessons at present required to be taught too great. I believe that, unless some restriction of the number of subjects to be taught as separate lessons is made, the quality of the teaching in the smaller schools must deteriorate, and that the essentials of an elementary education will have to be more or less sacrificed for matters of secondary importance. In the large schools the work has been much more easy to overtake, and in them the strain on the teachers has hardly been so great as that on the scholars. So far as I can judge, the present course of instruction can, without much difficulty, be overtaken in its entirety in schools where there are three or more teachers; where there are two the difficulty becomes greater; with one, and a large number of classes, the difficulty is insuperable, and a satisfactory compromise is all I have expected or, indeed, could myself propose. Last year I pointed out that the staff allowed by the Board was too meagre, and I am still of opinion that a more liberal staff would do much to improve the character of the education imparted in the Board's schools.

Instruction.—I think the returns appended to this report afford sufficient evidence of the general efficiency of the schools. Of the 43 schools examined by me unaided, or with Mr. Taylor's assistance, 11 made a percentage of 90 or more, 13 reached from 70 to 90, and 8 from 50 to 70. Eleven made a percentage below 50, a result which is, to say the least, very unsatisfactory. Next year I intend from time to time to report for the Board's consideration all cases where the percentage is below 50. On the whole the great majority of the schools have been taught with great fidelity and no inconsiderable skill. In a large number the work was in many respects excellent, and gave proof of energetic work on the part of the teachers and the pupils. One cannot help noticing the growing desire to secure good results, nor admiring the perseverance and enthusiasm with which success is courted. While it is a pleasure to accord praise where it is due, it is equally necessary to notice what is not deserving of commendation. To some points of the latter character I shall, *inter alia*, advert in the rest of my remarks under this head. In consequence of the enlargement of the number of subjects taught, the amount of time formerly devoted to some of them has necessarily been somewhat curtailed. In some schools reading, comprehension of meaning, and repetition of poetry appear to have suffered from diminished attention. In fluency and distinctness of reading there has been a very great improvement within the last few years; but in intelligent expression and rendering of the meaning there has been less cause to be satisfied with what has been achieved. This defect in the reading manifestly arises from failure to understand the meaning, which, again, is a result of the general character of the teaching. Comprehension is seldom made a substantive lesson, but is usually combined with reading, grammar, poetry, or some other lesson—an arrangement which is not to be objected to, for comprehension and intelligence are the outcome of the general spirit and method of the teaching, rather than specific results following a specific mode of proceeding: I fear it is often thrust too far into the background by this alliance with another lesson. During the past year I have repeatedly listened to examinations on lessons where comprehension of the meaning was all but wholly disregarded. There were numerous questions about what was said, what was done, what followed, and so on; but a repetition of the words in the book was accepted as a very satisfactory answer, no question being raised as to whether they were understood or not. Few neglect examination on the meaning of lessons, but in carrying out the exercise the error of confining attention to the incidents of a story or the points in a description is frequently committed. The questions appended to the lessons in the earlier reading-books turn wholly on such matters, and it is likely enough that many have accepted these as models of examination on the meaning, and have thus got used to overlooking the explanation of words, phrases, and even entire sentences. To do justice to this subject, the importance of sound comprehension must be constantly and consciously held in view in connection with all the work of the school. Reading-lessons, as I think, are frequently too long to admit of proper examination on them. For practice in reading lessons of some length are doubtless necessary, but they might be varied by shorter ones for more complete examination.

Foster's writing-books have now been very generally introduced in the schools I have visited, and I think that considerable improvement has arisen from the adoption of a smaller hand at the beginning of the course. The mechanical arrangement of this set of copy-books is such as greatly to facilitate superintendence of the work, and to make faults and careless writing readily evident. These aids are not always turned to account so well as they might be. I have marked books showing neglect of the guiding-lines, or persistent errors in forming and linking letters, as falling short of the standard required for a pass. Where possible, I have examined the home and school exercise-books, which were in a good many cases done with great care and neatness. In the great majority of schools, however, the writing in the exercise-books was much inferior to that in the copy-books, and frequently in a different style. The practice of writing in two different styles is one which every teacher should do his utmost to discourage in his pupils. I have in many cases had occasion to complain of the want of ordinary care in preserving these books.

In arithmetic the work of the year has given me great satisfaction. Some schools failed egregiously in it, but on the whole the subject was accurately and intelligently known. It receives a great deal of attention, perhaps more than its fair share, and is now undoubtedly one of the most efficiently-taught subjects in the whole course of instruction. Mental arithmetic has not been taught regularly except in a few cases, but I have directed attention to it wherever I found it omitted from the time-table.

In grammar the work required in the different standards has been considerably lessened. The subject continues to be carefully taught, at least so far as parsing and analysis are concerned. English composition has been examined with considerable care in every school I have visited. The results have, on the whole, been rather disheartening. In many cases very little attention has been given to this most important subject, and even in the best schools the work was very unequal. The great difficulty is the arrangement of what is written into sentences. There is wanting a sense of what a sentence is like, of where it should begin, where it should end, and how many

statements it should contain. Not rarely a long string of disconnected and independent statements is formed into a single sentence of immoderate length, having its parts tacked together by all sorts of appropriate and inappropriate connectives. All this shows a prevailing want of method and system in teaching composition. In past years it has not been examined with any regularity, and suitable methods of dealing with it have apparently been less considered than in other branches. In my opinion the earliest exercises should be specially directed to impart a correct idea of a simple sentence, and for a time nothing more than simple sentences should be expected. The next step might well be the combining of two or more simple sentences into a compound one. This is an easier exercise, I think, than making complex sentences, and might therefore come before it. By-and-by reproduction exercises and original composition exercises might be introduced. All work of this kind requires careful superintendence, and the errors should be marked, pointed out, and, as far as possible, explained to the pupils. Attention to this is, in my judgment, all-important. It is here that mistakes appear to be most frequently made. Numerous exercises are done, but too few are efficiently corrected and criticised. It would be far better to have fewer exercises, and more thorough examination of them. For practice in framing long and somewhat complicated sentences the "English Composition Exercises" in the "Royal School Series" would be found very useful. These are so arranged that a teacher could easily mark off how many heads were to be combined into a sentence, and thus any desired degree of complexity in the exercises might be attained. In reproduction and original composition exercises I believe it would be well, at first, to require short sentences, each containing a single principal statement, and for a time to discourage the use of long and complicated ones. It appears to me desirable that a certain proportion of the regular composition exercises should be finally written out in an exercise book. Such a record would be of value as showing the method of teaching and the amount of attention to correction and amendment. The proper correction of scholars' exercises in composition and other subjects takes up a good deal of a teacher's time, and is often done in a way which I fear is not very effective. As far as possible the members of a class should correct their neighbours' exercises, and the teacher's examination of them should come after this preliminary correction. This mode of proceeding is decidedly the best for the pupils, and is also the easiest for the teacher, for he need not on every occasion overhaul all the exercises for the day—the correction of a selection will be sufficient. Some exercises, and especially more advanced composition exercises, cannot well be treated in this way; but the majority of school exercises can and should be so handled. I have in many instances had occasion to admire the patient labour bestowed outside school hours by teachers on the correction and examination of written exercises, but in few cases have they found their trouble adequately repaid, and I doubt if it is an economical application of their time.

In the teaching of geography there has been considerable improvement in some schools, but on the whole there has been little general advance during the year.

History is one of the new subjects added under "The Education Act, 1877." As yet but little progress has been made in it, and in a large number of schools it has been merely begun. Considerable difficulty was experienced in getting a supply of books, and there is at present a great variety of them in use in the district. Many of the books appear to me too elaborate, and likely to require for their preparation a far greater amount of time than can reasonably be devoted to the subject. I consider "The Shilling History of England," by the Rev. M. Creighton, a book well suited for use in the Board's schools, wherever a longer text-book is unsuitable. It is vastly superior to the "Brief History," so widely in use. In the circumstances of the Otago schools the examinations in history have necessarily been of a very simple character, and the requirements for a pass very humble.

Science and object-lessons have received more or less attention according to circumstances. In the larger schools, where the staff is less limited, and where the teacher's attention is less divided between a number of different classes, a reasonable proportion of time has been devoted to both. In the smaller schools, and especially in schools having but a single teacher, they have necessarily suffered comparative neglect. It seems to me premature to pronounce any decided opinion on the success of the attempt to teach a knowledge of common things in the public schools. The success attained so far is not very reassuring, but the trial has been too short, and made under too unfavourable circumstances, to justify disappointment. In many schools I have not been able to hold any examination in science- or in object-lessons, but had simply to rest content with looking over the scheme of lessons submitted. The branches of science most commonly taught are physiology, physics, and chemistry. For the lessons on physics apparatus has been sadly missed. Thirty sets have now arrived, and should be distributed to the largest schools without delay. In some schools there is a good deal of ignorance about the nature and aims of an object-lesson. On several occasions I have found it necessary to point out that the primary and main aim of an object-lesson is not to impart new information, but rather to take some object known or familiar to the pupils, and consider with them its nature, striking properties, production, and uses, and this in such a way as to draw out and exercise their power of observing and of reflecting on what they see or know. The way in which such a lesson is managed is manifestly a very important matter. Its arrangement should be orderly and natural, and always thought out beforehand, while its management should be suggestive and directive, rather than communicative. The selection of the matter to be introduced requires considerable judgment, and more should be known of the subject than is likely to be touched on in the lesson. New information should be cautiously introduced, and only in so far as it can really be understood. The few object-lessons I have had the opportunity of hearing were rarely exempt from what appeared to me faults in the matter introduced, or in the management of the particulars. Some of the younger teachers have juster notions on this matter than others of much greater experience.

Discipline.—The discipline continues to be, on the whole, satisfactory. I have remarked considerable improvement in the behaviour of the pupils in some schools formerly conspicuous for rough and unseemly conduct. Except in a few cases, little pains is bestowed on trying to cultivate good manners in the scholars. Throughout the year the schoolrooms have generally been better filled than formerly. The crowding has not been favourable to honesty and independence of work, and I have found more reason than usual to suspect copying.

The District High Schools.—The extra work done at the district high schools was examined at the end of the year. The attendance at the extra branches has, I understand, been more or less affected by the pressure of the hard times. It is worth remarking that the addition of history and science to the former subjects in Standards V. and VI. has had the effect of curtailing somewhat the time available for taking extra branches. It appears to me that a good deal of misconception prevails as to what may fairly be expected of the district high schools. It must be remembered that they are in all respects public schools, and that whatever extra work is done at them is done in addition to the entire work of the Fifth or Sixth Standards, as the case may be. The district high schools are thus very heavily handicapped to begin with, and cannot be expected to do so much advanced work as is done in the endowed high schools and private schools, where there is no wide and definite compulsory standard work. As a matter of fact, nearly all the pupils who took extra subjects at the district high schools have this year had to pass the ordinary Fifth or Sixth Standard examination. If pupils remain at a district high school after they have passed the Sixth Standard, they can then devote their entire time and attention to the higher branches, and should make corresponding progress. At Tokomairiro several pupils have been in this position, and they have done a great amount of work, and done it well. Another disadvantage under which the district high schools labour arises from the insufficiency of the staff, only a portion, and sometimes a small one, of a headmaster's time being available for teaching the extra standard branches. The difficulty just noticed is intensified by the variety of extra branches in which instruction is desired. From this recital I believe it will be manifest that a district high school is a mongrel institution that can with difficulty do the upper standard work as efficiently as an ordinary public school, and cannot possibly do the extra work as well as any of the endowed high schools. Their present constitution and organization are at variance with their pretentious designation, and are manifestly of a temporary and makeshift character. To take the place in a system of graded schools they were originally designed to fill they will have to be greatly modified both in their constitution and in the relation they bear to the ordinary public schools.

The following is the substance of my reports on the extra work of the year:—

Port Chalmers District High School.—Examined, 1st and 2nd December, 1879. The following statement shows the number of classes, the number of pupils in each class, and the work done:—

Subject.	Class.	No. of Pupils.	Work done.
English	I.	9	"Merchant of Venice," in Nelson's Shakespeare
	II.	7	Reader.
Latin	I.	2	Cæsar, Book II.
	II.	3	Principia Latina, Part I.
	III.	7	Begun Principia Latina, Part I.
Geometry	I.	2	Euclid, Books I. and II.
	II.	7	Book I.
	III.	3	Begun Book I.
Algebra	I.	1	To easy quadratics.
	II.	4	To end of simple equations.
	III.	7	Begun the subject.

Remarks.—English: The higher division made an average of 60 per cent., and four of the papers were very good; the lower division had gone over the work once, and hurriedly, and only one in it reached 50 per cent. of the marks. In several papers, otherwise good, the division of sentences and the punctuation were faulty. Individual words were accurately and clearly explained, but selected passages of two or three lines were much less satisfactorily dealt with. The explanations were in most cases partial, and failed to bring out the force of the passage, or adduce the circumstances under which it was spoken, and which were in several instances essential to an intelligent explanation. One or two, however, gave the meaning of the passages proposed very well.—*Latin:* The papers of Class I. were very satisfactorily answered; the translation was done accurately and into good English, and the syntax and accidence were creditable for beginners. The second class did not answer so well, and their knowledge of the inflections of nouns and verbs was less complete than might be expected at this stage.—*Geometry:* Class I. has gained a very thorough knowledge of the work gone over, and Class II. answered very fairly on Book I.—*Algebra:* Both classes answered very well. The subject has been taught with very considerable care and skill. At this school English and Latin were taught by the headmaster, and geometry and algebra by the first assistant.

Oamaru District High School.—(Examined 3rd and 4th December, 1879.)—The following statement shows the subjects studied, the numbers of pupils and classes, and the work done:—

Subject.	Class.	No. of Pupils.	Work done.
Latin	I.	1	Principia Latina, Part II.; and Cæsar, 20 chaps.
	II.	16	Principia Latina, Part I., to verb sum.
French	I.	1	"Coin du Feu," 60 pages.
	II.	19	Ahn, Part I. to Ex. 90.
Geometry	I.	4	Euclid, first three books.
	II.	2	Book I., 20 props.
Algebra	I.	1	To simultaneous equations.
	II.	3	Todhunter, to Ex. 14.
	III.	8	Simple rules and factors.

Remarks.—Latin : In Class I. the translation was fair, but the rest of the paper was unsatisfactory. The second class has only begun the subject; their papers were, however, fairly done.—*French :* The pupil in Class I. answered well. The second class has gained a satisfactory acquaintance with the exercises read.—*Geometry :* The papers in the first class were badly answered, no one getting so much as half marks. Class II. answered somewhat better.—*Algebra :* In this subject the various classes answered very fairly.

Tokomairiro District High School.—(Examined 9th, 10th, and 11th December, 1879.)—The following table shows the number of subjects taught, the classes in each, and the amount of work done by each class :—

Subject.	Class.	No. of Pupils.	Work done.
English	I.	6	Paradise Lost, Book II., L'Allegro, Il Penseroso, Lycidas, and most of Comus.
Latin	I.	7	Portions of Cæsar, and Ovid's Metamorphoses; Sallust's Jugurtha, 38 chapters.
	II.	8	Grammar; Principia Lat., Pt. II. to page 61; and Cæsar, Book I., 17 chapters.
Greek	I.	4	Initia Græca, Pt. I. to page 119, and a portion of Pt. II.
French...	I.	4	Ahn's First French Course, and the Second to Ex. 25; also a portion of Ahn's Reader.
Geometry	I.	6	Four Books, with deductions.
	II.	7	To Book III., Prop. 16.
	III.	9	Book I.
Algebra	I.	6	Todhunter and H. Smith's elementary works.
	II.	10	To ratio.
	III.	8	To quadratics.
Trigonometry	I.	7	To the end of the solution of triangles: Todhunter's elementary work to Ex. XIII.

Remarks.—English : This subject was the weakest of the course. A great deal of work was done, but circumstances did not allow of revisal.—*Latin :* Class I. answered well; the parsing, syntax, grammar, and composition (Latin) were very accurate. The translation was not so good as the rest of the papers. Class II. has received a sound training in the elementary work; the translation was good, and the rest of the paper creditably answered.—*Greek :* This subject has been carefully taught; the accidence (to the end of the verbs) was well known, and the translation good.—*French :* One paper was well answered; in the others the translation was fair, and the grammar moderate.—*Geometry :* The two upper classes, with one or two exceptions, did well. In the third class there was one good paper, the rest being moderate.—*Algebra :* The two upper classes have been well grounded in this subject. The problems were clearly and simply solved. The lowest class was less successful in their work.—*Trigonometry :* This subject has been taught with great skill. The treatment of the transformations and problems showed a good acquaintence with the principles and formulæ. The triangles were accurately solved.

Lawrence District High School.—(Examined 12th and 13th December, 1879.)—The following table show, the subjects taught, the classes in each, and the amount of work done by each class :—

Subject.	Class.	No. of Pupils.	Work done.
English	I.	13	Extracts from the "Merchant of Venice," and "King John."
Latin	I.	4	Cæsar, Book I., 31 chapters; and part of Princip. Lat., Part. II.
	II.	3	Princip. Lat., Part I., to Ex. 37, and 31 Fables in Part II.
French	I.	2	Ahn's Part II., to Ex. 65, and Grammar.
	II.	2	Ahn's Part I., and Grammar.
	III.	6	Ahn's Part I., 85 Exercises.
Geometry	I.	1	Books I., II., and III.
	II.	4	Book I.
Algebra	I.	8	To quadratics.
	II.	6	To g. c. measure.

Remarks.—English : This subject was moderately answered.—*Latin :* The work here was elemeutary, but it was accurately known. The translation was good.—*French :* The translation was satisfactory throughout. With one or two exceptions the grammar questions were well answered.—*Geometry :* Class I. was not represented at the examination. The lower class did very well.—*Algebra :* Both classes answered the questions given very successfully. The principles of the rules are clearly understood. The work was very neat. During the examination of this school one of the most advanced and most promising of the pupils was unavoidably absent.

The work done at the District High Schools during the year has, I think, been as satisfactory as could be expected. Under the present Education Act they are, as I have already explained, so heavily

handicapped that they cannot be expected to run far into the domain of secondary education. At Tokomairiro a large amount of work has been done; but here several of the scholars had before passed the Sixth Standard, and were therefore free to devote all their time and attention to the higher branches. In none of the other High Schools was there any pupil in this position, and that is the reason why the work at these is so much less advanced. The headmasters have, one and all, carried the work on with praiseworthy enthusiasm.

I have, &c.,

DONALD PETRIE, M.A.,
Inspector of Schools.

The Secretary to the Education Board, Otago.

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2. Mr. TAYLOR'S REPORT.

SIR,— Dunedin, 31st March, 1880.

I have the honor to submit my report for the year ended the 31st December, 1879. During the first part of the year I was chiefly occupied in making visits of inspection to 62 schools. For three months I was engaged assisting Mr. Petrie in the examination of the larger schools. The remainder of my time was employed with office work, and in examining 39 schools, situated principally in the Peninsula, Taieri, Tokomairiro, and Tuapeka Districts. The summaries of the results connected with the examination of these 39 schools have been tabulated along with those examined by Mr. Petrie, and will be referred to by him. Appended to this report is a table giving a detailed statement for each of the schools I examined unaided, under the following heads:—"School," "Standard," "Presented," "Passed," "Failed," "Average Age," "Percentage of Passes." It will be observed that the percentage of passes to the number presented ranges from 23 to 100. Six schools show a percentage of 90 and over; fifteen, from 70 to 90; twelve, from 50 to 70; and six below 50. The reasons of the great disparity in these results call for some notice. It is scarcely necessary to state that the highest results are the outcome of intelligent teaching, thorough work, skilful management, and a cautiousness, sometimes excessive as shown by the average ages, which guarded against presenting pupils in standards the work of which they were considered not thoroughly able to undertake. Of the six schools showing a percentage of passes less than 50, I attribute the failure in the result of three of them partly to certain unfavourable circumstances connected with them, and to the fact that the instruction given was not regulated by the standards of the syllabus. In the case of the other three, I believe failure arose almost entirely from incapacity to teach and manage on the part of their teachers.

In comparing the average ages of the pupils presented in the standards a wide difference will be found to exist between schools. This difference is most noticeable in the case of the First Standard, where the age ranges from seven years one month to ten years five months. Of the 39 schools referred to here, 6 have, for the First Standard, an average age of eight years and under, and 4 have an average age of ten years and over. The latter have, therefore, an advantage over the former of two years at least in the age of the children. In forming a comparative estimate of the character of the work done in the schools from an examination of the results here shown, this difference of age has to be taken into account. The conclusion to be drawn, then, is that the school with the lowest average age and the highest percentage of passes in the same standards is the most efficient, and that a high average age and a low percentage of passes indicates a school of the opposite character. The other schools will find a place between these two extremes, and thus have their position in the scale of efficiency approximately determined. This conclusion should not be drawn too rigidly, as there are modifying circumstances connected with schools which sometimes interfere with it; nevertheless, as a broad generalization it is not very far from being correct. Two circumstances, which should not affect the schools to the same extent for next year as they did for the one just past, deserve to be noticed. The examination for the past year being the first under the new syllabus, a degree of uncertainty prevailed as to the manner in which it would be interpreted, and therefore in some quarters teachers, guided by extreme caution, and in order to err on the safe side, presented their classes lower than they might have done. In some instances the reverse was the case. Again, the advent of free education, and the consequent influx to the schools, especially in populous centres, of pupils whose education had been previously seriously neglected, had the effect of retarding the progress and impairing the efficiency of the schools, and of considerably raising the average age for the different classes. There is every reason to expect that in future the results will approach nearer to uniformity, and that the relation of age to standard will be more satisfactory.

DISCIPLINE.—Much improvement has been effected in discipline during the past few years. The pupils have been generally trained to maintain a quiet and orderly behaviour both in and out of school, to observe a respectful attitude towards others, and, with some exceptions, to take an intelligent interest in their work. The exceptions refer to no less than 8 out of the 39 schools I examined, in which the discipline and training were defective in two most important particulars. The defects were a manifest lack of earnestness and interest in their work on the part of the pupils, and a dull, lifeless, unworkable kind of disposition which prevented them from giving indications of being possessed of any but the smallest degree of intelligence. They would not move except at the expense of much time and strength, and then the result was most disappointing. A teacher who is devoid of tact and power to stir up earnestness in work and a love of study in his pupils, and who can discover no avenue to or means to rouse their slumbering intelligence, fails to a very serious extent in fulfilling the purposes of his profession. There is no doubt that home and local influences tend to neutralize to some extent those of the teacher, but he ought not to be wholly overcome by them.

INSTRUCTION.—Satisfactory progress continues to be made in respect of instruction, both in amount and method. Reading, spelling, and writing are the subjects most efficiently taught. Grammar comes next, and then arithmetic. The really deficient subjects are geography and history. In most of the schools the latter subject had been but recently introduced, and in some it had not been introduced at all at the time of examination. In such cases a series of failures had to be recorded under the head of history. Geography is such a wide and indefinite subject that a considerable number of failures is not very surprising. Reading has been improved in respect of distinctness and

expression—qualities in which it formerly too often fell short. In comparatively few schools is now heard the dreary monotone in prose reading, although the unpleasant unvarying swing in the repetition of poetry is still too common. Spelling, which is tested by words written on slates in the two lowest standards, and by dictation exercises in the others, continues to be particularly accurate. Writing now receives much greater attention than formerly, and there is a very noticeable improvement. I could name a few schools, however, in which this branch is still left very much to chance. Exercise books frequently show a want of sufficient supervision. Shorter exercises with stricter criticism would be advantageous. There are exceptional cases in which these books are all that could be expected. Object-lessons have received more or less attention in nearly all the schools—in a very few only have no time and place been found for them. With few exceptions they were not very successfully given; but this is not very surprising, when what is involved in them and the difficulty of presenting them satisfactorily to the minds of young children are taken into consideration. More acquaintance with their nature and aim, and more experience in dealing with them will lead to improvement. These lessons are certainly worthy of being systematically practised, for they form an excellent means of training, both to teachers and scholars, and will amply repay any pains bestowed upon them. The increase of knowledge, though an accompaniment, is not their aim, which is rather the cultivation of all in a child that will enable him to acquire knowledge. Their use is to lead to habits of sustained attention for longer or shorter periods, to the exercise of all the senses or powers of observation, to the ability to form comparisons, and to trace similarities and contrasts, and to the use of the reason and judgment. To accomplish all these and more besides the lessons required to be carefully graduated to the age and abilities of the children, but this is not often the case. Their arrangement of parts should be such as to lead the pupils to anticipate what was to follow, so that much telling might be avoided. The teacher's manner should be pleasing and animated, so that close attention might be secured and sufficient impression made. A good test of the success of these lessons is the continued interest and attention of the pupils; if these are not generally secured the lesson is a failure. Lessons on science might be treated like object-lessons, the subjects being so arranged and simplified that the pupils might have no difficulty in receiving and assimilating them.

The teaching of singing and drawing is becoming more general; but in the schools I examined the effects are not very impressive save in a few instances. In most of the large schools these subjects, and also industrial work, receive sufficient attention, and the results are satisfactory.

In conclusion, I have to express the opinion that a reasonable and satisfactory amount of progress has been made during the past year, notwithstanding the considerable changes in and additions to the school course. The work of examination has been no light task, and the work of preparing the schools for examination has, I am sure, been no lighter, and it is only owing to the skill and diligence of the large body of the teachers that it is so satisfactory as it is.

I have, &c.,
WM. TAYLOR,
Inspector of Schools.

The Secretary to the Education Board, Otago.

SOUTHLAND.

SIR,— Education Office, Invercargill, 20th February, 1880.

I have the honor to forward my general report for the year 1879.

During the year new schools have been opened at South Invercargill, North Invercargill, Gladstone, South Forest Hill, Ryal Bush, Lumsden, Fairlight, Otatara Bush, Knapdale, and Elderslie. At Riverton the old schoolhouse has been replaced by a commodious and handsome new one, and several schools have been altered and refurnished in accordance with the most approved plans. I have had no opportunity of comparing our new school-buildings with those of other education districts in New Zealand, but I do not hesitate to say that they do not suffer by comparison with those of the sister colony Victoria. Many of the school-grounds are now fenced; but few of the teachers, I regret to say, cultivate a garden, or otherwise utilize the school glebe. There is a refreshing exception at Waianiwa, where the teacher, Mr. Rowe, has spared neither money nor labour to ornament both the school-ground and the schoolhouse. His school is a model of neatness, and does him great credit. It is painful to have to complain of the filthy state of some of our schools and outbuildings. Very liberal allowances are made to Committees for the purpose of meeting the cost of cleaning the school-buildings and premises, and therefore the dirt and filth of which I have had too often to complain are utterly inexcusable. The schoolroom should be swept every evening, and the furniture dusted every morning; and once a month, at the least, the school floor, furniture, and out-offices shonld be thoroughly scrubbed.

Along the Mataura Valley, north of Gore, the Waimea Plains, the Oreti Plains, and that large extent of country lying between Otama and Otaraia, settlement is advancing so rapidly that, to supply the educational wants of the settlers, the resources of the Board will, for some years to come, be taxed to the uttermost.

Most of the schools are now tolerably well supplied with maps, ball-frames, and reading-cards; and quite recently arrangements have been made for the supply of properly-made black-boards and easels.

The school at Stewart Island, and three others that were closed when I was in their neighbourhood, have been visited only once, and three schools recently opened not at all. All the rest have been visited at least twice—seventeen, three times; four, four times; and the town schools all several times. In the discharge of my duties I have travelled 3,968 miles, and made 141 visits of inspection.

Number of pupils examined in the standards	2,031
Number that passed fully according to Regulation 8	853
Number presented in the First Class* (not fit to be examined in Standard I.)	1,331

* This class is always tested, and the result recorded in the report sent to the teacher. Average age of this class—7 years 9 months.

Several new schools had not been long enough in operation to stand the test of a formal examination, and were therefore not examined.

The following tables will show at a glance, better than any verbal description of mine, what is the state of education in this district:—

TABLE I.—Showing the Percentage of Passes gained in the several Subjects of Examination.

Subject.	Percentage of Passes.
Reading	87·2
Spelling	72·2
Writing	87·1
Arithmetic	46·4
Grammar	26·4
Geography	44·0
History	17·0

TABLE II.—Showing the Percentage of Passes gained by each Standard in the several Subjects of Examination.

Standards.	Average age.	Reading.	Spelling.	Writing.	Arithmetic.	Grammar.	Geography.	History.
	yrs. mos.							
Standard I. ...	9 6	89·6	86·0	91·4	56·7	...	...	...
Standard II. ...	11 5	86·8	83·3	86·9	41·1	...	46·5	...
Standard III. ...	12 5	81·6	55·4	83·3	49·5	29·2	45·3	14·5
Standard IV. ...	13 5	90·5	48·0	80·2	31·0	26·6	34·5	20·6
Standard V. ...	13 11	85·1	37·8	89·2	23·0	15·0	48·7	20·3

The percentages gained in arithmetic, grammar, and geography are very low, and may be accounted for on the following grounds, and others that will be referred to as the report proceeds: The basis of classification has hitherto been too narrow: many teachers, up to the time of the examination of their school, had formed no adequate conception of the work compassed by each standard of the syllabus: the examinations were conducted rigorously and under conditions differing, in many cases very materially, from those to which pupils had been accustomed when examined by their teachers.

As it is a matter of some importance that teachers should know wherein their methods are considered to be faulty, I now proceed to make a few observations on organization, and the subjects of instruction.

ORGANIZATION.—The time-tables have improved very considerably during the year. In many schools these documents are now skilfully constructed and faithfully adhered to; but in still too large a number they are only fairly constructed, and very indifferently adhered to even in my presence. From the fact that the teachers of these schools do not know their time-tables by heart I conclude that in my absence no attention whatever is paid to them. A few—and, I am glad to say, only a few—of our teachers seem to think that a time-table once made should serve for all time. Skilful managers find it difficult to make one that will serve, without some alteration, for even six months. In each standard there are several subjects of study, and it will often be found, if classes are systematically examined, as suggested in my last report, that pupils are advancing faster in one or two subjects than in others. To restore the balance the time-table must be altered; more time must be given to the weaker subjects, and less to the stronger. The distribution of the teaching power has improved in many of the small schools; but head-teachers of large schools do not sufficiently attend to the supervision of the work of their assistants and pupil-teachers. It is well for them to know that errors in organization count against them when marks are assigned in accordance with Regulation 12. Classification is still very faulty. The position of a child is determined too much by reading and spelling alone. The recent examinations have, however, shown that this basis of classification is much too narrow; and teachers will now, it is to be hoped, adopt some such plan as that recommended last year.

READING.—The percentage gained in this subject is to be regarded rather as the measure of familiarity with the forms and sounds of words than as that of ability to read intelligently. I said last year that reading was "much heard, but little taught," and the remark will bear repeating. The reading lesson is conducted as if there were but one end to be attained—namely, facility in naming certain words in a given order. Pupils learn, as a home exercise, the meaning of the words explained at the end of the lesson, read the lesson in class, give, when called upon to do so, the meaning (synonym) of a word or two, and are then considered to have mastered the lesson. The fact that the main object of reading is to gain a mastery of the language employed, and, through this, familiarity with the matters treated of in the reading lesson, is in the majority of schools almost entirely overlooked. The result is that pupils get through their reading-book a time or two long before the rest of the class-work marked out in the syllabus has been overtaken. Parents then importune the teachers to put their children in a more advanced book—in other words, into a higher class. From the point of view of the parents the position taken up by them is not an unreasonable one. They think—most of them do so, at any rate—that when the child is able to read the book, he necessarily knows the book; nor is this to be wondered at, when so many teachers themselves fail to distinguish between knowing the words of a lesson and knowing the lesson itself. It were to be wished that teachers would give more heed to quality and less to quantity. It is not necessary that children should read much daily, but it is necessary that they should be made to think of what they read, to understand the language and the matter of the lesson, and to have their attention cultivated. In only a few schools are children accustomed to sustained attention. Whilst the reading lesson is going on it is quite a common thing to see half the class idling, looking about the room, or indulging in a *tête-à-tête* conversation. What amazes one most

is that teachers appear to be quite insensible to all this, and are apparently satisfied if the pupil under direct instruction is attending to his work. Of course the attention of all could be assured by causing, at suitable intervals, the books to be closed, and asking a few questions on what had been read; but the questions must be pertinent, and, moreover, not require looking for. In fine, the lesson must be prepared beforehand, and its general manner of treatment determined upon. No teacher, I believe, that does not systematically prepare his lessons can do the fullest justice either to himself or his pupils —make the most of his time or of theirs.

Spelling.—The standards examined orally (First and Second) did very well, those examined in dictation on paper (Third, Fourth, and Fifth) very badly. The inferior quality of the answering in the case of these latter I attribute to the very unsatisfactory methods employed in the dictation exercise. At an inspector's examination pupils are so placed that copying and prompting are impossible; in class work under the teacher any amount of copying and prompting is possible, and, I regret to add, is common. The remedy is vigilance on the part of the teacher. Another element of weakness lies in the fact that nearly all the time allotted to the dictation exercise is spent in actual dictation. Errors are thus daily committed and seldom corrected. Wrong impressions are printed on the mind, and little effort is made to efface and replace them by correct ones. Unless they devote more time to the correction of errors, teachers had better abandon the exercise altogether, and substitute transcription in its stead. In any case transcription should, even in the advanced classes, frequently take the place of dictation. The utility of this exercise, however, depends also quite largely on the manner of conducting it. The following method is recommended: Always transcribe a portion of the reading-lesson for the day. Let the pupils read over (not more than twice at most) one or two phrases, or a sentence, turn over their reading books, and write what they have read on their slates or exercise-books. This done, let them repeat the process until about half the time allotted to the exercise has expired. The written work should then be compared by the pupils with the printed passage, all mis-spelt words marked, and thereafter written out correctly from five to ten times each. With advanced classes the exercise should more often take the following shape: At the teacher's dictation the pupils underline the more difficult and uncommon words in the reading-lesson for the day. They then read over as many of the underlined words as they can with difficulty remember, turn their books over and write the words on their slates or exercise-books; and so on, until all the words underlined are written out. They then compare their own spelling with that of the book, after which all mis-spelt words are written out correctly from five to ten times each. One of the best spellers should always be told off to take a note of the mis-spelt words, and at suitable intervals—say at the end of every four or five days—these words should form the basis of another spelling exercise. It is perhaps necessary to add that, if any words are forgotten, the fact should be indicated by a dash. In this way the maximum of work is got out of the pupils, the possibility of writing a word incorrectly even once is immensely reduced, the attention and the memory are cultivated, and the teacher is free in the meantime to teach another class.

Writing.—What I complained of last year must again be complained of this—in the majority of schools the subject is not taught: the black-board is not used in the correction of errors. In collective teaching the proper way to correct an error is to write the letters as written by the pupil on the black-board, and alongside of them the letters as written in the headline, to direct the attention of all the pupils to the two kinds of letters, and get them to point out wherein those written by the pupil differ from those in the headline. Of course the pupils know that this difference is the error, and will, in future, guard against it. Where I find a child writing in a suitable copybook, and plainly making every effort to imitate the headline, I invariably record a pass; but where there is plainly little or no effort made to imitate the headline, I invariably pluck the child. Dirty, smeary copybooks are always rejected. A careful and competent teacher can rely upon getting 100 per cent. in this subject. Neither the proper position of the body, nor the proper way to hold the pen, is anything like sufficiently insisted on.

Arithmetic.—Some improvement is noticeable in the manner of treating arithmetic; but the subject is still made too much a matter of rules. Explanations and demonstrations on the black-board, by well-chosen examples, of the principles and applications of the rules are not at all prominent features in our school method. It is true there are few teachers that do not work sums on the black-board before their pupils, and tell them how these and similar sums are done; but I have seldom seen the working out of the reason "why" by skilful statement and question. The questions "How do you know?" and "Why?" do not occur with sufficient frequency. Instead of merely assisting pupils to correct solutions, many teachers do almost all the work for them. For example: In silent work from books, some of the pupils are unable to do one or two of the sums, the teacher straightway either works the sums, or shows his pupils how to do them. This, of course, is very unwise, and can certainly not be called educating. The following method has been found to be successful: Construct similar problems and write them on the black-board, and help the pupil to a mastery of the principles involved in them; cause the children to construct similar problems, and thereafter to solve them; and, finally, send them to their places to work the sums over which they had previously stumbled. With practice, children soon acquire surprising facility in the construction of these problems. This is an exercise that is deserving of greater prominence in the higher classes. Numeration and notation are generally well taught; but the first and second classes are still very weak in the addition table. Mental arithmetic is very weak.

Grammar.—This subject still continues to be ill taught in the majority of schools. The intensely stupid practice of putting a grammar-book into the hands of young children, and causing them to learn the rules and definitions, still too widely obtains. I have not infrequently found children able to repeat glibly enough the definitions of the parts of speech, and yet unable to distinguish an adjective in an easy sentence. Instead of being led by the study of simple cases to evolve the general proposition, these poor children are made to begin with the general proposition and descend to the particular case—to begin with the abstract and end with the concrete! No wonder the way is difficult! In the advanced classes, full parsing and the analysis of sentences are taught; but the fact that these exercises are only means to an end is, I fear, in the main lost sight of. Just as parsing should be taught with

the view to the right arrangement of words, so should the analysis of sentences be taught with the view to the right arrangement of phrases and sentences.

Geography.—In a few schools proper methods of teaching this subject prevail. Outline maps are drawn on the black-board by the teacher, and the subject-matter of the lesson filled in as the lesson proceeds. In most schools, however, one of two other methods is adopted: pupils learn either from text-books, paying little or no attention to locality, or from wall-maps at the pointing of the teacher. The former cannot be too strongly condemned; but the latter is not objectionable if carried out with judgment. This, however, is just where the shoe pinches: it is not carried out with judgment. On the one hand, the pointer is too seldom in the hands of the pupils; and, on the other, not a few teachers seem to think it incumbent upon them to traverse in the short space of thirty minutes almost every feature of the map; and thus capes, bays, mountains, rivers, towns, &c., &c., "in thick disorder run." I must again condemn the practice of teaching (?) this subject with book in hand. What the teacher does not know he had better not attempt to teach. Though my questions in physical geography were of the most elementary character, yet they failed in most cases to elicit satisfactory answers.

History.—Judging from the character of the answering, I incline to the opinion that, up to the time of the examinations, the subject had not been seriously entered upon.

Object-Lessons and Elementary Science.—Object-lessons are properly given in but few schools. In the most, these lessons are both aimless and soulless. They are generally read out from books, and are in no way prepared beforehand. Hardly any questions are given to evoke thought—there is absolutely no working-in, and no recapitulation. Teachers would do well to read what Herbert Spencer and Bain have said about object-lessons. In elementary science two or three enthusiastic teachers have done very creditable work; and it is a fact worth remarking that these teachers got good results in the essential subjects of the standards. Generally, however, Regulation 12 has remained a dead-letter.

Singing and Drawing.—Hardly anything has been done in drawing, and very little in music and singing. In a few of the small schools, and in all the large schools but one, singing is taught by one or more of the staff. Not much of theory is taken up; but easy songs and rounds are executed very creditably indeed.

Records.—During the year, it is painful to have to say, one teacher was dismissed for falsifying his register, and another for again and again omitting to mark his for days together. Both these teachers are now out of the service, and their names need therefore not be mentioned. As a rule, however, the records of our schools are, I believe, faithfully kept.

Discipline.—Except in the middle and upper classes of some of the town schools, the discipline and behaviour of the children are generally satisfactory. The "tone" of most country schools is very good.

District High School.—The District High School was examined in the higher branches in the end of November. I subjoin a table showing the work done in the year, and a few notes on the quality of the answering.

Subjects.	Class.	No. of Pupils Examined	Teacher.	Work done.
Latin ...	Preparatory	12	Mr. Macgregor	Dr. Smith's Principia Latina, Part I., pp. 1–24.
	I.	6	Mr. McLeod	Dr. Smith's Principia Latina, Part I., pp. 1–50.
	II.	1	Mr. McLeod	Dr. Smith's Principia Latina, Part I., and the Mythology in Part II.
	III.	3	Mr. Macgregor	Æneid, Book III.; and small portions of Books I., IV., V., and VI. of Cæsar's De Bello Gallico, and Grammar.
Greek ...	I.	1	Mr. Macgregor	Initia Græca, Part I.; and Book I., and a small portion of Book II. of Xenophon's Anabasis.
French ...	Preparatory	6	Mr. Bennett	Dr. Ahn's First French Course, Ex. 1–115.
	I.	9	Mr. Bennett	Dr. Ahn's First French Course, Ex. 1–152; and De Fivas' Grammaire des Grammaires, pp. 1–71.
	II.	2	Mr. Bennett	Grammaire des Grammaires, pp. 1–117; and Book I. of Histoire de Charles XII.
Geometry ...	I.	3	Mr. Macgregor	Euclid's Elements, Book I.
	II.	4	Mr. McLeod	Euclid's Elements, Books I.–III.
	III.	1	Mr. Macgregor	Euclid's Elements, Books I.–VI., with deductions.
Algebra ...	I.	11	Mr. McLeod	Todhunter's Algebra for Beginners, Ex. I.–XIII
	II.	1	Mr. Macgregor	Todhunter's Algebra for Beginners, Ex. I.–XXXVI.
Trigonometry	I.	1	Mr. Macgregor	Todhunter's Trigonometry for Beginners, to solution of triangles inclusive.

Remarks.—Latin: Preparatory Class: Very deficient in the vocabularies. About half the class did the *vivâ voce* translation of Latin into English satisfactorily; the rest very badly. First Class: Two pupils answered fairly; the rest very badly indeed. Second Class: On the whole, good; but very little work has been done during the year. Third Class: Two passages from Virgil were given, and two from Cæsar. They were satisfactorily translated by one boy, and hardly fairly by the two

others. Translation of English into Latin, good by one boy, hardly attempted by the others.—*Greek:* Translation good; grammar fairly satisfactory.—*French:* Preparatory Class: Very weak in the vocabularies. Translation—French-English, satisfactory; English-French, very fair. First Class: Very weak in the vocabularies. Translation—English-French, very inferior; French-English, fairly satisfactory. Second Class: Both grammar and translation on the whole good.—*Geometry:* First Class: Very satisfactory. Second Class: On the whole, good. Third Class: Excellent.—*Algebra:* First Class: Two pupils answered well, two satisfactorily, two fairly, and six very unsatisfactorily indeed. Four pupils of this class were examined last year in Exs. I–VII., and this year they have not got beyond Ex. XIII. This is, in my judgment, far too little work to occupy even the dullest boy a whole year.—*Trigonometry:* Satisfactory.—The only subjects in which the syllabus has been overtaken are Geometry and Trigonometry. The quantity of work done in the other subjects falls considerably short of what is marked out in the syllabus. This is notably the case in Latin, Greek, and Algebra.

I have, &c,

P. GOYEN,

The Secretary, Southland Education Board, Invercargill. Inspector of Schools.

By Authority: GEORGE DIDSBURY, Government Printer, Wellington.—1880.

Price 1s. 9d.]