

means was to make the teacher at once report to the Board, through the head-teacher, the fact of her absence. The feeling that each absence is at once known and recorded deters teachers from absenting themselves without ample excuse.

As I stated in my last year's report, examinations for standards were not begun in this district till 1879, so that the system is still in its infancy here. I am of opinion, as I stated last year, that the system, if worked judiciously, will do much good. I think the statements made in reference to standards in last year's report of the Inspector-General are calculated to assist this judicious working. He says, "Inspectors should in any case of doubt lean to the side of strictness in the interpretation of the standards. On the one hand the demands made by the standards should be rigorously exacted. They are to be taken as representing the minimum of attainment of which the Inspectors will expect evidence at each stage of a scholar's progress (*see Regulations*); and they ought to be passed in such a way as to indicate that the candidate could, without much difficulty, do better work than is demanded of him at examination. On the other hand, the Inspector should keep his questions strictly within the limits prescribed." (The italics are my own.) And, again, the Inspector-General states that it is a misconception to think that "if a pupil has passed in one standard the teacher must present him for the next standard at next examination, whether he be fit for it or not." While strictness is prescribed to the Inspector, considerable latitude is allowed, and to my mind wisely, to the teachers as to the pupils they send up. Children who can barely pass the First Standard will have difficulty in passing the Second in a year; those who can barely pass the Second will find it still harder to pass the Third in a year; and one who has just scraped through the Third Standard will very frequently fail to pass the Fourth in twelve months. These difficulties will be avoided if the Inspector-General's views are given effect to. Pupils will not be passed for the First Standard unless they give evidence that their attainments are nearly those required for the Second; and so with the other standards. It will be seen how wrong it is to put pressure, directly or indirectly, on teachers to send up pupils prematurely, especially for the First Standard. Of course the local authorities must be careful to see that no abuse is allowed to creep in. Indirect pressure is put on teachers, and much harm done by commenting on and comparing the results obtained at various schools without a full knowledge of the circumstances of each. In some schools, for various reasons, the proportion of young children is very large. Then, in some districts or portions of districts, the pupils leave school at an earlier age than they do in other places. There are many other differences. It will be seen how injustice may be done to a teacher, and pain inflicted on him, by hasty and crude criticism. Rightly understood, I do not think the standards will narrow the work of the teacher to merely preparing for them. In the earlier standards, for instance, the knowledge which pupils may have of matter in advance of the standards can with advantage be drawn out and increased. Many young children have incidentally picked up some knowledge of coin, and of weights and measures. They also, almost of necessity, have some knowledge of geography. They always hail with delight questioning which draws out or helps to methodize this knowledge, and they become eager to acquire more. By it their intellect is awakened, their intelligence increased, and the ordinary routine work, robbed of its monotony, becomes easier.

I append a table showing the number presented and passed in each standard. Considering that we are but beginning, and that it will take a long time to get the system into full work, I do not think the result unsatisfactory. I believe a somewhat severer test is applied here than in some other places. In the matter of composition, for instance, we require letters on a given subject to be written in a sufficiently satisfactory manner by candidates in the Third and Fourth Standards. This, which considerably adds to the difficulty of passing, is not done, I think, elsewhere. There can be no comparison between passes which include composition and passes which don't. Candidates failing in one standard have not in any case been classed for a lower one; if they had been the percentage of passes would have been higher, but it did not appear to me that the regulations gave authority to do it.

| Standard | I. | II. | III. | IV. | V. | VI. | Presented. | Passed. | Per cent. |
|----------|------|-----|------|-----|-----|-----|------------|---------|-----------|
| Standard | I. | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 2,412 | 1,807 | 75 |
| " | II. | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 1,983 | 1,375 | 69 |
| " | III. | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 1,494 | 861 | 58 |
| " | IV. | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 674 | 337 | 50 |
| " | V. | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 143 | 89 | 62 |
| " | VI. | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 16 | 14 | 87 |
| | | | | | | | 6,722 | 4,483 | 66 |

I give this table for what it is worth, but it must never be forgotten that the test of results is often a fallacious test. We want not only to know what has been acquired, but how—whether by judicious training or by the brute force of cramming. Mr. Payne, a high authority, says, "The test of results only is insufficient, inasmuch as, however valuable they are in appearance, they may be the product of contracted and unenlightened views, as embodied in practice, of the true ends of education, and indeed may be entirely due to that 'cramming' which is directly antagonistic to healthful mental training."

The state of the schools continues to improve on the whole. The gaining of scholarships, is, of course, taken by itself, no criterion of the efficiency of a school. It may be the effect of a disregard of school duties. However, when we find that the general work does not suffer, and at the same time that the power of gaining scholarships and certificates of proficiency is more generally diffused, it is cause for satisfaction. This was the case here last year, when country schools got a fair proportion of the scholarships and certificates of proficiency gained at the same examination; the number of the latter gained this year being 39 as against 6 in 1879, the number of candidates being about equal.

To go to particular subjects: The teaching of writing continues to improve. In some of the schools the writing is really excellent. Of course much remains to be done. Teachers cannot be too careful to insure that pupils shall exactly follow the copy set before them. It is not enough that a pupil's writing is fair of its kind if the kind is not that of the copy. A pupil is supposed and professes to write in the same fashion as the copy. When he does not do so his work is not honest. He gets