

organising some of the schools, and assisting and advising the less experienced teachers. As Mr. Petrie puts it, “this part of an Inspector’s duties is certainly not inferior in point of importance to the examinations.” It is scarcely possible to put this matter on a proper footing without increasing the number of Inspectors, or else rearranging their districts, which could only be done by concert between the Boards. Until the teachers generally are trained either in the normal schools or by the Inspectors, the results of our school machinery will be to some extent disappointing. Not that New Zealand is at all singular in this respect. Sir Charles Reed’s report on the schools of the United States complains of the want of proper knowledge of “method” on the part of many of the teachers. He says, “The schools are everywhere supplied with a full complement of adult teachers. If the latter were always well trained, our congratulations would be unreserved; but, unfortunately, complaints are made on many sides that the level of attainments is low. Thus Mr. Philbrick speaks of ‘the almost universal evil in American schools of substituting the setting of tasks and the hearing of lessons for real teaching;’ and Mr. Wickersham writes, ‘We want less of words and more of things; less of abstract rules and definitions and more of living facts.’”

The educational status of the pupils in the primary schools is exhibited by two sets of figures. The first set shows the teachers’ judgment of the relative proficiency of the children, as expressed in their classification in the schools. The second set gives the Inspectors’ judgment, as expressed in standard passes. The school classification at the end of the year is shown in the following table:—

TABLE N.—CLASSIFICATION ACCORDING TO STANDARDS IN THE LAST QUARTER OF 1880.

Standards.				Boys.	Girls.	Totals.	Percentage.	
							1880.	1879.
Infants (too young for line next following)	...	...	...	11,375	10,348	21,723	26·36	25·45
Preparing for Standard I.	...	...	...	9,114	8,367	17,481	21·21	23·60
”	”	II.	...	7,554	7,236	14,790	17·95	17·73
”	”	III.	...	6,796	6,639	13,435	16·34	15·70
”	”	IV.	...	4,591	4,255	8,846	10·72	10·75
”	”	V.	...	2,154	1,963	4,117	4·99	4·87
”	”	VI.	...	885	685	1,570	1·90	1·54
Passed Standard VI.	...	...	...	265	174	439	0·53	0·36
Totals for 1880				42,734	39,667	82,401	100	...
Totals for 1879				39,298	35,997	75,295	...	100

It appears from the above table that the proportion of children not yet fit to pass in any standard is slightly diminishing (from 49·05 per cent. to 47·57), but that, dividing these children into two classes, the proportion in the lower class (26·36 per cent.) is larger than it was last year (25·45 per cent.); and this notwithstanding that the proportion of children under five years of age has declined from 3·68 per cent. of the school-rolls to 3·18, and that generally the ages of the children are higher than they were last year, the proportions of children under seven years and under ten being both smaller than in 1879. The proportion of pupils judged by the teachers to be above Standard IV. has increased from 6·77 per cent. to 7·42.

According to the estimate of the teachers, then, nearly half of the pupils (47·57 per cent.) are not able to pass Standard I., which only requires ability to read sentences composed of words of one syllable and common words of two syllables, to spell easy words of one syllable, to write the small letters and the ten figures on a slate, to count, to add twos, threes, fours, and fives, up to 100, to do addition sums of three columns, and multiplication of numbers not exceeding 999 by numbers not exceeding five, and to read and write numbers not exceeding 999. While nearly one-half are deemed unable to pass this standard, only one-seventh of the remainder are reckoned capable of passing Standard IV. This cannot be regarded as a satisfactory state of things, and is probably to be explained by the very short average duration of a child’s stay at any school, which is apparently not more than two years. In 1880, for example, 49,294 children were admitted, yet the school-roll was only augmented from 75,566 to 82,401, an increase of 6,835. This means that while 49,294 came in, 42,459 went out; and either of these numbers is greater than half the roll. No doubt many of those