1881.

NEW ZEALAND.

EDUCATION:

REPORTS OF INSPECTORS OF SCHOOLS.

[In Continuation of H.-1I., 1880.]

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

[It has not been thought necessary in all cases to print the tables and those portions of the Inspectors' reports that relate only to particular schools.]

AUCKLAND.

SIR,— Auckland, March, 1881.

I have the honor to submit this report for the year ended the 31st December, 1880.

The number of primary schools in the education district, and the attendance of pupils, are shown in the following table:—

Quarter ending	Number of Schools.	Roll Number.			Average Attendance.		
		M.	F.	Total.	M.	F.	Total.
March 31	203	7,670	6,883	14,553	6,042	5,328	11,370
June 30	206	7,786	7,062	14,848	6,119	5,321	11,440
September 30 ...	205	7,751	7,070	14,821	5,931	5,212	11,143
December 31 ...	208	7,787	7,152	14,939	6,245	5,594	11,830

The training of teachers has been carried on up to the 31st December last, in the manner I have so often described, viz., by means of evening and Saturday classes for young teachers and probationers, and by correspondence between the master of the training classes and country teachers; together with practice in the ordinary work of the schools. Probationers, as I have before explained, are persons whom the Board consider likely to make useful teachers, but who have little or no experience in teaching. Some of these probationers, as might be expected, have been failures, and, after a fair trial, their services have had to be dispensed with. It is very satisfactory to be able to state that many of them have become admirable teachers. Some of the best schools in the district are taught by these young men and women, without any long training, but formed on the methods of instruction and discipline which the Board here have long since adopted. Of course in these cases a natural aptitude for teaching was there; without this, all the training in the world will not bring efficiency.

The Board have appointed Mr. McArthur as Principal of the Training School, which, it is to be hoped, will be in operation ere long. It is proposed to continue, as far as possible, instruction to teachers not actual students in the school. The regulations under which it is proposed to work have been forwarded to the Minister of Education for approval. Mr. McArthur and myself consider that there is a tendency in these institutions to become in a great measure merely superior schools. We think that what should be aimed at is to fit the students for their career by practice and instruction in the art of teaching, and by earnestly promoting their general culture and enlightenment. A teacher whose knowledge is narrowed to school-books and school-methods is by no means a desirable citizen of a state: it may not be going too far to call him a mischievous one. Narrowness is contagious, and narrowness is one of the noxious growths of colonial society. From it come hasty, violent judgments, formed without inquiry or balancing of arguments, and that presumptuous ignorance which rushes in where knowledge and experience fear to tread. It is not wise to train men and women merely calculated to spread this type of character. What should be aimed at is to produce men and women, who, to use the language of Carlyle, "Value knowledge, possess some, and what is better and rarer, are open minded for more."

No junior teacher is now employed in the district of a less age than fifteen years. The Board are desirous to make the lowest limit sixteen, but they think it judicious to hasten slowly. I hope before long they will be able to raise the limit, and also to make passing in the Sixth Standard a condition of employment. The many advantages to be gained from this I dwelt on in my last year's report: the main one being the saving of young teachers from the double strain of teaching and learning. I am glad to be able to report that the number of short absences from duty of junior teachers has very much lessened. Until means were taken to winnow them, their absences were fast becoming an abuse. This

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.

	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

into a habit, as it were, of saying the thing that is not, and of enacting a sham. Of course this injures him morally and intellectually. He is having bad training when he might have good. He is getting trained to a habit of doing falsely and inaccurately what he should be trained to do truly and accurately. It should never be lost sight of that the object of all teaching should be to train the pupil in habits that will carry him through the travail of after life. Teachers should try to get good work; they should insist on getting honest work. In this case honest work means a valuable training in habits of accuracy and precision. I make it a practice to examine the standard composition and grammar papers of every school in the district, and I find almost invariably that the neat and careful writer does well in other subjects, while the scrawler mostly fails in all. Careful and honest work in one subject begets careful and honest work in the others.

Transcribing from books, which to my mind is a valuable means of training, is better taught as a rule. I still, however, find classes where a quantity of matter is allowed to be scrawled anyhow on a slate, with some after corrections. This comes from the error so deeply imbued in many teachers' minds that the time set apart for any subject is to be wholly taken up by the pupils' work, whereas teaching should occupy in many cases the greater part of the time. It is the absence of teaching that is the bane of so many schools. Pupils are allowed to produce any amount of bad work. No doubt there is for the most part some after correction, which is ineffective. But true teaching would prevent most of the bad work, and would quickly bring out good. Ten minutes of pupils' work and twenty minutes of corrective teaching, which should take the shape of making the pupil correct his own errors, will soon produce satisfactory results. This applies to many subjects. As regards this particular subject, when the teacher has to deal with an inexperienced class, or one that has fallen into bad ways, he should first of all warn the class that he will expect a certain kind of work, say large open writing, and but few words in each line. Then he should allow them to write one line, which he should glance over, or examine more carefully as time permits. He should next question the entire class about the sort of mistakes he has noted as most prevalent, illustrating his remarks, if necessary, by means of the black-board. He then should have the line written over and over again, if it appears necessary. It will, I think, be plain that this kind of teaching must be effectual. That is the test of all work. The teacher should constantly ask himself, "Am I effecting anything, or am I working the machinery at my command to grind nothing?" I wish again to state the strong objection I have to the practice of getting pupils to correct each other's work. It is bad intellectual training, and bad moral training.

The teaching of reading has improved. The temporary appointment of a teacher of reading for the city and suburban schools has had a good general effect by awakening teachers to the importance attached to reading. I am afraid that many teachers fail to lay the right foundation of good reading, that is, a thorough understanding of what is read. When a class have gone through a portion of a reading book laboriously, and have by frequent repetition mastered its meaning, then they are in a position to read with intelligence and fluency, and they have besides got a valuable training in thoroughness. As regards the beginning of reading, too much of alphabet teaching lingers in places. I am of opinion that this senseless method should be made to cease, and that what is called the "Look and Say Method" should alone be allowed. The reading of some of the junior teachers is not what it should be. Head-teachers can and ought to do much to rectify this by insisting on improvement, which in most instances can be brought about by practice.

The subjects least satisfactorily taught are geography and history. The bad results in the former must, I fear, be laid altogether at the teachers' doors. It is a subject which children delight in when they are intelligently taught to exercise their observing faculties on it, and ample instructions how to teach it have been placed within the teachers' reach. Pupils should be taught to make their walks voyages of discovery, to bring back to the teacher accounts of the islands, the almost islands, the lakes, the seas, &c., they have discovered—they will find plenty in winter on every country road. Then comparison comes in with these things as painted on the map. But indeed, of good ways, there is no end if people could only see. As regards history there is more difficulty in the way. The more general establishment of school libraries by diffusing a taste for reading, which the teacher should bend to his purpose, would perhaps do more than anything else to prepare the soil for the growth of historical knowledge.

There is some improvement in the teaching of grammar, but I cannot say I am satisfied with the way it is taught as a rule. However, teachers are beginning to find out that the elementary knowledge of grammar required for the Third Standard, or the Fourth, can, by means of object-lessons, be conveyed to the pupils in the Second and even First Standards. Children can easily be trained to see what the things called nouns are; to see what sort of things they are (adjectives); to see what they do (verbs); and to see how they do it (adverbs). I think that some knowledge of syntax—acquired by oral teaching—might very well be exacted in the Fourth Standard.

By steadily insisting on original composition—no matter how crude—considerable progress has been made in this subject. In the First Standard small beginnings are made. A little more is done in the Second. A large number of pupils preparing for the Third Standard write creditable letters, and improve still further in the Fourth. There is only one way to teach composition: follow nature, ask a child for his own natural talk only. Do not manacle him with reproduction and the like imbecilities.

Object-lessons are not as a rule what they should be. It seems almost impossible to make teachers feel that the aim of these lessons is to make children observe the things before their eyes; it is not to convey what is called useful knowledge. The so-called object-lesson books have much to answer for. Teachers will point with absurd complacency to lists of subjects in which they have given what they call object-lessons to a class not half of whom perhaps can tell how a horse's hoof differs from a cow's. The only subjects taken should be the animals and minerals, the trees, grasses, flowers, &c., of the neighbourhood.

Drawing is taught in and near Auckland, and, in some of the country districts, by a master employed for the purpose. He holds a teachers' class on Saturdays at the Training School. A drawing

class for teachers is also held at the Thames. On the whole some considerable progress has been made. Three music teachers are employed as hitherto—namely, one at Auckland, one at the Thames, and one in the Waikato District. They are doing their work fairly well. Objections are sometimes made to the expense incurred for teaching music, and what may be called the artistic parts of drawing. It is said that these subjects are not practical, and that the money their teaching costs had better be otherwise spent. It seems to me an eminently practical thing to imbue a people with a taste for refined and intellectual pleasures, pleasures which cost little, which leave no sting behind, and which act as safeguards against coarse, hurtful, and costly enjoyments. I believe it is well to sedulously foster those "artistic aspirations," to quote the words of the late Chairman of the Board, "which lead to true refinement of character, elevating private life, and ultimately exalting a people." I believe, too, with Dr. Campbell, that "it is a good and desirable thing that we should have the fact brought home to us that there are aims in life other than mere money-making, other than mere sensuous enjoyments, and that the devotion of the mind, in an artistic direction, is not incompatible with the every-day drudgeries of life."

The acquirements of the pupils in arithmetic—judging from the results—are, on the whole, fairly satisfactory. I cannot say that I am satisfied with the methods employed in all cases. In the junior classes there is too much learning of tables by rote. This is, of course, utterly wrong. Children should learn them experimentally, from the ball-frame, from coins, from measures, and weights—seen and felt and handled. Some improvement in this direction is, I am glad to say, taking place.

The laws of health are fairly taught. No man can with impunity remain ignorant of these laws, and good must result from a generally diffused knowledge of them. By-and-by people will probably adopt methods of living suitable to the climate. But it is rather wonderful, or perhaps it is not, how many resent being disturbed in their old traditionary, comfortable ways of killing themselves. Much good continues to be done by the teaching of gymnastics. The number of girls in the schools with contracted chests has perceptibly lessened, though the present style of dress neutralizes, in a great measure, the good sought to be done.

In connection with the laws of health there are some matters which call for special notice. The instructions of the Board provide that certain intervals—each of ten minutes or so—shall be given during school hours. These intervals are essential to the health of the teacher and of the pupil, as well as to the efficiency of the one and the intellectual progress of the other. I regret to have to say that some teachers have taken upon themselves the grave responsibility of depriving their assistants and pupils of these intervals. I do not find that these teachers have refrained from signing a certificate monthly that the instructions of the Board have been strictly adhered to. Another matter of importance is that teachers too often neglect to thoroughly air the rooms during intervals, and after school, and pupils are thus forced to breathe, from their entrance, a vitiated atmosphere. Then, care enough is not taken to adjust the openings of doors and windows, so that, while the ventilation is sufficient, the pupils are not exposed to injurious draughts. A high authority thus refers to the effect on pupils of breathing impure air: "It reacts on the blood, and this again on the brain. The teacher, as well as the children, all suffer from the same cause. He languidly delivers a lesson to pupils who more languidly receive it. They are no longer able to concentrate their attention. They answer his half-understood questions carelessly and incorrectly. Not appreciating the true state of the case, he treats them as wilfully indifferent, and punishes the offenders, as they feel, unjustly." The conduct of a teacher who does not take pains to preserve the health of his pupils seems to me little short of criminal, and the responsibility of the teacher is the greatest where large numbers are herded together. In many schools the health of the pupils is injured by too much home-work being given. Home-work should not occupy at most more than an hour, and should be of a light and not perplexing kind. Getting poetry by heart, preparing a reading-lesson, or a lesson in physical geography, would be suitable work. Arithmetic should never be given as home-work. Quantities of it are often given, merely, as it would appear, to take up the time which nature requires for recreation. This practice, if the pupil knows how to work, is useless; if he does not, and is helped, is demoralizing; if he does not know, and is not helped, that means perplexity and mental injury.

Some remarks, in a sermon by Dr. Talmage, printed in the *Herald* of the 26th February, are very pertinent to this subject: "When children spend several hours in school, and then must spend two or three hours in preparation for the next day, will you tell me how much time they will have for sunshine and fresh air, and the obtaining of that exuberance which is necessary for the duties of coming life?" And, again, "There are many schools to-day which are preparing tens of thousands of invalid men and invalid women for the future, so that, by the time the child's education is finished, the child is finished." Surely no care is too great to avoid the danger of turning out a race of invalid men and women.

Many people find fault with the elementary schools because they are not something else, because they are not, in a great measure, technical schools. But the object of the schools is not to teach the pupils particular trades, but to train their faculties so that they can turn them to account in any occupation whatever. To quote the words of Mr. Payne, "Although education is to be a preparation for after life, yet it is to be a general, not a professional, preparation, and cannot provide for minute or special contingencies. The object of education is to form the man, not the baker; the man, not the lawyer; the man, not the civil engineer." I do not, of course, mean that something special may not be taught in the school. Mechanical drawing may be taught, for instance. Country teachers may do much to make their pupils acquire knowledge useful to farmers.

The question as to what manner of men and women we are training up in the public schools is one of grave importance. Are they to be, to use the words of the headmaster of the Church of England Grammar School at Melbourne, "a race of men who will be incapable of doing anything which is disagreeable to them?" Another writer speaks of the Australian youth's want "of deference to others, respect for authority, reverence for age, veneration for worth, and belief in the existence of anything higher and better than the self-opinionated youth himself." And, again, "The idea of self-abnegation and self-sacrifice seems to be altogether foreign to the mind of Young Australia; and there-

fore it would be hopeless to look for any of those qualities in him which are essential to true greatness in the individual, and which, in the mass, go to build up the fabric of national greatness. Life is regarded as something out of which the utmost possible amount of pleasure—or what passes for pleasure—is to be extracted, and not associated with innumerable duties to be performed to others, in the faithful and loyal performance of which each of us should and might find the greatest happiness, as well as—in the gratitude inspired and the good diffused—his highest and best reward."

There can be but little doubt that these words indicate truly the tendencies of the youth of New Zealand, as well as of the youth of Australia. I do not propose to discuss from what these tendencies have sprung. They have their roots in the colonial social system. I believe the public schools can do something to check their growth: they certainly should not be made a means to stimulate it. They are made a means to stimulate it when the pupils are allowed to rule the school. It is true that people are becoming half awake to this danger. We do not of late find so much maudlin sympathy for the sorrows of young culprits who have been treated in some measure according to their deserts. But the fact remains that many teachers are afraid to punish their pupils, and think themselves obliged to pamper them. Parents have complained to me of this. Assistant-teachers have complained to me that head-teachers will not punish pupils sent up for insubordination, for fear of hurting their popularity. I have known pupils guilty of truant-playing and lying taken back without punishment, from a like motive. Then teachers find that it is expected of them to provide adulation for children that have done the simplest duty: if a school has been examined in the standards, the certificates obtained by those who have passed the simple test cannot be given out quietly—they must be distributed with a flourish of trumpets. People are got together, speeches are made, and the pupils are puffed up with injudicious praise. Then entertainments are given to raise money for prizes, which are bestowed with more praise and more manufacture of conceit. Further, teachers try to attract and keep pupils by, from time to time, bribing them with sweetmeats and feasts. It seems to me monstrous that public schools, which should be distinguished by honest work alone, are allowed to reproduce these worst features of private schools. This is what is happening. The evil has increased, is increasing, and ought to be stamped out. There is another point of no slight importance—the wrong done to the teacher who will not stoop to fawn. All this rewarding, pampering, and praising is wrong. Besides generating conceit and appealing to low motives, it further unfits a child for the future by giving him a false idea of life. We are not invariably rewarded and praised for our good deeds. We frequently suffer from our evil deeds; we no less frequently suffer for our good ones. Boys and girls should be trained to work for the reason that it is right to work, and for no lower motive. They should be taught to walk in quiet paths, and should be relegated to their proper and natural position of insignificance. Teachers should awake to the degradation of the position they assume, and to the vital injury they are doing to their pupils and to the country. Boards and Committees, parents and the Press, and every good citizen, should be aiding and assisting the teachers to fight against this system of truckling to pupils, which is fast producing a despotism of children which must become a danger to the State.

I have, &c.,

RICHARD J. O'SULLIVAN.

The Chairman of the Board of Education, Auckland.

TARANAKI.

SIR,— New Plymouth, 31st December, 1880.

Notwithstanding the total absence of thoroughly trained teachers in this district, I am glad to report the spread of a uniform and carefully-practised system of teaching through the schools.

Now that the training school for teachers at Dunedin is open to all comers, I think it would be advisable that the Board should for the future adopt, as a general rule, that no teacher should be appointed even temporarily to any school unless he has gained a year's experience in a training school, or in some large school conducted by an efficiently trained teacher. I think that it operates prejudicially on the pupils that an untrained teacher should learn the duties of his profession while in sole charge of a school, the more so as such teachers are very apt to teach effectually only those subjects which are favourite studies. Some teachers improve themselves by study during their leisure hours, and consequently become more efficient instructors. I wish I could say this is a general practice, but it never will be so long as some of your teachers have to walk or ride to and fro (even as much as ten miles a day) from New Plymouth to their schools in the country.

I regret to state that the pupils now attending your schools are almost wholly changed from those who were attending last year: I imagine almost to the extent of 70 per cent. have left, and their places taken by children who have never been classed in any school. This state of things has been brought about by the removal of families to bush farms, the state of the labour market, and losses on the sales of farm produce, especially grass-seed. Many promising young people under fourteen years of age I looked forward to meeting again with pleasure, have been taken to farm-work and other services just as their minds were beginning to open and take an interest in what they were being taught. The only satisfactory facts to set against this is the greatly-increased number of pupils attending most of your schools and increased regularity of attendance.

What I have now stated seems to indicate the great necessity for all your teachers residing in their respective districts, and their being induced to keep night schools. My work of examination has also been increased by the pupils having been placed by the teachers in the different standards, and having to test their arrangement before I could begin my examinations.

I have adapted my examinations as closely as possible to the requirements of the Government standards. I prepared a double series of questions in writing on the following subjects: Arithmetic (including mental arithmetic), geography, grammar, composition, and history for the pupils in the Third, Fourth, and Fifth Standards, and required the answers to be given in writing. The result showed singularly the idiosyncracies of the teachers, the consequence of irregularity of attendance, and the want of interest in education on the part of the parents. The children leave school at such an early

age, I fear that the knowledge retained by them will prove very superficial, because so much is required to be taught by the regulations, and sufficient time cannot be allotted to all the subjects. I regret that an ancient practice is abandoned of employing the Friday for repetition lessons taken from the week's work. More time should be devoted to composition in some shape or other, for I find very few can write the most ordinary letter, or express themselves well in writing on the simplest topic. The want of a spirit of adventure and observation combined surprises me. One of my questions for composition was, "Give a description of the country twenty miles round New Plymouth." In one of the town schools, out of a class of sixteen, eight knew absolutely nothing of the Sugar Loaves; with few exceptions the answers were poor and unsatisfactory. I wish more attention was paid to drawing tradesmen's bills, and writing out receipts in a proper form, and the necessity of dates impressed on the minds of the pupils. Also I wish a simple form of book-keeping formed part of the instruction in arithmetic. During some of my visits to some of the schools I tried to introduce it; but most unintentionally my questions have given offence in some quarters. My questions were, "Make out a debtor and creditor account, showing how much you cost your parents in a year, and the value of what you do for them in return." "Make out an account showing the cost price of a cow, and the cost of her keep for a year, and the profit derived from the sale of butter, &c., during the same period." I wish, further, that more time was allowed for the recitation of poetry and pieces of prose, with the view of teaching deportment and ease in speaking and expression of thought. The contrast between English and French boys in these last-mentioned matters of polish is very striking. Some of your teachers cannot give instruction in music or drawing. I have therefore recommended such teachers to devote the time allotted by the time table to those subjects, to dictation, writing, and arithmetic. The half-time schools, I assume, do some good, but at best they are unsatisfactory. I have endeavoured, by an alteration of the time-table, and the omission of singing and drawing, to give more time to writing, arithmetic, and dictation for the future. Mr. Pope reduced the study of history to a minimum, especially in some of the country schools, where it is only used as a reading lesson once a week. In the town schools, however, I obtained some very good papers.

I am glad to report a visible improvement in the writing since the introduction of Vere Foster's copy-books, though it is still unsatisfactory. The Board must take some decisive steps as to the supply of copy-books. Some parents still supply their children with such miserable rubbish in the form of books and pens that it is impossible for the master to teach them. Other children go without books for days, and even weeks, because the parents will not give them three halfpence or twopence necessary to buy them. I would suggest that the teachers should be forbidden to allow any copy-books to be used in the schools except those mentioned in the regulations; and when a child wants a book, and does not bring one the next day, or the money to purchase one from the teacher, that the teacher send a note to inform the parents that their child will not be taught writing until he has the necessary articles with him. Only one other course is open, and that is for the Board to charge each child 1s. 6d. a quarter, and recover it from the parents, and supply what is wanted on requisition from the master. I have discovered that it will not be advisable in some cases to leave the masters to carry out this last suggestion, for it will either entail a loss on them or cause disputes of a most objectionable nature between teachers and the parents. More than once already I have been called on to settle such disputes. I have some satisfaction in informing the Board that a recent visitor to this place, who, for seven years, has been employed as a teacher under the English Government, states that English is more purely spoken in Taranaki than in similar districts in England.

The teachers, almost without exception, have done their best in their lessons on objects, but all want more method in the mode of teaching. It would be far better for them if they would prepare themselves as directed by the regulations, especially in writing out a syllabus. A knowledge of geography of New Zealand and Australia, and in many cases of England and Europe, has been very carefully inculcated. The power of drawing maps is greatly increased, and often very satisfactorily. Everywhere great pains have been taken in teaching arithmetic, especially mental arithmetic. But the work on paper submitted to me showed defects, which I in every case pointed out to the teachers, other than those caused by the novelty of doing work on paper, where errors could not be obliterated by a wet finger.

I have paid two surprise visits to all the schools except three, which I could only visit once, as other schools required more attention. I have also examined all the schools except those of Midhurst and Stratford, which have been so recently opened that I could only classify the pupils. Unlooked-for circumstances prevented me completing the examination of the Waitara West School, and also two pupils in the Manutahi School.

The registers are better kept, but still there is much room for improvement. No teacher should leave the school-room in the afternoon before he has filled in all the items required by the regulations, nor should he ever forget that every moment spent in school must be accounted for. The time-tables point out how; and there is no time allowed for taking things easily, nor do they allow of taking part of the time allotted to one study to finish up another.

WM. CROMPTON,
Inspector.

The Chairman of the Board of Education.

NOTE.—The following is a summary of the Inspector's record of the total passes in the schools of the Taranaki Education District, 1880:—

			Presented.	Passed.
Number on roll, 30th September ...	1,382	Standard I.	174 ...	100
Average attendance, September quarter	1,001	„ II.	234 ...	143
Total presented	662	„ III.	150 ...	56
Total passed	377	„ IV.	83 ...	62
Total percentage	57	„ V.	21 ...	16

The temporary school at the Barracks, Marsland Hill, for the employed immigrants, had 45 pupils on the roll, and an average attendance of 37. It was not examined in the standards.

WANGANUI.

SIR,— Education Office, 23rd February, 1881.

I have the honor to submit my second general and detailed report on the state of education in the schools under inspection in my district for the year ending the 31st December, 1880.

At the outset I would state—(1.) That throughout my examinations I have gone more literally by the requirements of the standards this year than I felt warranted in doing last. I may also add that the examinations just concluded were conducted, as those of last year, on one uniform plan, the children in the First, Second, and Third Standards being examined orally, and those in the Fourth, Fifth, and Sixth by means of written papers, which I received and revised after school hours. The number of written leaves given in was 2,712, and the time required for revisal was 90 hours. (2.) That, in forming an estimate of the character of the work done in the different schools, I took into account class work, an important factor, as well as the results of the individual test. (3.) That, with the view of completing them before Christmas, and within the school year, I began the examinations at an earlier period than last year. They were begun on the 1st September and ended on the 23rd December, 1880. In all cases in which the school year was a fraction of one, a reasonable allowance was made in estimating the work done. (4.) That, as soon as possible after the examination of each school, I furnished the Chairman of the School Committee with the schedules containing the names of those scholars who had passed the several standards, so that standard certificates might be issued by the time indicated in the Order in Council (24th September, 1878, subsection 3).

In order to show fully the state of education in each school and in each county, I have drawn out tables, which I beg now to lay before the Board, and which embrace the following particulars: (1) The number of children on the roll on the day of examination; (2) the number present; (3) the number presented in the several standards; (4) the number that passed; (5) the number that failed; (6) the percentage passed; (7) the number that passed from a lower to a higher standard in the course of the year; (8) the number that passed in reading, spelling and dictation, writing, arithmetic, grammar, geography, history, and sewing; (9) the average age in the several standards; (10) the number of children examined from one or other of the standard classes, but who, from faulty classification or from other causes, were not presented in the standards, and of children too young to be presented in Standard I.; (11) the whole number examined.

PATEA.—In this county there are 10 schools in connection with the Board. These are officered by 8 male and 10 female teachers; total, 18. The roll number on the day of examination was 398 boys and 352 girls; total, 750. The number present was 359 boys and 305 girls; total, 664. Of these, 138 were presented in Standard I., 176 in II., 62 in III., 34 in IV., 11 in V., and 3 in VI.; total, 424. Of these, there passed in Standard I., 105; in II., 135; in III., 35; in IV., 20; in V., 10; and in VI., 3: total 308;—and failed in Standard I., 33; in II., 41; in III., 27; in IV., 14; in V., 1; in VI., 0: total, 116. Percentage passed, 75·2. The number that passed from a lower to a higher standard in the course of the year was 96 boys and 89 girls; total, 185. There passed in reading, 380; in spelling and dictation, 311; in writing, 391; in arithmetic, 275; in grammar, 68; in geography, 203; in history, 81; in sewing, 108. The total number of passes in these subjects was 1,817. The average age of the children presented in the standards was 8·4 years in Standard I., 10 years in II., 11·8 years in III., 13·2 years in IV., 13·1 years in V., 13·5 years in VI. The number of children examined from one or other of the standard classes, but who, from faulty classification, or from other causes, were not presented in the standards, and of children too young to be presented in Standard I., was 128 boys and 112 girls; total, 240. The whole number examined was 664.

WANGANUI.—In this county there are 17 schools in connection with the Board. These are officered by 15 male and 19 female teachers; total, 34. On the day of examination the roll number was 756 boys and 722 girls; total, 1478. There were present 668 boys and 628 girls; total, 1296. Of these, 222 were presented in Standard I., 209 in II., 150 in III., 108 in IV., 35 in V., 18 in VI.; total, 742. Of these, there passed in Standard I., 171; in II., 180; in III., 101; in IV., 60; in V., 26; in VI., 16: total, 554. The number that failed in Standard I. was 51; in II., 29; in III., 49; in IV., 48; in V., 9; in VI., 2: total, 188. Percentage passed, 72·3. The number that passed from a lower to a higher standard in the course of the year was 169 boys and 144 girls; total, 313. There passed in reading, 681; in spelling and dictation, 547; in writing, 695; in arithmetic, 539; in grammar, 225; in geography, 390, in history, 245; in sewing, 280. The total number of passes in these subjects was 3,602. The average age of the children presented in Standard I. was 8·4 years; in II., 10 years; in III., 11·8 years; in IV., 13·2 years; in V., 13·5 years; in VI., 14·2 years. The number of children examined from one or other of the standard classes, but who, from faulty classification and other causes, were not presented in the standards, and of children too young to be presented in Standard I., was 276 boys and 272 girls; total, 548. The whole number examined was 1,290. Six boys, in the Wanganui Boys' School, who were present, were not examined, having passed the Sixth Standard last year.

RANGITIKEI.—In this county there are 13 schools in connection with the Board. These are officered by 9 male and 10 female teachers; total, 19. On the day of examination the roll number was 414 boys and 363 girls; total, 777. There were present 368 boys and 313 girls; total, 681. Of these, 124 were presented in Standard I., 167 in II., 100 in III., 42 in IV., 13 in V., 6 in VI.; total 452. The number that passed in Standard I. was 109; in II., 134; in III., 83; in IV., 23; in V., 11; in VI. 5: total, 365. The number that failed in Standard I. was 15; in II., 33; in III., 17; in IV., 19; in V., 2; in VI., 1: total 87. Percentage passed, 81·8. The number that passed from a lower standard to a higher in the course of the year was 137 boys and 101 girls; total, 238. There passed in reading, 426; in spelling and dictation, 392; in writing, 432; in arithmetic, 336; in grammar, 105; in geography, 229; in history, 125; in sewing, 126. The total number of passes in these subjects was 2,171. The average age of the children presented in Standard I. was 8·5 years; in II., 10·5 years; in III., 11·9 years; in IV., 13 years; in V., 13·5 years; in VI., 13·6 years. The number of children examined from one or other of the standard classes, but who, from faulty classification and

from other causes, were not presented in the standards, and of children too young to be presented in Standard I., was 120 boys and 109 girls; total, 229. The whole number examined was 681.

MANAWATU.—In this county there are 16 schools in connection with the Board. These are officered by 15 male and 15 female teachers; total, 30. On the day of examination the roll number was 733 boys and 637 girls; total, 1370. There were present 626 boys and 563 girls; total, 1189. Of these, 190 were presented in Standard I., 225 in II., 115 in III., 51 in IV., 14 in V., 4 in VI.: total, 599. There passed in Standard I., 177; in II., 163; in III., 89; in IV., 31; in V., 13; in VI. 4: total, 477. There failed in Standard I., 13; in II., 52; in III., 26; in IV., 20; in V., 1; in VI., 0: total, 112. Percentage passed, 76·3. The number that passed from a lower to a higher standard in the course of the year was 140 boys and 135 girls; total, 275. There passed in reading, 560; in spelling and dictation, 477; in writing, 573; in arithmetic, 464; in grammar, 136; in geography, 277; in history, 155; in sewing, 127. The total number of passes in these subjects was 2,769. The average age of the children presented in Standard I. was 9·3 years; in II., 10·6 years; in III., 11·3 years; in IV., 12·3 years; in V., 13·1 years; in VI., 13·9 years. The number of children examined from one or other of the standard classes, but who, from faulty classification and from other causes, were not presented in the standards, and of children too young to be presented in Standard I., was 319 boys and 281 girls; total, 600. The whole number examined was 1,185. Four pupils in the Sandon School were present, but not examined. Two of them (cadets) had previously passed the examination for pupil-teachers as at the end of the third year's service.

SUMMARY.—The total number of schools in these counties, in connection with the Board, is 56, and the staff employed in them—(*a*) certificated teachers, 37; (*b*) uncertificated teachers, 35; (*c*) pupil-teachers, 29: total, 101. On the day of examination the roll number was 2,301 boys and 2,074 girls; total, 4375. There were present 2,021 boys, and 1,809 girls; total, 3,830. Of these, 674 were presented in Standard I., 777 in II., 427 in III., 235 in IV., 73 in V., 31 in VI.; total, 2217. Of these, 562 passed in Standard I., 612 in II., 308 in III., 134 in IV., 60 in V., 28 in VI.; total, 1,704. The number of children that failed to pass Standard I. was 112; II., 155; III., 119; IV., 101; V., 13; VI., 3: total, 503. The percentage of standard passes was 76·4. The number of children that passed from a lower to a higher standard in the course of the year was 542 boys and 469 girls; total, 1,011. The number of scholars that passed in reading was 2,047; in spelling and dictation, 1,727; in writing, 2,091; in arithmetic, 1,614; in grammar, 534; in geography, 1,099; in history, 606; in sewing, 641. The total number of passes in these subjects was 10,359. The average age of the children presented in Standard I. was 8·8 years; in II., 10·2 years; in III., 11·7 years; in IV., 12·8 years; in V., 13·3 years; in VI., 13·8 years. The number of children presented from one or other of the standard classes, but who, from faulty classification and from other causes, were not presented, and of children too young to be presented in Standard I., was 843 boys and 774 girls; total, 1617. The whole number of children examined was 3,820 + 10.

R. FOULIS, F.E.I.S.,
Inspector.

The Chairman of the Board of Education.

WELLINGTON.

SIR,— Education Office, 31st March, 1881.

I have the honor to present my seventh annual report on the primary state schools of the Wellington District. The same schools as last year, 43 in number, continue in operation. These, with the exception of three, I have visited once; and afterwards I examined all of them, with the exception of Mauriceville, where an epidemic had broken out.

ATTENDANCE.—The attendance of scholars at the annual examination this year was 5,488, or an increase of 468 for the year. Last year the increase on the previous year was 901, and the year before 1,023. The falling-off in the rate of increase may partly be accounted for by the restriction put upon infant departments in large schools during the year, children no longer being admitted under five years of age. Some of the schools, however, show a decided falling off, as for example, Featherston and the Upper Hutt. In these places the examination attendance, which is nearly always the best muster a school can make, fell off from 160 and 130, to 122 and 84 respectively. This was caused by the completion of railway works, and the consequent migration of a portion of the population. The increase in the examination attendance at the city schools is 574, exceeding that of the whole district, and thus proving that the country schools in themselves show no increased attendance for the year.

STANDARD RESULTS.—For the purpose of comparing standard results, in my examination returns I shall retain the classification of the schools initiated in my last report. The 43 schools may be thus classed:—

8 city schools, each on an average attended by	430	children	=	3,439
9 district town schools	"	"	192	"	=	1,725
17 country schools	"	"	51	"	=	862
9 rural schools	"	"	27	"	=	240
						6,266

In city schools	1,934	were presented in standards, of whom	82	p.c. passed	=	1,580
In district town schools	1,008	"	"	"	75	"	=	706
In country schools	492	"	"	"	73	"	=	360
In rural schools	161	"	"	"	65	"	=	104
In all ...	3,595	"	"	"	76·5	"	=	2,750

Last year 3,217 were presented and 2,377 passed, or 74·5 per cent.

SUMMARY OF RESULTS.

Class of Schools.	No. of Schools.	Average No. on Books.	(a) Total No. on the Books.	(b) Total No. Present at Examination.	(c) Over Eight Years of Age.	(d) No. Classed in Standards.	(e) Standards in which Classed.						(f) No. Presented in Standards.	(g) No. Passed in Standards
							I.	II.	III.	IV.	V.	VI.		
Wellington City ...	8	430	3,439	3,074	2,019	1,972	482	564	469	291	112	54	1,934	1,580
District town ...	9	192	1,725	1,480	1,043	1,021	256	294	235	161	45	30	1,008	706
Country	17	51	862	720	553	504	118	142	155	71	27	11	492	360
Rural	9	27	240	214	151	153	40	39	32	28	10	4	161	104
Total this year ...	43	145	6,266	5,488	3,766	3,650	896	1,029	881	551	194	99	3,595	2,750
Total last year ...	43	128	5,525	5,020	3,369	3,208	928	921	797	271	214	77	3,217	2,377
Increase ...	...	17	741	468	397	452	-32	108	84	280	-20	22	378	383

A reference to the table of results here given will show that, whilst there is an increase of 383 in the number who have passed the standards, there is a decrease in the number classed in Standard I., and an increase in the numbers classed in Standard II., III., and IV. The decrease in Standard V. is abnormal, and arises from the fewness of the number passed in Standard IV. last year, which left few candidates for Standard V. this year. The general results of the standard classification appear to me fairly satisfactory. The table of results shows in detail for each school the actual results of the late standard examination; and, in the tabulation, I have shown the full classification of each school as determined by this examination. Comparison of the number of passes with the number of candidates in each school would, in many cases, be unfair, for reasons which I must briefly state. The average age, attendance, ability, and past success of children vary in each school; and, with these varying quantities, the results may be expected to vary. Again, the standards, as pointed out in my last report, are not so arranged as to make it necessarily an even year's work one to the other; and the majority of candidates, unless of considerable age, cannot pass year by year consecutively without a break somewhere. So that a class in a good school may pass Standard I. at, say, between seven and eight years of age, and many of them may pass Standard II. between eight and nine, and possibly Standard III. between nine and ten. The difficulty has, however, increased year by year, and by-and-by the strain becomes too great; and probably, as candidates for Standard IV. or V., many of them fail on the first attempt. The teacher should therefore exercise a wise discretion in not attempting too much with candidates who are under age. The following is the average age at which candidates are now presented for the respective standards: I., eight years seven months; II., nine years nine months; III., eleven years; IV., twelve years two months; V., thirteen years two months; VI., fourteen years one month.

In giving year by year a return of the passes made in each school, it appears to me essential that the classification as determined both by the last and by former years' work should be shown conjointly. By associating the past results with the present, the true educational status of the school may be fairly judged. If it be found that the number classed in standards, and fairly classed as to each standard, compares favourably with the number of age for the work done, it is evident that, notwithstanding apparent want of success in the candidates last presented, they are in fact satisfactorily classed, owing to the good work of previous years—indeed, the candidates may have previously passed a standard much in advance of their age. Take, for example, the Waihenga School, in which this year only nine candidates were successful out of twenty-one; nevertheless, the status of the school is remarkably high, and it has been famed for years as one of the best taught schools in the district. For these reasons I think it undesirable to give a percentage return of the passes in each school. I think a comparison of the figures in columns (*c*) and (*d*), and an inspection of the classification in column (*e*), would give the best idea which can be obtained from numerical standard results of the working condition of a school. But numerical standard results are not everything, as I shall endeavour to point out later on in my report. Still, they are of great value, and approximate very closely to a true test of the efficiency of the work.

The following table shows the total results of the standard examinations:—

	Presented.	Passed.	Failed.	Passed, per cent.
Standard I.	897	710	187	79
„ II.	890	781	109	88
„ III.	802	624	178	78
„ IV.	640	436	204	68
„ V.	223	122	101	55
„ VI.	143	77	66	74
	3,595	2,750	845	76·5

MANAGEMENT.—I observe considerable improvement in the management of most of the schools in this district, but there are defects in some of them to which I wish to call attention. The work of the lower classes might be more thoroughly supervised by the head-teacher, who should be very exacting

as to the quality of elementary work. Head-teachers might devote more time to showing pupil-teachers how to give class lessons and how to produce the best results, and I recommend head-teachers to keep a record for the year of the model lessons given by them in the presence of any subordinates.

Pupil-teachers should prepare their lessons with notes; and they should be required to submit their notes to the head-teacher. Head-teachers are not required to put up with the continued inefficient or careless work of their subordinates, and I recommend them to report such cases from time to time to the Board. At present this is hardly ever done. It is not until a serious breakdown occurs at an examination that the work of an assistant-teacher appears to be seriously found fault with. Assistants, including pupil-teachers, should share all the duties of management, such as the making-up of returns and keeping order in the playgrounds.

Intellectual Teaching.—In August last I addressed a circular to teachers calling their attention to the importance of aiming at a better class of results than the average of those hitherto produced, by setting their educational work on a basis of broader culture. I pointed out that much of the subject-matter generally taught in primary schools affords little scope for that intellectual training which is best imparted by inductive teaching. Teachers were recommended to use every available means of rendering the instruction throughout their schools less monotonous in character, less an exercise requiring mere imitation or the remembering of sets of dry facts, and more a process of mind-building and thought-forming. I stated that it would be my duty to discriminate clearly between a school which is intellectually taught, and one which merely imparted routine instruction of an uneducative order. I was aware that a large part of the daily labour of the teacher must necessarily be given to the patient teaching of mechanical reading, spelling, writing, and process-work in arithmetic. Still, every teacher must realize the fact that, unless the interest of his pupils has been awakened during at least some portion of every day's work, and unless the various faculties of their minds have been stimulated, the results are of little educative value. At the risk of being tedious on this important subject, I must point out that the standard schedule must not be taken as a full picture of the educational work of a year. The teacher, who is skilled in his profession, will look upon the programme as an artist would on a picture in its first stages, when only the boldest outlines have been sketched in and the broadest effects produced. It remains for him skillfully to fill in the nicest details, and to give the picture its finishing touches. The standards are merely the rough outlines, which the teacher is to fill in, and give effect to, according to his skill and conception. There is really nothing in a system of standards which need cramp the efforts of an artist, and nothing which need hinder him in his teaching from taking an original and broad view of the work before him. Further, I may say, no teacher will succeed well who allows himself to feel thus fettered.

District High Schools.—Although it is desirable that provision should be made for grammar-school teaching as following a course of elementary instruction, I am of opinion that any attempt to tack secondary education on to primary will prove a failure. The organization, system, and teaching power of a primary school are often quite unsuited for a secondary school. But a more serious objection is a practical one, for how can the best teaching power be spared from primary work, say, one-fourth of the school time; and what advantage will it be to give a little extra instruction to a handful of children, while the whole school not only suffers the loss of its head and of its most able teacher, but the whole organization for primary work is upset? The only way in which secondary work can be satisfactorily done in connection with primary schools is by the teachers, who are competent for the work, forming classes outside the primary school hours. And in the City of Wellington, where alone in this district there is much field for organizing secondary education, what a waste of time it would be for all the six or seven head-teachers—assuming that they are fitted for the work—to be engaged a portion of every day in taking small classes in a small way, when all these small classes could be much better taught in one school owing to better classification, increased emulation, and special appliances, to say nothing of teaching power; and the time of the pupils would be fully occupied in purely secondary work. My plan with regard to secondary education would be to allow a competent teacher to charge fees in country schools, where the work was done outside primary school hours; and in Wellington to establish an unpretentious grammar school for boys and one for girls, in which the pupils would pay a moderate fee, and to which they would not be admitted until they had passed Standard IV.

Septennial.—Seven years have now passed since the first standard examination was made; also the first school age has expired, and all or nearly all the children then attending school are now engaged in the more arduous duties of life. A brief retrospect can hardly fail to be interesting to those who watch the progress of education. On the first introduction of standards, 32 public schools were nominally established in the present district. The State owned no school property in the city—not a rood of land, not a building of any kind. Two Church of England schools, 2 Roman Catholic schools, and an infant school, the last held in the lean-to of a cottage in Hopper Street, were supported by the Board. These 5 schools presented 684 children for examination, of whom 219 were classed in old Standard I., and 63 in Standard II. In the Porirua and Hutt Districts, including 4 half-time schools, there were 16 schools held in buildings all of which have since been rebuilt or largely added to, except Porirua, Wainuiomata, and the one at Taita, which, at that time, was the best public school building in the whole educational district. These 16 schools presented 563 children, of whom 153 were classed in Standard I., and 59 in Standard II. Besides these, there were, including 2 half-time schools, 11 in the Wairarapa, all held in very poor buildings, that at Tauherenikau being about the best and the only one now remaining in use. These 11 schools presented 404 children, of whom 127 were classed in Standard I., and 43 in Standard II. Thus, in seven years, the attendance at the examination increased from 1,651 to 5,488 children.

I have, &c.,

Robert Lee,

Inspector of Schools.

The Chairman, Wellington Education Board.

HAWKE'S BAY.

1. Mr. Hill's Report.

Sir,— Education Office, Napier, 31st December, 1880.

I have the honor to submit my general report upon the results of the annual examination of the schools and upon the progress of education in this district for the year ending the 31st December, 1880. Thirty-six schools are now under my inspection, 5 of which have been added during the year, viz., Blackburn, Makaretu, Makatoko, Mohaka, and Waerengahika. In a number of places where schools are conducted, as at Waerengahika, Te Arai, and Patutahi, in the Cook County, Mohaka and Tarawera, in the Wairoa County, Te Aute, in the Hawke's Bay County, and Te Ongaonga, Tamumu, and Takapau, in the Waipawa County, no schoolhouses are provided by the Board, although the average attendance in the buildings used for school purposes warrants the erection of a suitable schoolhouse in each of these places. In all the large centres of population ample accommodation has been provided for the children attending the schools, with the exception of Napier and Ormondville, where the schoolhouses are full to overflowing. Of the 36 schoolhouses, 19 are provided with teachers' residences. All the schoolhouses and the majority of the teachers' residences, which are the property of the Board, are in good order and repair, as are also the school appliances.

Teaching Staff.—Throughout the schools of the district 28 certificated, 23 uncertificated, and 26 pupil-teachers are engaged, together with 8 sewing mistresses. Twelve of the uncertificated teachers are in charge of schools. The average number of children to each teacher employed by the Board, omitting the sewing mistresses, was slightly in excess of 29. In 1879 the average number of pupils to each teacher was 32·4, and for the schools of the colony 33·1. It will thus be seen that the teaching staff in the schools, compared with the average attendance, is relatively greater than in some of the other education districts.

Attendance.—The attendance at the schools continues to increase. At the beginning of the year 2,388 children were entered as belonging to the district schools. During the year 2,037 children were admitted and 1,340 left, so that on the 31st December there were 3,085 children actually attending the schools under the Board. Of this number, 160, or 5 per cent., were under 5 years of age; 772, or 25 per cent., were between 5 and 7; 1,040, or 33·6 per cent., were between 7 and 10; 855, or 27·6 per cent., were between 10 and 13 years; 232, or 7·8 per cent., were between 13 and 15 years; and 26, or 9 per cent., were over 15 years of age. In 1879 the average number of children on the school registers throughout the district was 2,322, and the average attendance at the schools 1,807; but in the year just ended the average number of children on the school registers was 2,980, and the average attendance 2,240, showing an increase of 658, or 28·4 per cent., in the number on the roll, and of 433, or 24 per cent., in the average attendance, when compared with those of last year. All the schools have been visited and examined by me, in accordance with the Government requirements. The following table gives the number of children of each sex presented for examination in each standard, the number who passed the standard, and the percentage of passes compared with the total number on the school registers. For the purpose of comparison I have also given the number of children who passed in each standard in 1879:—

1880.	Presented.			Passed.			Percentage of Passes.	Passed in 1879.		
Standards.	M.	F.	Total.	M.	F.	Total.		M.	F.	Total.
I.	285	263	548	199	174	373	12·4	228	201	429
II.	257	258	515	176	158	334	11·1	224	166	390
III.	158	151	309	104	103	207	6·9	95	94	189
IV.	90	62	152	53	40	93	3·1	43	22	65
V.	25	11	36	19	6	25	0·83	...	...	...
VI.	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Total ...	815	745	1,560	551	481	1,032	34·33	590	483	1,073

No pupils were examined in the Sixth Standard. Such results as these require further explanations. I pointed out, in my report for 1879, that there were 52 per cent. of the children in the district schools who had not passed the First or lowest Standard, and that actually 22 per cent. of those who could not do so were children above seven years of age. I regret to say the number of those who have not passed Standard I. has actually increased during the past year, and that this increase, representing increased ignorance to be dealt with, is chiefly made up of children who are above seven years of age. There were 3,005 children attending the schools at the date of my examination, and from the table showing the number presented and passed in each standard it will be seen that 1,032 passed the standard requirements. If it is considered that all those children presented in a standard higher than the first had previously passed one of the standards, and that 373 children passed Standard I. last year, it will be found that 1,385 children were capable of passing, and 1,620 were incapable of passing, in one of the standards when my examinations were held during the December quarter in this year. It must not be supposed that the 1,620 incapable children were too young to be examined. I have already shown that the number of children below seven years of age attending school on the 31st December was little more than 900; it therefore follows that about 700 children above seven years of age, or 23 per cent. of the total number in the district schools, were unable at the close of the year to read words of one syllable, to write down on a slate the small letters of the alphabet, and to add together numbers of not more than three figures—a knowledge of which is required to pass Standard I.

I hope it will not be imagined that no progress has been made in the work of education, for I am pleased to say there is ample evidence to the contrary; but it is necessary to point out the cause of this increase in the number of attendants at school below Standard I., showing, as it does, how many children there are in the district whose education has been almost, if not entirely, neglected. During the past year no less than 658 children, or 21 per cent of the total number on the registers throughout the district, were brought for the first time within the influence of the Board's operations, the majority of whom had never entered a school before. These children have mostly gone to swell the ranks of the classes preparing for Standard I. next year, although many among them are children from ten to fifteen years of age. To people living in towns it can hardly be realized to what an extent ignorance prevails in some of the outlying districts. Hundreds cannot read and write, and, in many instances, do not know a score of words of the English language. Surely it cannot be said of the children in this district that they are being over-educated, when 1,385 out of 3,005 examined in the district schools could read words of one syllable.

If those who decry against the present education system, on the score of the education being too advanced, would visit some of the country and bush schools, and see for themselves the ignorance which prevails, I feel sure they would feel humiliated, did they possess the least spark of humanity, to find so many European children—the future men and women of the district—unable to decipher either in script or print the commonest words of the English language. It is true that an attempt is made in the upper standards in most of the schools to break the dull monotony of a school course, where reading, writing, and arithmetic of necessity must be the chief objects of attention, by the teaching of several other subjects; and those who know the benefits and pleasures the children themselves derive from a course of well-arranged lessons, leading them to observe, to compare, and to examine, will never begrudge the efforts made by teachers in this direction; but the following results will show how very few of the children attending the primary schools ever get beyond the merest rudiments of instruction:—

Of 3,005 children who are recorded as attending school at the date of my examination, 1,440 passed in reading, 1,456 in writing, 855 in arithmetic, 583 in spelling and dictation, 289 in grammar, 137 in geography, and 73 in English history. That is, 2 in 5 could read and write, 2 in 7 could add simple numbers together, 2 in 21 could distinguish the parts of speech, 2 in 43 knew something of geography, 2 in 82 knew something of English history. But, besides the large influx of untaught children who found their way this year into the schools, and greatly lowered the general standard of education as compared with 1879, there is another reason, which calls for some notice, why so few children in the district give evidence of satisfactory progress, although they may be said to be attending the district schools.

Irregular attendance has been, and still is, perhaps, the greatest hindrance to the progress of education in the district. With all the opportunities now afforded to parents in the various school districts to send their children to school, and with the power in the hands of School Committees of enforcing attendance for at least half the school year, if found necessary, there exists a state of affairs which I can only characterize as disgraceful. In 1879, when on my visit of inspection, several teachers drew my attention, when examining their registers, to the irregularity of a large number of their children, but I inferred it was in consequence of the building operations which were then general throughout the district, and I suggested that the attendance would probably improve on the completion of the schoolhouses; but, on comparing the attendance results for 1879 and 1880, I find that irregularity among the children is growing worse and worse. To show to what an extent irregular attendance prevails in the district, I have prepared a list of the attendances made by every boy and girl attending the schools in the Hawke's Bay District during the year, as regulated by the date of my annual examination. The attendances are taken from the examination schedules, which were filled in by the teachers, and are copied from the daily class registers in use. Out of 3,005 children whose names appear on the schedules, the following attendance results were obtained: 1. That 886 children, or 29·49 per cent., had attended 300 or more times during the year. 2. That 709 children, or 23·59 per cent., had attended 200 and less than 300 times during the year. 3. That 612 children, or 20·36 per cent., had attended 100 and less than 200 times during the year. 4. That 798 children, or 26·55 per cent., had attended less than 100 times during the year. On the average the schools in the district were opened 435 times during the year.

In England, where school fees are generally paid, I find that, during the year 1879–80, 73 per cent. of the pupils examined in standards, and actually 63 per cent. of the 3,710,883 children on the school registers, between the ages of three and thirteen years, made at least 250 attendances each; yet here, with a free system of education, where nothing is required from parents except for them to send their children to school, there is the spectacle of 26 per cent. of the children on the school registers staying away three times out of every four that the schools are open, and another 20 per cent. staying away two out of every four times. It is no use for me to expect good results and satisfactory progress either in the general management of the schools or in the annual examinations, unless something is done to alter this wretched state of affairs. The Board has built schoolhouses, supplied all necessary machinery, and made efforts to befit all the teachers alike to undertake the work of education. The conditions, as far as the Board is concerned, are most favourable to success, but the work of the Board is rendered almost useless by the evident indifference of parents, and the refusal of the majority of the School Committees to put in force the compulsory clause of the Education Act. In some of the school districts I certainly find an energy displayed, which, though sometimes misdirected, affords evidence that the people are awakening to some of the many advantages derivable from the adoption of a good system of general education. With the compulsory clause, however, many of the Committees, especially in the country districts, hesitate to deal. They are perfectly aware that its enforcement is necessary, and they would like to see the clause in operation compelling the attendance of children at school; but, as it has been often put to me by Chairmen of School Committees, when inquiring whether the clause was introduced, "We cannot afford to quarrel with our neighbours on this subject." Hence it happens, owing to a circumstance over which the Board

has no control, that its own usefulness is materially affected from diminished funds, and the cost of education is increased; but, worse still, the progress of education is greatly retarded. It appears to me that, under existing circumstances, the capital which is annually invested by the Board for the spread of education amongst the people is, in this district, far from producing results which the Board has a right to expect; for the majority of children cannot make any real progress with an attendance at school such as I have just pointed out. I have more than once stated to the Board—and it is based upon my experience as a schoolmaster of many years standing—that an attendance at school of less than two hundred and fifty times in a year is perfectly useless for examination purposes, and the money might as well be thrown into the sea as spent upon a class of children who learn nigh to nothing themselves, retard the general progress of those children who do attend well, and acquire at home habits of indifference and irregularity, which are the bane of all progress. I do not know whether parental authority and oversight, and the active influences of home life, are being stifled by State aid, but it appears to me evident that many of the parents do not realize that they have duties to perform in connection with the training and educating of their children. A schoolhouse and a schoolmaster typify to them the ideal of educational requirements, and they seem to imagine that their children as they grow in years will also grow in knowledge so long as the schoolhouse and schoolmaster exist among them, whether the children attend school or not. I cannot help feeling that it would be a wise provision if parents had to pay for the education of their own children on neglecting to send them to school at least half the times the schools are opened during the year. Such a plan would obviate the enforcement by Committees of the compulsory clause, and it would teach, by the best of experiences, those parents whom it is so desirable to teach that their own neglect is the cause of their own punishment.

Class Subjects—True Training of Children.—I now proceed to deal with the class subjects on which all my tabulations as to the general progress of education are based. It seems to me that much greater attention should be given to the consideration of these subjects, and especially as to their relative value in enlarging the conceptive and reflective faculties of children by and through the active operation of the senses. For, after all, the complexed organizations of departments, education districts, and school districts, form merely the machinery to assist in the more rapid attainment of this end. The machinery of supervision may be perfect, the Board may continue to erect schoolhouses, and it may have the entire co-operation of the district Committees in the enforcement of attendance, but if the subjects of study are not satisfactory all their efforts will lead to disappointment and failure. I cannot say that I am satisfied with the progress made by the district in education matters during the year. In the following remarks reasons will be given to show that there are difficulties to be combated by teachers which must be removed before the results in education are commensurate with the economical expenditure of time and money. I have a very strong desire to see that the education, however elementary, which is given in connection with the class subjects to the children attending the schools under the Board, is of such a nature that it shall at least be of some practical use to them in whatever station of life they might be called upon to occupy.

There are three aspects of life in this district—town, country, bush—and the condition of the people in each of these places is different from the other two—the town from the country, the country from the bush, and also the bush aspect of life is farther removed from the town than from the country. As the aspects are different, so are the conceptions of the people. The modes of life, the surroundings, the pursuits of the people in the bush, have little in common with the mode of life, the surroundings, and the pursuits of the people in the town, and it seems only natural to infer that the education of the children should be built upon these different aspects of living. But what is the case at present? I am required to go into town, country, and bush schools, and balance the work of each pupil by the same rigid standard. There is no differentiation in the subjects for examination, no allowance made for the varying modes of thought consequent on the differences in the aspects of location, no evidence to show that the subjects of study are made subjective to the future needs of the children in the business of life, and no discrimination allowed on the part of the Inspector. Through the adoption of this stereotyped system of judging results, it can scarcely be realized to what an extent the memory, to the neglect of everything else, is being employed in this district in preparing the children for the standard examination. In history, in geography, in grammar, and even in reading, it is the memory, and it alone, that is brought into active operation. Teachers are forced to use what to them is the only mode of escape from danger in the annual examinations, and the children, unable to complain of the stones given to them instead of bread, become the victims of, what is to me, a cruel and unnatural system of teaching. I understand an educated child is one taught to observe, to think, and to act, but the syllabus on which I have to examine requires from the children little observation and less thinking. A surfeit of the memory, and a parrot-like reproduction, are the only things needed to pass the standard requirements, and the thoughtful and observant children—deemed slow because they have little or no memory for remembering abstract information—are passed over as failures. It may be taken as an axiom that the real education of children can only be based upon their early surroundings, and their knowledge will vary in proportion to the use made by a teacher of the social, physical, and political aspects of the district in which his school might be placed. But in the standard requirements a teacher is unable to follow this course. He must bend his mode of teaching to an artificial system, utterly at variance with the true necessities of education, and the consequence is that the memory sits in state in the schools as the first thing to be regarded in the education of youth.

Standard Arrangement of English History and Geography Unsatisfactory.—The children cannot conceive the facts of English history, they cannot conceive the facts of outside political geography, nor can they conceive the definitions of English grammar, unless each subject is pursued in a different manner from the present requirements of the broad sheet. Why are the children in this district to go in imagination to a country they have never seen, and to a period in its history which they nor I can duly realize, to obtain their first conceptions of history? And what is the use of children in the bush learning a list of dates in English history having reference to a number of Royal Houses from the Saxons to the Brunswicks, or of being able to repeat a number of "interesting facts" connected with each period? Without considering the question of the utter impossibility of children

born in New Zealand conceiving the circumstances surrounding the "interesting facts," or of the ways and means taken by different Kings to rid themselves of dangerous rivals, I desire to know of what value such indefinite information will be to the children after it has been mentalized—the result of many bitter tears. Will such mental facts assist in making them better citizens, better mechanics, better artisans and farmers? To know when Hengist and Horsa landed in England, when all the wolves were destroyed in that country, when the Battle of the Standard was fought, when Ireland is said to have been conquered, and when Wat the Tyler split the tax-collector's skull, will neither improve the morals of the children, improve their powers of observation, nor make them better able to pursue their various callings in life. I have yet to learn of what use is every fact in history, in outside political geography, and in grammar rules and definitions, to those who cannot realize the facts, and know how to use them to some good purpose; and certainly it is impossible for the children in the district schools to form conceptions of the things they are required to learn in these subjects, so unlike are they to their own daily experiences. Ask a boy in the Third Standard, born in the Forty-Mile Bush, whereabouts England is, what it is, whether a large town, or a country, or a continent, and it will readily be seen what conceptions children possess in outlying districts of things outside their own horizon of observation. And no one who understands child-mind and its progressive development can be astonished at children—especially country and bush children—mistaking England for a town or a continent instead of a country. And if children are unable to form correct conceptions of thing existing beyond the limits of their own experiences, how useless it is to require of them to go to this same country, but to a period in it utterly unlike England of to-day, and asking them to realize events that have happened there centuries ago—events that cannot be compared to any events that are constantly taking place around them, and having no influence whatever upon the welfare of themselves, of this district or country.

Adaptation in Education Needed.—I venture to caution the Board as to the benefits derived from teaching these subjects as now arranged. I have a high opinion of the value of history, geography, and grammar of the right sort, and rightly pursued, but I think there are many subjects of more importance to the happiness of the children, and to the prosperity of the district, and coming within their experiences, which might be substituted in the school curriculum. Children are obtaining an acquaintance with knowledge which in itself is of a most indefinite character, and tending, as it appears to me, to make them discontented with their lot in life, because it is knowledge which they feel incapable of using in their various pursuits and callings. The future bushman, ploughman, and mechanic are provided with the same tools to perform entirely different functions in life, with the result, as I have shown, that, in the schools, words are now an equivalent for ideas, memory for mind, and instruction for education.

Reading.—The remaining subjects of the syllabus—namely, reading, writing, and arithmetic—are in some cases very well taught; but at present the children learn to read under great disadvantages. Seldom indeed is it possible to hear expressive or intelligent reading, but the fault does not rest with the children. They cannot express what they do not understand, and the allusions in the majority of the reading books in use are mostly of this sort. Still there is ample room for improvement. Many teachers appear to think the reading lessons are so easy that they do not prepare them beforehand. This is evident from the fact that not a dozen teachers in the district possess class-books of their own. If teachers cannot gain success in this subject, they might do something to show that they deserve it, instead of which complaint is often made that children do not provide themselves with the necessary school books, forgetting that it is the teacher's first duty to set the example.

Writing.—Very few of the children are able to write really well, resulting, as it seems to me, from permitting them to form the letters too slowly. Freedom in the use of the pen is everything in writing, as it is essentially a subject acquired by imitation. Where old English letters are taught in conjunction with the ordinary writing lesson I find that the progress is more rapid, and the final results—boldness, legibility, rapidity—are more certain. Very great attention is given to writing in copy-books at Takapau, Ashley-Clinton, and Puketapu, where most of the writing obtained full marks.

Arithmetic.—In arithmetic very many failures have taken place. The subject is one which tests the power of a teacher possibly more than all the other class subjects. It cannot be successfully taught except by the constant reference to concrete forms and examples, and it is here that many of the teachers fail. The subject is well taught at Napier, Gisborne, Havelock, and Hastings Schools, but only the pupils in the former school had acquired the habit of setting down the work neatly and tastefully arranged. I wish the teachers generally would accustom their pupils to take a pride in setting down on paper their work as neatly as possible. Habits of neatness and carefulness among children are as valuable to them as either of the individual subjects they are required to learn. But little extra trouble is required to foster these habits in the school-room.

Quality of Work, etc.—As to the quality of the standard-work, I am pleased, in an increasing number of instances, to speak in terms of unqualified praise. Teachers are beginning to realize that they have a definite amount of work to do, and certainly the majority of them strive to do it. But there are several employed in the schools on whom experience nor advice appears to have the least effect. I very much sympathize with the children they are said to teach, and I regret that they themselves have so much mistaken their profession. Several of the district schools are in an efficient state, and a few others give great promise as to the future by their steady improvement. The character of most of the standard-work done by the pupils in these schools affords evidence of hard and determined work on the part of the teachers engaged in them. The requirements for a pass in the standard examination were more rigid than in the previous year, as the instructions to Inspectors, as they appear in the annual report of the Minister of Education for 1879-80, state that "Inspectors should, in any case of doubt, lean to the side of strictness in the interpretation of the standards." Whilst feeling that the Inspector of the district, in his examination, should be the sole judge whether a child who fails in a class subject, or even two, should be allowed to pass or not—he being familiar with the circumstances of the case—I have on this point, at least, striven

to carry out the instruction of the Minister, and a number of children in the upper standards have failed who certainly would have passed had I followed my own judgment in the matter.

Organization, Discipline, and Time-tables.—In the management of the schools, faults of organization, though still common, are less glaring than formerly. It is chiefly in small schools that improvement is needed, and generally among teachers whose knowledge of school matters does not extend beyond their own school-room. Where pupil-teachers or assistants are employed, the distribution of the teaching staff is in most cases satisfactory, and due supervision is kept by the principal teachers in the management and arrangement of the classes. I found a time-table in each school-room with a single exception. For my information I have obtained a copy of the time-table used in each of the district schools, and, after perusal, it appears to me that several teachers do not understand for what purpose a time-table should be employed. One teacher, who had no assistance in school, had a time-table for a master, two pupil-teachers, and a sewing-mistress; and several others appear to think it an easy matter to teach three or four classes at the same time, two of the lessons being reading. Faults in discipline are still common in most of the schools. Many of the teachers do not pay as much attention to this branch of school-work as I could wish. Children delight in discipline, and it is a great power in the hands of good teachers in the formation of character. The class-drill is generally satisfactory; but I notice that there is a tendency in several schools to use the class movements for show purposes, rather than as useful aids to school-work.

Exercise-books and Copy-books.—In connection with the standard examination I have carefully examined and marked all the copy-books and home exercise-books used by the children of each school. The books in the Napier District School with few exceptions, those belonging to Standard III. in the Gisborne School, and the copy-books in the Takapau and Puketapu Schools, and in a less degree in the Ashley-Clinton school, were models of neatness and careful working; but in most of the other schools the home exercise-books were simply inadmissible. As I have pointed out in most of my separate reports, it seems to me of the highest importance to see that the home exercise-books and copy-books are well and carefully worked, as they certainly reflect the character of the school as a whole, besides which the moral tone of the school must be defective where the writing gives evidence of carelessness and inattention.

Sewing.—With the sewing done by the girls I have had little to do. I confess my inability to correctly estimate some of the work required from the senior girls at the schools, and I have been compelled to pass on the specimens to my wife, who has examined the work, allotted marks, and reported upon all the larger schools. At my request she has written a general report on the character of the sewing, which is appended herewith. From the anxiety shown by the mistresses to have the sewing examined, it is evident to me that much greater attention is being paid now than formerly to the teaching of this subject, and next year, with the permission of the Board, I hope to make such arrangements that the specimens from each school can be examined at the same time by a committee of ladies willing to undertake the work.

Extra Subjects.—Little improvement has taken place in the teaching of the optional subjects, except singing, which is taught very successfully at Napier, Gisborne, Wairoa, and Matawhero, and fairly so at Ormond and Hastings. In drawing, Napier and Petane—especially the latter—showed some excellent specimens of work. The recitation was, with few exceptions, unsatisfactory. The senior classes in the Gisborne and Napier Schools took physiology as an extra subject, and the knowledge which they displayed upon the subject pleased me very much. I cannot help thinking that the education in the schools of this district would be far better, far more thorough, and more likely to promote the future well-being of the children and the prosperity of the district, if all the class subjects to be taught in the schools were left to the approval of the Board. A district Committee could then make recommendations for any special subjects to be taught in their school as might seem better adapted to the requirements of their district; and it would tend to do away with the unnatural system, now in operation, of forcing children of diversified minds and aptitudes to pursue their studies in the same undeviating objectless track during their school career, after which they enter into life to play parts as unlike and as varying as are the trees of the forest.

Conclusion.—Although I have drawn a somewhat dark picture on the present state of education in the district, I cannot help feeling that even the worst part of it affords evidence of growing interest in educational matters. A number of the teachers are beginning to appreciate their work, and by their constancy and earnestness prove themselves worthy of the profession they follow. Several of the School Committees are bringing an intelligence to bear upon their duties worthy of more general imitation, and certainly the class results are a great improvement on those of preceding years. Personally I am sanguine as to the future. With a little more activity during the current year on the part of Committees in striving to promote the welfare of the teachers and the pupils in their districts, a little more constancy and determination among the teachers to improve their schools, as indicated by me in this report, a little more attention on the part of parents in seeing that their children attend regularly at school, and a modification of the broad sheet after the manner suggested above, and I shall have the pleasing duty of stating, when next I report to the Board, that education is making satisfactory progress in the schools of this district.

I have, &c.,

The Chairman, Hawke's Bay Education Board. H. Hill.

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2. Mrs. Hill's General Report upon Needlework for the Year 1880.

Having been requested to examine the needlework of the girls attending the schools of the Hawke's Bay Education District, I beg to report as follows:—

Although the needlework examined by me is on the whole far from satisfactory, there is an evident desire on the part of teachers (judging by the advanced character of the specimens forwarded for examination) to improve in this subject.

It has been a general fault to omit the earlier branches of needlework, and to prepare specimens beyond the requirements of the standards in which the girls were presented for examination. This error, I fear, has arisen from not examining sufficiently the syllabus of sewing as issued by the

Government, which, in my opinion, is an exceedingly well-arranged and progressive scheme. It should be remembered that, if each branch is to be well done, the girls in each standard will not be permitted to advance a step beyond what is required of them in the syllabus. Of course, as pupils proceed to the higher classes, a little of the previously plain work may be done again, though much improved, and in addition to the more advanced branches. This rule will vary according to the article chosen for inspection.

There are two or three schools which deserve commendation, as the manner in which the work has been done by the girls shows that much care has been bestowed upon this subject by the teachers. These are the Napier, Waipukurau, and Gisborne Schools.

It is unnecessary to enter into minute details regarding the many specimens examined, for sufficient progress has not yet been made to require this, excepting in the schools mentioned above. Cutting-out, darning, and patching, have in a number of instances been generally well done, owing, I suppose, to the encouragement given by Captain Russell in awarding prizes for these branches. Knitting does not seem to have been attempted, but I would recommend that attention should be given to it during the present year, if only to teach the girls how to knit their own stockings.

Perhaps it would be advisable another year to make such arrangements that all the sewing specimens done by the girls in the upper standards throughout the schools of the district could be forwarded for examination at the same time.

Napier, 28th February, 1881. EMILY HILL.

MARLBOROUGH.

SIR,— 9th November, 1880.

I have the honor to lay before you my report on the Marlborough public schools for 1880. I have examined 19 schools, the flooded state of the rivers having hitherto prevented me from examining the remote little school at Kekerangu. It is the wish of the Board, however, that I should publish my report without waiting for the result of the examination of that school. The number of scholars on the rolls of the schools examined was 1,122, 892 of whom were present at my examination. The number of passes was 505, giving a percentage of 78 for the district on the number presented for standards, 643. The age at which scholars pass the standards being an important factor in determining the value of the work done, I have compiled a table showing the average age at which the pupils in each school have passed the several standards. I have also shown what is the average age for passing in the whole district.

As a rule the schools did well this year, though the state of a few—as will appear from my estimate of each school—was far from being satisfactory. There are also defects in the method of teaching common to most of the schools, which I shall point out. The schools, however, vary so much, that it is not easy to give such a general estimate of the degree of success with which each subject is being taught as shall be equally true even of a large proportion of them. The reading, on the whole, has improved, the spelling being certainly far better than it was. The arithmetic of many schools is still weak—this being especially manifest when a question is put in a form differing even slightly from that to which the pupils have been accustomed. Thought would be stimulated and accuracy gained if teachers would exercise their scholars in sums set in the most varied forms. Geography is now fairly well taught in almost every school, while the results of the examination in history were, taken altogether, better than those obtained last year. Letter-writing—among the most important matters that a child can learn—is evidently not practised enough. Not only are many of even the older scholars quite at a loss to express themselves clearly on the simplest subjects, but they have not been properly instructed in "form;" that is, they do not know how to address or subscribe a letter properly. The handwriting in the different schools, with at most half a dozen exceptions, is still far from being as good as it ought to be, and as it would be if the requisite pains were taken. I shall not cease to insist upon this point until I see a general amendment. Elementary science continues to be well taught. Singing by note is now taught, so far as I can ascertain, in one school only—Renwick; I make no account of singing by ear. Drawing forms part of the school course in a few places; needle-work being taught wherever a mistress or assistant-mistress is employed.

Before giving my usual summary of the present state of each school, I shall do what I can to correct a wide-spread misapprehension as to the quality of the instruction given in our public schools, and its probable effect both on the scholars themselves and on the cost of the system. It is broadly and very generally alleged—1st. That the kind of education given in our primary schools is such as to unfit children for their future work in life; and 2nd. That expenses might be largely curtailed if the instruction were confined to the bare elements of reading, writing, and arithmetic. It will not be difficult to show that there are no good grounds for either of these allegations. A practical test is, fortunately, readily applicable. Six hundred and forty-three children have this year been presented for examination in the Marlborough District. Of these, no more than 21 have succeeded in passing the Fifth Standard, 21 having passed the Sixth, including nine scholars attending the High School. And there is no good reason for supposing that this number will be materially increased for some time. It follows, then, that the vast majority of the children who attend the primary schools will not get beyond the Fourth Standard when they leave school. Experience shows that their time, especially in the country, is too valuable to admit of their being retained at school much beyond their twelfth year, when this standard is usually passed by scholars of average ability. But all that the average boy carries away with him from school after passing the Fourth Standard may be summarized thus: He can read a passage of ordinary difficulty from a newspaper, not well, but intelligibly; he can write a short letter on some simple subject in a legible hand, and probably without gross misspellings; and he knows enough of figures to be able to make out or to check a tradesman's bill. As to the rest of his acquirements, no apprehension need be felt lest the scraps of geography, grammar, and history that he may have picked up should be a serious obstacle to his success in life. It may be assumed that a large proportion of

the children who attend the Marlborough schools will be engaged hereafter in the field or the workshop. In neither of these pursuits will the acquirements I have enumerated be found superfluous; nor, even if a little elementary science be added, will some knowledge of the principles on which a pump or a hydraulic press is constructed be found burdensome to a farmer or a mechanic. The danger of our children being over-taught may then, I believe, be regarded as a very remote contingency. Nor can I see how the cutting-off of what are termed the extra subjects, such as grammar and science, would materially lessen the total cost of primary schools. A teacher who is not competent to give instruction in these matters is hardly fit to be employed at all in our public schools; and, as a matter of fact, teachers do not object to taking up two or three of these subjects, which, on the contrary, are regarded by many as a relief from the monotonous drudgery of grinding at the bare rudiments. The salaries of teachers whose work was restricted to teaching reading, writing, and arithmetic could not well be reduced below the new scale; the only difference, so far as they are concerned, would be that their work would be duller. My own objection to attempting so many subjects is that they can rarely be taught effectively, especially in our smaller country schools, where there are many classes to one teacher. For this reason, mainly, I have formerly recommended the excision of history from our school course. So far, however, am I from sharing the apprehension that the children of this colony will be over-educated, that my only fear is lest, owing to the abridgment of school life—caused by bad roads, bad weather, sickness, and perpetual withdrawals for home-work—a large proportion of our youth should leave school with but a sorry equipment for the battle of life. I have written strongly and at length on this subject, because I feel its paramount importance, affecting, as it does, the very foundation of our education system.

I have much pleasure in adding to this general review of the literary work done in the Marlborough schools my favourable testimony to the behaviour of the children, so far at least as I have observed it on my former visit of inspection and during my late examination. The scholars, as a rule, struck me as being mannerly, well disciplined, and promptly obedient to orders—a matter in which they have improved perceptibly during the last two years.

I have, &c.,
W. C. Hodgson,
Inspector.

The Chairman, Marlborough Education Board.

Record of Total Passes made in the Marlborough Schools during 1880.

			Presented.	Passed.
Number on roll	1,122	Standard I.	199 ...	146
Present at examination	892	„ II.	183 ...	151
Presented in standards	643	„ III.	147 ...	126
Passed	505	„ IV.	65 ...	40
Percentage of passes	78	„ V.	27 ...	21
		„ VI.	22 ...	21

Summary showing the Average Age at which the Standards have been passed in the District of Marlborough in 1880.

	Yrs.	mos.		Yrs.	mos.
Standard I.	8	6	Standard IV.	12	1
„ II.	10	0	„ V.	12	6
„ III.	11	0	„ VI.	14	1

NELSON.

Sir,— 31st December, 1880.

I have the honor to submit to you my report on the Nelson public schools for the year ending the 31st December, 1880.

Number of Schools.—There are now 67 schools in the district, the two divisions of Bridge Street and of Westport Boys' Schools being this year bracketed together, and reckoned as a single school. Nine new schools have, therefore, been opened during the past year, a much larger increase, within twelve months, than has been made for many years. Four of these schools—Bridge Street (juniors), Brightwater, Rockville, and Fern Flat—are within school districts, the remaining five—Stanley Brook, Marahan, Churchill, Ngakawha, and Fairdown—are small aided schools.

Number of Scholars.—The number on the rolls during the last quarter of 1879 was 3,737, the working average being 2,935. The number on the rolls for the corresponding quarter of 1880 is 3,934, the working average 3,007, the increase on the rolls being 197, on the average attendance 72. The smallness of the addition to the total numbers caused by the opening of nine schools is accounted for by the fact that the five new aided schools muster altogether no more than 78 scholars.

Standard-work: Percentage of Passes.—The results of this year's examinations have, on the whole, exceeded my expectations. Although teachers were no longer at liberty to present their scholars under whatever standard they pleased, as in 1879, the total percentage of passes is 80, as against 78 last year. The subjoined statement will show more clearly the improvement made:—

	Passed in 1879.	Passed in 1880.		Passed in 1879.	Passed in 1880.
Standard I. ...	575 ...	464	Standard IV. ...	194 ...	274
„ II. ...	487 ...	555	„ V. ...	78 ...	134
„ III. ...	334 ...	428	„ VI. ...	17 ...	69

The increase in the number of passes in the two highest standards appears to me a very hopeful symptom, especially as I have construed the requirements of these standards very strictly. At the risk, however, of being accused of a wearisome iteration, I must again caution my readers against

forming any final conclusion from a perusal of the list of passes alone, without also taking into account my short estimate of the state of each school. The proportion that the scholars present bear to the number of those brought forward for standards ought also to be considered. The kind of standard passed, and the average age at which each standard has been passed, are also important elements in determining the real status of each school. By way of assisting the public to form an opinion as to this latter matter, I have compiled a table showing the average age at which each standard has been passed in every school. This is well worth doing, for once at least. From the results given by this table, which correspond, I find, pretty closely with those obtained by me this year in the adjoining District of Marlborough, and with those published in other school districts in this colony, it appears that the average age at which scholars pass the several standards is as follows: Standard I., 8 years 2 months; II., 9 years 10 months; III., 11 years; IV., 12 years 2 months; V., 13 years 7 months; VI., 14 years 3 months. The large detailed table seems to show that nothing is gained by passing children through the First Standard at an unusually early age, as by the time they have reached the Fourth Standard they are barely on an equality with those who went through the earlier stage when they were a year older. I trust also that the example of a few precocious children who have passed the Fifth and Sixth Standards a year or two sooner than their fellows will not stimulate injudicious parents and teachers to attempt to rival, by sheer cramming, the success of those whom Nature has endowed with exceptional abilities. As a rule, the scholar who passes the Sixth Standard in his fifteenth year has done very well; and I regard with extreme disfavour any attempt to push scholars through much before that age. It will be observed that several of the smaller schools have passed 100 per cent. of those presented, generally in the earlier standards. This of itself may mean very little, and ought not to lead to unfair comparisons with older and larger schools, where the percentage is smaller. It may be laid down, however, on the other hand, as a general rule, that where the percentage of passes falls below 65, as is the case this year in eleven of our schools, some very satisfactory reason—such as irregularity of attendance, or frequent change of teachers—should be shown. If passes are to be accepted as tests of work done, no school that cannot show 75 per cent. of passes, out of at least two-thirds of the number present on examination day, can be said to have done well.

Supply and Training of Teachers.—At present, so far as the means go of filling up the frequently-recurring vacancies in our schools, or of providing, in anything like a systematic manner, for the training of young teachers in school-work, the Nelson District is but in sorry case. A training college, with the scanty means at the disposal of the Board, however desirable, is not to be thought of. The annual examinations of teachers, judging from two years' experience, do little or nothing towards filling up the gaps caused by resignations or other causes. Last year not a single new candidate in Nelson succeeded in obtaining a certificate, while three only of the fourteen candidates for the approaching examinations are not already on the Nelson list of teachers, the rest coming forward merely to complete their certificates or to obtain a higher grade. Vacancies are now filled up—often after a long delay from the lack of any decently-qualified candidate—on the strength of a comparatively easy examination, conducted quarterly (and avowedly as a makeshift) by a Board of Examiners, consisting of three members of the Education Board and the Inspector. The candidates are usually either young women who have received most, if not all, of their education at our primary schools; or men, some of them middle-aged, who have had no experience whatever in teaching, and whose qualifications for their important office are respectability, and the fact that in boyhood they received a fair commercial education. Little argument is needed to show how slow, how costly, and, above all, how uncertain is this method of getting teachers; for some time must elapse before it is discovered that the master who is thus learning his business at the public expense may, after all, have no real aptitude for an occupation often taken up merely because no other employment is open at the time. But it is waste of words to enlarge on the manifold defects of a system that is admittedly unsatisfactory, and for the longer retention of which necessity is the only plea. I purpose sketching out a plan that will do something, at least, towards supplying Nelson with young teachers of both sexes, with respect to whom, before they are finally taken into the service of the Board, three things, at any rate, will have been ascertained: 1st. That they are competent from a literary point of view; 2nd. That they have some knowledge of school-work; 3rd. That they have some aptitude for the business of teaching. I may premise that I am aware that the members of the Board are entirely opposed to the pupil-teacher system, as worked in this colony and in Australia. Without sharing these objections myself to their full extent, I do not entertain a very warm feeling in favour of a system which has been deliberately rejected in two countries which, in matters of education, stand in the foremost rank—Prussia and the United States. What I propose is such a modification of the pupil-teacher system as seems to me suitable to the present circumstances of this district. I would select the most promising boys and girls who have attended, or who still attend, our primary schools, and who show a desire to make teaching their future occupation. The conditions as to age and proficiency should be that they have attained their sixteenth year, and that they have passed, with ease, the Sixth Standard. These, to borrow a word from the Auckand Inspector (to whom also the original idea of my plan is due) might be called *probationers*. They should be placed, as vacancies occur, under our most trusty and experienced teachers, to learn the practical work of a school. Their term of service or trial should be not less than three years, at the expiration of which they might fairly be expected to go up for examination for the E certificate. In the meantime no attempt should be made to vex their souls with examinations of any kind, so that there would be no likelihood of their health breaking down under the cruel double strain of teaching and examination. If they have any real energy or ability they might well prepare themselves, with but slight extraneous help, for the teachers' examination, the last, I should hope, that they would feel called on to undertake for some years. A small bonus should be given annually to the head-teacher, on an Inspector's certificate that the progress of the probationers in the art of teaching had been satisfactory. The parents of the probationers ought also to enter into a bond by which they undertook to forfeit a certain sum if their children left the service of the Board, without leave, within two years after the expiration of their three years' trial. The salaries offered, especially for the first year, need not be large—certainly not

half as large as what the Board has given for some time to assistant-teachers whose qualifications are by no means superior to those of the class I propose training.

School-Buildings. Organization.—These two matters, in Nelson, are intimately connected. The peculiar circumstances under which many of the Nelson public schools were built will account for many of the apparent inconsistencies, and for much of the apparent absence of design, that must at once be obvious to a stranger. It must be remembered, however, that those districts which, when building grants began to be dispensed with a lavish hand by the General Government, had as yet done but little towards supplying themselves with school-buildings, had a great advantage over places like Nelson, which, for long years, had been struggling to provide themselves with schools of the cheapest and most primitive construction, as occasion served. In such cases it is a great point gained to have nothing to undo or to pull down. The difference is that between a modern city constructed on a carefully thought-out and symmetrical plan, and an old-fashioned town, in which house has been added to house according to the necessities or the present means of the builders. But, although these reasons may be thought sufficient to excuse admitted shortcomings in the past, the time has come when some general principles as to the building and organization of new schools should be laid down and carried out, so far as is practicable, when opportunity offers. False steps cannot be retraced at once, but if correct standards are once laid down and assented to, approximations to what is best can gradually be made. Contrary to what might have been expected, fewer mistakes have been made in the country than in the town. Taking it as a canon that, unless some impassable barrier intervenes, no two country schools should be less than four miles apart, I find only three groups that violate this rule, the first being Lower Wakefield, Upper Wakefield, and Foxhill—the total distance between all these three schools being little more than four miles; Ranzau and Hope—with an interval of about a mile and three-quarters between them; and River Terrace, Brightwater, and Spring Grove—these three schools being separated by less than three miles altogether. It ought to be stated that in the first two instances an attempt on the part of the Board to consolidate the schools was frustrated by an active local opposition. Little fault can be found with the organization of the country schools, which is indeed of the simplest kind. The staff is now, it appears to me, in every case numerous enough for the work required of it, the Board having invariably granted one or more assistants where the numbers fairly warranted such appointments. The division of comparatively small schools into separate departments for boys and girls has, to say the least of it, been carried quite far enough, and, if not carefully restricted in future, will lead to increase of expense, and, what is worse, to diminution of efficiency. It is only in large schools, indeed, that this system can be carried out without throwing away the enormous advantages to be derived from the division of labour. It is in the City of Nelson itself that the want of a definite plan is most palpably shown, both in the erection of school-buildings and in the subsequent organization of the schools. Some years must elapse before much can be done in the way of consolidating the now scattered groups of buildings. But defects in organization are more easily remedied. For many years the means at the disposal of the Board did not admit of two groups of schools being built in a central spot, with accommodation enough for all the children of both sexes within the city. Small detached schools were therefore erected, where the population was thickest, from time to time, as funds were available, and the opportunity for building capacious schools on a well-considered plan was lost. There is nothing for it now but to make the best of such buildings as we have, two of these, at least—Toitoi Valley Girls', and Haven Road Boys'—leaving little to be desired, if considered as detached schools, and not as instalments towards a future whole. But the prospect of a reform in the organization of the city schools is not so remote. A beginning may be made by showing what direction improvements should take, as opportunity offers. At the opening of the year three of the schools were fairly organized—Hampden Street, Haven Road, and Toitoi Valley. Each of these establishments had a head-teacher, responsible for the general conduct of the school, and a sufficient staff of assistants, looking to the head-teacher for direction in carrying on the work. But towards the close of the year the power of supervision has been taken from the mistress of the Toitoi Valley School, which has been split up into three departments under three independent heads. Excellent special reasons doubtless exist for this change. All that I wish to point out is that as a general rule this is a step in the wrong direction, and the reconsolidation of the school, under one head, should be steadily kept in view as a thing desirable in itself. The present organization of the Bridge Street group of schools is unique. In one room is a master with about forty scholars, drafted from the most advanced boys in the other town schools. Each of the other two rooms is occupied by a master doing junior work, but who has nothing whatever to do with his neighbour on either hand. A building in close proximity, intended for boys in the earlier stages, is taught by a mistress, who acts quite independently of any of the three masters of the Bridge Street School. At Hardy Street Girls' Schools there are also three independent heads of divisions, in three separate rooms. Here, as in Toitoi Valley, whatever reasons connected with the *personnel* of the present staff may be alleged in favour of the existing anomalous arrangements, it will hardly be seriously contended that they approach ideal perfection, or that they ought not to be altered as soon as the personal reasons that may now exist for their continuance cease. These schools are all doing their work well, and I advocate no sudden or violent changes, confining myself to pointing out what direction changes should, in my opinion, ultimately take.

Method of Teaching.—It is impossible to make any general statement as to the way in which the prescribed subjects are being taught that shall be even approximately true of all our schools. I shall, therefore, confine myself to stating generally that there is little to complain of in the methods of teaching the leading subjects now pursued in the Nelson schools. The one weak point is composition, or letter-writing. This invaluable art has been so grossly neglected in a large proportion of our schools, that I have resolved not to grant a pass in future in any of the three higher standards, unless the candidate is able to express himself readily and clearly on the simple subjects set.

I have, &c.,

W. C. Hodgson,

Inspector.

The Chairman of the Nelson Education Board.

SUMMARY showing the AVERAGE AGE at which the several Standards have been passed throughout the Nelson District during 1880.

	Yrs.	mos.		Yrs.	mos.
Standard I.	8	2	Standard IV.	12	2
„ II.	9	10	„ V.	13	7
„ III.	11	0	„ VI.	14	3

RECORD of TOTAL PASSES in STANDARDS DURING 1880.

			Presented.	Passed.
Number on roll on examination day ...	3,937	Standard I...	565 ...	464
Present at examination	3,355	„ II...	648 ...	555
Presented in standards	2,402	„ III...	552 ...	428
Passed	1,924	„ IV...	366 ...	274
Percentage of passes	80	„ V...	190 ...	134
		„ VI...	81 ...	69

NORTH CANTERBURY.

1. Mr. RESTELL'S REPORT.

SIR,— Education Office, Christchurch, March, 1881.

I have the honor to submit herewith, as required by the gazetted regulations, a return showing the number of children who have passed from a lower to a higher standard during the year 1880 in my district. I have also added some further particulars illustrative of the same return. The total number inspected and examined in my special district has amounted to 6,725; the number presented and examined in standards, 4,288, of whom 3,053 have passed from a lower to a higher standard; generally, of schools examined more than once, the result of the later examination has comprised all who passed. The percentage of scholars who passed as presented is 71·2, a result comparing not unfavourably with those of former years; for although last year the percentage was 89, that result, as then explained, included the passing again of many scholars the same grade as in the previous year. It has now become the custom, judiciously classing the scholars according to their fitness, to withhold from examination, *i.e.*, "not to present," unfit scholars for the next higher standard than that last passed. Sufficient reasons for scholars being withheld are sometimes given; these are, "bad attendance," "inattention to study," "idleness," "incapacity for more advanced work." I have, however, been surprised at the large numbers withheld in some schools of higher organization, and, in some instances, even then at the only moderate percentage of success. This has led me to institute a comparison; and I find in some schools no scholars withheld, and, nevertheless, very creditable results attained. In other schools very few of those who passed in the previous year are withheld. It seems to be obvious that it cannot but be a confession of inefficiency if a large proportion of scholars of fair average age for their next higher standard are "not presented." On the other hand, I think that school the best in which, the largest proportion of scholars being presented, the standards are passed fully at the lowest average age. The percentage of passes is often mistaken to be the sole mark of efficiency; but it must be considered with reference to other data, among which are "the percentage presented." I have, therefore, included this item in my return, which shows that only 63·75 per cent., or less than two-thirds, were presented in standards, of whom, as before stated, 71·2 per cent. pass. This still leaves again the large proportion of 2,452, or more than one-third of the whole attendance, unable to pass the lowest standard. This number, however, is swollen by the attendance of many infants below five years of age, whose admission often permits also of the attendance of some older child otherwise kept at home in charge of the younger ones. The following tables show a summary of this year's result in comparison with those of the two previous years :—

	Presented in Standards.	Passed as Presented.	Percentage of Success.
1880	4,288	3,053	71·2
1879	3,761	3,368	89
1878	3,984	2,841	71

	STANDARDS PASSED.							AVERAGE AGE PER STANDARD PASSED.						
	VI.	V.	IV.	III.	II.	I.	O.		VI.	V.	IV.	III.	II.	I.
1880 ..	24	113	230	529	1,211	947	2,452	1880 ...	13·8	13·4	12·5	11·6	10·1	8·4
1879 ...	37	99	300	786	1,084	1,503	2,326	1879 ...	13·8	13·1	12·8	11·8	10·4	9·0
1878 ...	61	178	321	641	867	969	3,116	1878 ...	13·2	12·5	11·9	10·6	9·5	8·1

This year's results would at first sight seem to compare unfavourably with those of 1879; but a sufficient reason for the difference has already been stated. Some of the low results, apparent in the return of scholars passed, relate to exceptional or classification examinations, as on the opening of a new school, or on a new teacher taking charge. The only new schools opened in my special district during the year 1880 are Aylesbury and North Loburn; the others in which examinations have been held for classification, or after a short interval, are Eyreton, the Kaiapoi Island Schools, Kowai Bush, North Kowai (Amberley), Oxford East, Saltwater Creek, Stoke, Sumner, Waiau. The examination of these schools has been a preliminary classification of the scholars, as a record of their proficiency at the time of the new teacher taking charge, and a standard by which to compare future progress. The low results, in such cases, do not reflect on the new teacher, nor, generally, on his predecessor. Among the apparent causes for dissatisfaction are the many failures in the higher standards, and the backwardness at their age of several scholars who never reach them.

The Sixth and Fifth Standards comprise far too much work for many of the scholars to be able to overtake in one year; and much time is also occupied, in some instances very profitably, in several extra subjects required to be taught, but not essential to passing. Such subjects are chemistry, botany, electricity or elementary science generally, music, drawing, drill, needlework, domestic economy. The

time occupied and the useful knowledge acquired in the study of these extras must compensate many scholars for remaining in a lower standard. Although "the extent of the knowledge indicated by the science programme is intended to be not greater than is covered by 'Science made Easy' and other primers," yet a much more ambitious aim is sometimes attempted. In some schools the science syllabus is far more pretentious than judicious; in others, where for instance one teacher has the charge of all standards, there is no opportunity for bringing the extra subjects within the time-table. Some teachers own that they have neither the time nor the ability for these extras.

In most schools the scholars profit by a judicious course comprising the mechanical powers, simple machines, and fundamental principles of physics; or they take also animal physiology, chiefly as to man and the larger animals. Mostly the scholars do not stay long enough for more than a first year's course; which is then repeated to their successors. With further reference to the failures in the higher standards, and to the failure to even find scholars presentable at all in them, I am convinced that this deficiency is in some instances less attributable to the many subjects to be taught, and the pupils' own difficulties, than to unskilful erroneous teaching, and downright incapacity to instruct scholars in these higher standards. In one school a very incompetent master having been appointed, his scholars failed year after year to pass the Fourth and Fifth Standards; and now, having no scholar fit for pupil-teachership, the residents find it necessary to raise funds for the payment of an adult assistant. No greater injury can be done to a school or a district than the continuance in office of an incompetent teacher, or one of low moral instincts. It is not only detrimental to the school, but incalculable evil is done to the scholars, and eventually to society, by their constant contact with an unprincipled person, defiant of local and central authorty, and wasteful of the school time in abuse or ridicule of those set over him. The scholars not only fail to acquire useful knowledge, but they pick up unruly and untruthful ideas, demoralizing to themselves and to society for the rest of their lives.

I have known several instances, in and out of Canterbury, where an incompetent, an immoral, or an intemperate teacher could agitate his district and get retained in office for years, while his scholars suffered a loss from which they would never recover. The fact is that, from local or denominational patronage, some most unfortunate appointments have been made; and it hardly matters how incompetent a teacher may be, so only that he can keep on good terms with his neighbours and his Committee. On the other hand, an unpopular teacher may at once lose his appointment for one unfavourable report. I am glad, however, to speak highly of the tone and efficiency of the majority of the teachers and scholars in my district. There is one matter which calls for greater attention from many teachers, and this is the very necessary revision of the "age" column; some most palpable errors in this respect are of not unfrequent recurrence. I have much pleasure in reporting the efficiency, or the improving efficiency, of some of the teachers from the Normal School.

I have, &c.,
J. P. Restell,
Inspector of Schools.

The Chairman of the Board of Education,
North Canterbury.

Return of the total number of scholars passed from a lower to a higher standard during the year in Mr. Restell's district:—

Scholars on roll	8,002
Number present	6,725
Percentage of numbers presented in standards	63¾
Number presented	4,288
Number passed	3,053
Percentage passed	71

	Presented.	Passed.
Standard VI.	52 ...	24
„ V.	203 ...	113
„ IV.	527 ...	230
„ III.	962 ...	529
„ II.	1,468 ...	1,211
„ I.	1,076 ...	947
Remaining below Standard I....	...	2,425

Average Age per Standard Passed, 1880.

	Standard VI.	Standard V.	Standard IV.	Standard III.	Standard II.	Standard I.
General Averages, 1880	13·8	13·4	12·5	11·6	10·1	8·4
„ „ 1879	13·8	13·1	12·8	11·8	10·4	9·0

2.—Mr. Edge's Report.

Sir,— Education Office, Christchurch, March, 1881.

I have the honor to submit, for the information of the Board, the following general report on the schools in my district for the year 1880:—

During the year I paid one or more casual visits to the schools under my charge, and fully examined all those in operation. The results of the examinations have been in each case reported on separately, and lists of the names of the scholars who have passed their standards have been furnished to the Committees. From the tabulated forms herewith attached, in which the number of passes in each standard and the average age at which the scholars pass are given, a fairly accurate idea of the state of each school may be obtained. I think it, however, but right to state that, although each school must, in a great measure, be judged by the results, yet, as many circumstances have to be taken into consideration when reporting on such, it would be manifestly unfair to determine the efficiency of a teacher by a mere reference to the percentages of passes. In some instances, where the number of passes was very small, the teachers had lately been appointed, and were not, therefore, responsible. Again, certain teachers who failed to gain high percentages last year, performed their duties with as much energy and efficiency as in former years, and to the circumstance of irregular attendance alone I attribute their want of success in the higher grades. It is absurd to expect children who are practically half-time attendants to pass a standard each year under the present regulations. Children of ordinary intelligence receive little or no benefit from such attendance, and their occasional presence

retards the progress of others in the same class, discourages the teacher, and (for they are invariably present on the day of inspection) wastes the time of the examiner. The question of compulsion has, I believe, been discussed by several Committees, and in some districts, where the school accommodation is sufficient to meet all requirements, the effect of it has been tried, but with what result I am not at present aware. I may here state that I think it would be well, as head-teachers have very different ideas on the matter, to define distinctly the number of attendances necessary to constitute a "fair attendance."

Three new schools have been opened, and important additions and improvements have been made to the buildings at Tinwald, Ashburton, Dunsandel, Heathcote Valley, Heathcote Lower, and other places. Except in the case of isolated families, there are very few places where the means of education are not placed or about to be placed within a reasonable distance of all children of a "school age." As regards the material condition of the buildings and grounds, they are nearly all in a very fair state, and, with few exceptions, I found the rooms clean and tidy, not only on the days appointed for examination, but also on the occasion of my surprise visits. More care is exercised in letting the buildings, as only two teachers made complaints against persons using the rooms in the evenings and neglecting to leave them in proper order for the next day's work.

The number of children present at examinations this year was 6,318, being an increase of 435 over those examined in 1879. The enrolment on the same dates was 7,847. The following table shows the enrolments and attendances for the years 1878, 1879, and 1880:—

Year.	Enrolment.	Present at Examination.	Percentage.
1878	5,857	4,767	82
1879	7,443	5,883	79
1880	7,847	6,318	80

This year, out of the total number examined, 3,828, or 60 per cent., were presented in standards. It will thus be seen that there is still a large proportion of the pupils attending our elementary schools whose attainments range below Standard I. This is far from encouraging, and, until some very marked improvement is effected, the quality of the instruction given in the infant classes cannot be deemed satisfactory. The following table shows the number presented in each standard, the number passed, the average age at which the scholars pass, and the percentage gained:—

	Presented.	Passed.	Average Age.	Percentage.
Standard VI.	63	32	14·0	50
„ V.	211	104	12·9	49
„ IV.	547	255	12·3	46
„ III.	882	424	11·2	48
„ II.	1,084	787	9·7	72
„ I.	1,041	861	8·3	82
	3,828	2,463		64

The above table shows that the percentages of passes, except in the Sixth Standard, are considerably lower than those of the previous year. Although in many instances I am not surprised at the results, yet the marked general falling-off is very disappointing, especially as I was very careful not to put an unduly high construction on the requirements, and the tests applied are not severer than formerly—indeed, in some subjects, the questions were designedly a little easier. Of course a large proportion of the failures is due to absenteeism and irregular attendance, but, in addition to these acknowledged hindrances to successful teaching, there are others; and there are, in my opinion, defective training in the preparatory classes, the absurd system of cram persisted in in some schools, and the disinclination or inability of a few teachers to adapt their methods of instruction to the standard system. Frequently during the past year circumstances have come to my knowledge that have convinced me that in some cases, for at least two-thirds of the year, the scholars are classified and taught, not in accordance with the regulations, but in accordance with the wishes of their parents. A month or six weeks before the annual examination, probably not before the teacher receives notice of the Inspector's visit, the children are put back into their proper standards, and an attempt is made to overtake the work of months in as many weeks. As may be readily supposed, everything goes wrong on the day of examination. Some sulk because primers are substituted for their No. III.; others are indignant because they are compelled to disclose their ignorance of the compound rules, instead of being allowed to display the fact that they have been *working in* vulgar fractions and interest. Until masters make up their minds to perform their work in a systematic and progressive manner, or their places are supplied by thoroughly trained persons, the educational aspect of the district will always appear to more or less disadvantage. Far too many head-teachers still persist in devoting an undue proportion of their time and attention to preparing a few pupils for the higher standards, and think that, if after a year's cram they succeed in passing a fair percentage of them, they have done very well. I use the word "cram" advisedly, for in these schools all questions requiring the slightest exercise of the intelligence were either passed over or incorrectly answered. Thus, for example, four-fifths of a class preparing for the Fourth Standard would, in all probability, correctly multiply £16 13s. 4¼d. by 54. When, however, the same question was given in the form of a problem, as—How much money must be divided between 54 persons so that each may receive £16 13s. 14¼d.? hardly one-fourth of the same class would be successful. I a mafraid that this neglect of the junior classes is not confined to unsuccessful country schools, but is also to be found in some of the town schools. I am forced to this conclusion, not only by what I have observed on my visits of inspection, but also by the carelessness, inattention, bad style of reading, and general unpreparedness displayed during examination. It is far from creditable to find that, out of 2,125 children presented in Standards I. and II., 477 failed to come up to the very moderate requirements, and especially so when their ages and the periods that they have been at school are taken into consideration. Seeing that the majority of the children enrolled leave school at the age of twelve, or attend so irregularly after that age as to make but little progress, it is evident that,

unless these children are to be allowed to go out into the world with a very small modicum of learning, their early training must not be left entirely in the hands of pupil-teachers or unskilled assistants.

I do not intend in this report to make any remarks on the manner in which the essential subjects prescribed by the regulations are taught, beyond stating that, generally speaking, too much dependence is placed on text-books, and too little on incisive oral teaching. It appears to me that a very considerable amount of time is wasted in committing to memory mere lists of names, dates, &c. I found children fail to answer the simplest questions on the geography and history of New Zealand, who were, so the teachers informed me, quite capable of naming in their proper order the capes of North and South America and the battles fought between English and French from 1066 to 1485.

Elementary science is intelligently taught in at least twenty schools in my district, and the papers handed in by the pupils, particularly at Akaroa, Tai Tapu, Lincoln, Springston, Sydenham, Gloucester Street, Gebbie's Valley, Opawa, and Heathcote Lower, showed a very fair knowledge of the year's programme. While I have lost no opportunity of encouraging teachers to acquire such a knowledge of this branch of instruction as would justify them in teaching it, I have, at the same time, never failed to point out that a mere rote-learning of a few chapters of a science primer by their pupils was not of the slightest use, and that time so spent was wasted. Although object-lessons are part of the course of instruction, they have not been given in all schools. When properly given, they are very valuable in training the observing and reasoning faculties, and I know no lessons capable of being made more interesting to children. There is a want of system in the arrangement of the lessons, and in many schools the same unvarying round of subjects is used. In one or two instances I saw that a plan of a series of lessons on some subject had been made. I am sure that, if this method of arrangement were more generally followed, good results would follow. Singing and drawing were not more generally taught than last year. Except in four schools, due provision was made for the teaching of sewing. All things considered, very fair discipline is maintained, and, in a great measure, without resorting to corporal punishment.

As a body, the teachers are very anxious about the success of their pupils, and spare neither time nor trouble to produce satisfactory results. So far as I am capable of judging, it is more often want of skill than the want of will that causes failure. Shortly after the appointment of the present principal of the Normal School, I incidentally heard that it was intended to set apart a room in that building as a "model country school." I hope this matter has not been lost sight of, as I am convinced that the establishment of such a school would be of the greatest benefit, not only to the students, or at least to those of them who intend to seek employment in small schools, but also to those teachers already so employed who have not had the advantage of any special training for their work. Should such a school be established, there are very few untrained teachers in my district who would not gladly avail themselves of the opportunity of attending it; and I have not the slightest doubt that the experience gained by such attendance for even a month would be of more real assistance to them in the discharge of their duties than two years' lecturing on school management.

I have, &c.,
W. L. Edge,
Inspector.

The Chairman,
North Canterbury Board of Education.

Results of Examinations in Standards, 1880, in Mr. Edge's district.

	Number.		Presented.	Passed.
Scholars on roll	7,847	Standard VI.	63 ...	32
Present at examination	6,318	„ V.	211 ...	104
Presented in standards	3,828	„ IV.	547 ...	255
Passed as presented	2,463	„ III.	882 ...	424
Percentage	64	„ II.	1,084 ...	787
		„ I.	1,041 ...	861

Average Age per Standard Passed.

	General Averages.		General Averages.
Standard VI.	14·0	Standard III.	11·2
„ V.	13·0	„ II.	9·7
„ IV.	12·3	„ I.	8·3

3. Mr. Walker's Report on Drill.

Sir,— Christchurch, 16th February, 1881.

I have the honor to submit, for the information of the Board, the following general report referring to military drill, gymnastics, &c., as taught at the public schools in Canterbury, for the year ending the 31st December, 1880:—

Instruction Classes.—During the year 1,081 squads have been present for instruction, which has, in some cases, included—For boys, military drill, gymnastics on fixed apparatus, fencing, boxing, and Indian clubs; for girls, drill, calisthenics, and deportment.

Boys.—The result of the instruction in drill during the year is in many cases very satisfactory, and the help given by the male teachers between my visits has exceeded that of any previous year. The placing of drill on the list of regular school-work has no doubt given an extra impetus to this matter.

Girls.—The girls continue to evidence pleasure in their work, and, in the cases where help is cheerfully given between my visits, results are very satisfactory and of a permanent character.

Gymnastic Competition.—The competition was omitted this year owing to the allowance for prizes not being voted. I would respectfully ask the permission of the Board to arrange for a competition at the end of or during the year 1881. Prizes to be awarded to junior male teachers for drill and gymnastics, to lady teachers for the greatest improvement effected in any class of girls. The drill instructor paying special visits to any school wishing to compete. Boys' competition to be in gymnastics only.

Class for Lady Students.—Thirty-eight classes were held during the year. The attendance during the latter part of the time was most regular. Occasionally each lady under my supervision has given the lesson in drill and calisthenics. The gymnasium was available for these ladies during part of the lesson hour.

Lady Teachers' Classes.—The attendance of junior teachers (except those from the Normal School) was very irregular; sometimes over twenty being in attendance, at other times the number not exceeding six or eight. These classes are specially intended for the benefit of the younger teachers within easy distance of the gymnasium, and I am convinced if it were made compulsory to attend, where practicable, the result physically would be of lasting benefit to these young teachers and the improvement of the school girls be more general. After the lesson in drill and calisthenics the gymnasium is placed at the disposal of the class; a fair proportion availing themselves of the benefit of gymnastic exercises. Forty-one classes were held during the year.

Class for Male Students and Pupil-teachers.—With the exception of the students, the class has consisted of a few who have learned to like gymnastics and who show very good work, and several whose attendance was very irregular, and a few who did not put in an appearance more than five or six times during the year. I beg respectfully to repeat my recommendation of last year, that, where practicable, the attendance at these for drill and gymnastics be compulsory in the case of assistants and pupil-teachers.

Gymnastic Apparatus.—The apparatus generally is in fair repair, the exception are a few sets supplied five or six years ago. The masters generally seem more desirous of seeing the apparatus kept in good order, and prevent unfair usage.

The Gymnasium.—The only thing required in the gymnasium is a few sets of new boxing-gloves, the present ones having done duty for a very long time. All the other apparatus is in excellent repair. The gymnasium is used by lady students, lady teachers, male students, male assistants, and pupil-teachers, and occasionally by classes of senior boys from the various schools.

By the kind permission of the Board, private classes are held by me Tuesday and Friday evenings; all teachers are considered members of these classes without payment. I also hold classes Saturday mornings.

I have, &c.,

James Q. Walker,

Gymnastic and Drill Instructor to Public Schools.

The Chairman of the Board of Education.

SOUTH CANTERBURY.

Sir,— Timaru, June, 1881.

I have the honor to submit my general report on the work of inspection for the year 1880. The serious illness which overtook me in February has prevented an earlier attention to the work, and on account of the great delay I do not propose to do more than give a short statement of the results of the year's work.

During the year twenty-nine schools have been in operation, and have been duly inspected. In two cases examinations were not held within the year; one school being closed at the time the examination should have been made, and in another case bad weather prevented my attendance. The following table shows the general results of the last standard examinations for all schools, except Opihi, which has been temporarily closed:—

Number on roll	3,472
Average attendance	2,497
Present at examination	2,833
Examined in standards	1,790
Passed as examined	1,538
Percentage of passes	85·9
Percentage in three higher standards ...	9·9
Percentage in three lower standards ...	51·4
Percentage below Standard I.	38·7

Classification after examination:—

	Passed.
Standard VI.	12
„ V.	101
„ IV.	168
„ III.	390
„ II.	546
„ I.	521
„ O	1,095

Taking these results, and comparing them with those of the previous year, we find a steady improvement.

As a first comparison, the following statement of the numbers and percentage passed in each standard may be made:—

In 1879, 8, or 0·3 per cent., passed Stand. VI.	In 1880, 12, or 0·4 per cent., passed Stand. VI.
„ 57, or 2·6 „ „ V.	„ 101, or 3·5 „ „ V.
„ 133, or 6·2 „ „ IV.	„ 168, or 5·9 „ „ IV.
„ 221, or 10·0 „ „ III.	„ 390, or 13·8 „ „ III.
„ 468, or 21·3 „ „ II.	„ 546, or 19·3 „ „ II.
„ 394, or 17·9 „ „ I.	„ 521, or 18·4 „ „ I.
„ 907, or 41·3 p.c., failed to reach Stand. I.	„ 1,095, or 38·6 p.c., failed to reach Stand. I.
2,193	2,833

As a further comparison, we find that the division of the scholars into the three main classes shows a perceptible improvement on the results of the preceding year:—

	In 1879.	In 1880.
Passed in three higher standards ...	203, or 9 per cent.	281, or 9·9 per cent.
Passed in three lower standards ...	1,083, or 50 „	1,457, or 51·4 „
Failed to reach Standard I... ...	907, or 41 „	1,095, or 38·7 „
	2,193	2,833

As a last test of improvement, it is shown that, in 1879, 1,159 of 1,397, or 84·3 per cent., passed the standards in which they were presented; while, in 1880, 1,538 of 1,790, or 85·9 per cent., passed as presented.

In viewing this statement of results it must be remembered that twelve new schools were opened during the previous year, principally in thinly-populated districts, where no means of education previously existed. The results of the first examinations in these schools are necessarily low, and tend greatly to reduce the average attainments for the year. When, with this drawback, a perceptible improvement in average attainment can be recorded, I think the results of the year's work must be considered very satisfactory. The new schools have generally made better progress during the short time they have been at work than I could have been justified in expecting; and in the well-established schools steady improvement in the quality of the work produced is almost everywhere apparent.

Very little may be said on the regular subjects of instruction. I have made it a practice to enter upon the examination schedules my estimate of the several subjects, calling attention to causes of failure, and, where necessary, suggesting remedies for defects. Where the instruction in any subject appears inefficient, I have marked the subject as a class failure, and have required that it shall be brought to the necessary standard before any passes are registered. Subjects thus pointed out receive special attention; and it is seldom necessary to complain of the same defect at a subsequent examination. Grammar, geography, and history, in the extended form, taken in the upper standards, present more difficulties. There is an almost universal tendency to be satisfied with the rote-knowledge, which should form but the basis of the instruction. I have constantly to advocate greater attention to intelligent oral teaching and collective lessons; but I fear that much improvement in this direction can scarcely be expected from the majority of our untrained teachers until some provision is made to enable them to benefit by observation of similar instruction given by trained teachers.

The teaching of science, drawing, and music, when first introduced, presented almost insurmountable difficulties to those teachers who had no previous knowledge of the subjects. They were themselves unable to acquire the necessary knowledge, and it was useless to expect any uniform or systematic instruction in the schools. To meet the difficulty, the Board sanctioned the formation of teachers' Saturday lectures. The classes were conducted by myself, ably assisted by the Rev. J. Simmons, who took the vocal music. The course occupied twelve Saturdays, of two and a half hours each day, and consisted of six lectures in chemistry, six in physics, three in freehand drawing, three in model drawing, three in linear perspective, three in practical plane geometry, and twelve in vocal music. The teachers entered heartily into the scheme. Sixty-seven teachers attended the whole or part of the course, the average attendance being forty-nine. The time at our disposal would allow of the subjects being treated only in a cursory manner, but I believe that the lectures have been of the greatest practical benefit to the teachers, and that the effect will be immediately apparent in the systematic treatment of these subjects in the schools. The science apparatus, imported by the Board and used in the lectures, has since been distributed to the schools, and will be eminently useful to teachers in their work. The total expenditure for travelling expenses was £127 13s. 9d. Of this amount, £85 13s. 9d. was refunded by Government on account of railway fares, leaving the balance of £42 a charge on the Board's funds. The results of this experiment were so encouragiag that I feel considerable good would accrue from another course to meet the difficulty I have pointed out above. Our teachers, holding the more responsible positions, are either fully trained with a normal school course, or have had such experience that they are in every way fitted for their work; but most of those engaged in the smaller schools have had no preliminary training, and inadequate experience. It may readily be supposed that, where their duties are earnestly pursued, the latter class will have little difficulty in perfecting the more mechanical school-work, but will sadly fail in intelligent oral instruction, or what may be correctly termed the art of teaching. If the Board could continue the work of the past year, and bear the necessary expense that would enable teachers to spend a few days in Timaru, a series of practical lectures in the art of teaching, and model lessons could be given, that I am sure would be of great value in their results.

The teachers' salaries have suffered considerably through the reduction in the grants to Boards; and, although the effect has not been so injurious as at first anticipated, I would submit that the salaries now given are not commensurate with the personal ability and professional work expected from our teachers. In the majority of cases the salary is barely sufficient for a living, and less than the same ability and energy displayed in most other callings would insure.

My visits of simple inspection have been very numerous, and have enabled me to gain much valuable insight into the real work and organization of the schools. The term "surprise visits," now so generally adopted, I find scarcely applicable, as it implies suspicion, which in this district I cannot say is warranted. In only one case have I found any neglect of work or registration. In most cases I have been able more fully to appreciate the ability and energy displayed by the teachers, and in some cases to give suggestions and information that may prove of service.

I have, &c.,

HENRY W. HAMMOND,
Inspector of Schools.

The Chairman of the Education Board.

WESTLAND.

SIR,— Hokitika, 20th January, 1881.

I have the honor to submit my general report for the year 1880. There are now thirty-four schools in operation in this district, and another is about to be opened at Kynnersley. New schools have been opened at Westbrook and Upper and Lower Kokatahi, and one has been reopened at the South Spit. The last three have not been examined this year. The schools in the southern part of the district were visited and examined during the year, and the results duly reported to the Board. The number of

children examined in standards this year is greater by nearly 200 than it was last year, and, of these 171 are in the four higher standards. In addition to the work of the standards, as defined in Regulation 7, the following schools have this year included in their curricula the subjects set opposite their respective names:—Greymouth: Elementary science and drill. Hokitika: Elementary science, vocal music. Kumara: Elementary science, vocal music, drawing, and drill. Ross: Elementary science, vocal music, drawing, and drill. Stafford: Elementary science, vocal music, and drill. Goldsborough: Geikie's "Physical Geography," and Buckton's "Health in the House." Kanieri: Elementary science, drawing, and drill. Brunnerton: Elementary science and drawing. Cobden: Elementary science. Blue Spur: Elementary science and drawing. Donoghue's: Drawing. Upper Crossing: Drawing. Ahaura: Vocal music.

At two schools that took up elementary science at a late period of last year the Sixth Standards were presented again in the same branch. Of course, fresh sets of questions covering a wider range of the subjects were prepared for the schools alluded to, namely, Hokitika and Kumara. The teacher of the Goldsborough School presented his Fifth Standard for examination in physical geography, and although this is not included in the elementary science as defined by the regulations, yet, as the teacher had devoted considerable time to it, I thought it only fair to allow the class, consisting of one boy, the benefit of any marks he could obtain in this subject, and examined him therein accordingly. The percentage of marks throughout the district is necessarily lower this year than last, firstly, because (in the case of girls) no marks for sewing have been added; and, secondly, because, while only about a dozen of the schools have introduced subjects not included in Regulation 7, all of them have been debited with the marks for those subjects, in order that they might be more easily compared. Of course, the provisions of Regulation 9, with respect to passing a standard, have been observed. The quality of the work in elementary science was, on the whole, good in the Sixth and Fifth Standards, but, as a rule, of very little value in the Fourth; and I am compelled to admit that in the majority of cases the introduction of this subject into the Fourth Standard has been followed by a perceptible deterioration in the quality of the ordinary work; the percentage of marks having fallen considerably in all but three of the schools referred to. There is also a falling-off in the percentage of marks in the two upper standards of most of these schools, but not to the same extent, and in most cases not more than can be fairly accounted for. In the Fourth Standard some ludicrous mistakes occurred in the science papers, which showed that more attention should be directed to written exercises on these subjects. The following are a few examples: "The lungs give out carbolic acid," also "carbonate acid." Amongst the bones composing the human skeleton were the "nepan," "inchstep," "parental bone," and the "outstep," and one lad described the right auricle as "west" of the left auricle, and "north of the right ventricle."

Object-lessons.—So far as I can see at present the object-lessons have not been productive of much advantage to the recipients. The scholars in the Third Standard were required to give, in writing, an account of some one object selected from the syllabus furnished by their teachers. Objects somewhat similar, such as cotton and flax, were hopelessly confused, and even the bee and the silkworm, sponge and coral, bat and owl, &c., whilst very erroneous ideas are apparently entertained upon some subjects. Several described salt as fusible "because it will burn," and as many stated that the same substance is used "for building houses where there is no wood or stone." The bat was described as "very useful to farmers by killing mice," and as not laying eggs "like other birds." Sponge is "a mineral," and paper "grows in the United States." There is, however, one school where the bulk of the third class exhibit a very good general knowledge of the subjects upon which they were examined, and that is at Ross. The object-lesson papers at this school, considering the age of the scholars, are admirable as regards the subject-matter, the method of treatment, and the neatness of writing and arrangement. The following table shows the total number of children presented and passed in standards, with their average age, &c.:—

	Average Age.	Presented.	Passed.	Per Cent.
Standard VI.	14 yrs. 4 mos.	63 ...	62 ...	98
„ V.	13 „ 3 „	100 ...	95 ...	95
„ IV.	12 „ 7 „	219 ...	191 ...	87
„ III.	11 „ 2 „	325 ...	287 ...	88
„ II.	9 „ 7 „	437 ...	425 ...	97
„ I.	8 „ 2 „	377 ...	375 ...	99

If it be granted that the method of examination adopted here is as fair a test of the efficiency of schools as those which obtain in other parts of New Zealand, it must be admitted that the foregoing table shows the results of this district, as a whole, to be very satisfactory. Comparing the above with a similar table, given in the last report of a neighbouring district, it will be seen that, in a portion of that district containing 63 schools, some of them very large, out of 3,499 scholars presented in standards, only 19 were presented in the Sixth, and of these only 8 passed. In all the other standards, although the numbers, as compared with Westland, are increasingly larger as we descend to the First, the percentages of passes are from 3 to 8 per cent. lower there than they are here. In comparing the results in this district with those of other parts of the colony, another circumstance should be taken into consideration. In the other districts the teachers present in each standard those scholars only who are almost certain to pass. In Westland, however, it has been the custom ever since the Board established and organized its schools to present every scholar in a standard higher than that which he passed at the previous examination, and, although the present regulations do not insist upon this, the practice is still maintained, and with very few exceptions every scholar presented this year had passed (or even, in a few cases, failed in) the previous standard at the last examination. It must not be supposed from the foregoing remarks that I wish to claim for Westland a superiority over any other district whatever; my only object is to convince the sceptical that we are not in any degree behind our neighbours as regards the efficiency of the majority of our public schools.

The next table shows the average age at which children are presented (or passed) in the several standards in this and the two neighbouring Education districts:—

District.	Average Age of Scholars in Standards.						Remarks.
	VI.	V.	IV.	III.	II.	I.	
North Canterbury: Mr. Restell's report, 1879	13·8	13·1	12·8	11·8	10·4	9·0	Passed standard. Age last birthday.
North Canterbury: Mr. Edge's report, 1879 ...	13·5	13·1	12·4	11·4	10·3	8·8	Presented in standard. Age last birthday.
Nelson report, 1880 ...	14·2	13·5	12·1	11·0	9·8	8·2	Passed standard.
Westland report, 1880 ...	14·3	13·2	12·6	11·1	9·6	8·0	Presented in standard. Age at date of examination.

From the above it will be seen that at present the average ages of the several standards in Westland do not differ much from those in the other districts. The age of the Sixth Standard is indeed a little higher, but it is not, in my opinion, a matter of regret that children should be found in that standard at the age of fourteen years and upwards.

I believe that the great majority of children are incapable of deriving the full benefit of the present system of instruction in that standard at any much earlier age, and it is more to be feared that, unless means be devised to prevent it, the present practice of admitting children under five years of age, and advancing them a standard every year, will hereafter result either in numerous failures in the higher standards, or, what would be far more disastrous, in the overloading of the immature brains of the rising generation, by forcing upon them mental pabulum that they are unable to digest or even to retain. It is my opinion, and, I believe, it is the opinion of many experienced teachers, that when a child has passed Standard IV. (or the standard of exemption), he should not "be expected to advance" the two remaining standards in the two following years, but that in the majority of cases it would be greatly to the advantage of scholars to be allowed at least three years to complete the work of the Fifth and Sixth Standards. I have this year arranged the schools in the Table of Results in five groups, each group containing schools which are somewhat similar as regards average attendance and staff employed. . . . . I must, however, caution the general public against falling falling into the error of supposing that the mere comparison of the figures in the Table of Results will enable them to form a proper estimate of the relative merits of the several teachers. To do so requires a far more intimate acquaintance with the past history and present circumstances of both schools and teachers than is possessed by the generality of persons unconnected with school matters.

I have followed the course I adopted last year with regard to scholars whose attendance has been very irregular. All such who failed at the examination are excluded from the body of the table, and placed by themselves in a column to the right. It will be observed that the Third and Fourth Standards present more failures than the others, and this I account for in the following manner: The Fourth Standard is the "standard of education" fixed by the Act, and the passing this standard exempts the scholar from the operation of the compulsory clauses. I have therefore thought it proper to make the examination in this standard as severe as the regulations permit, so that this exemption shall not be too easily obtained. In the Third Standard it must be remembered that the scholars are, for the first time, examined on paper, and doubtless this causes many to fail to do themselves and their teachers full justice. But the great stumbling-block in this standard is the English history. The whole range of English history from the Roman to the Brunswick period is included in their programme, and although only "a few of the most interesting facts in each period" are required, yet many teachers complain, with reason, of the difficulty of making a suitable selection from so extensive a field. I propose to meet the difficulty by drawing up a brief synopsis of English history, suitable for this standard, within the limit of which the examination will in future be confined.

Nearly every year the prevalence of some infectious disease is reported as having hindered the progress of education in some of our schools. This year is no exception. At Greymouth an outbreak of whooping-cough caused the Committee to take steps to prevent the attendance of any children from families so infected, the natural consequence being a considerable falling-off in the attendance for that quarter. At Hokitika the Committee closed the school for four weeks for similar reasons. The very low average attendance at the Arahura Road School, which also was closed for some weeks, is partly attributable to the presence of diphtheria and other diseases in the neighbourhood. Brunnerton suffered considerably at the beginning of the year from the prevalence of whooping-cough. At Hatter's Terrace, bronchitis and whooping-cough prevailed for some time, and very much reduced the attendance, and it is possible that other schools may have suffered from similar causes, although their cases have not been brought prominently under my notice.

For some time past statements have been repeatedly made in the columns of a local newspaper to the effect that the Hokitika School is in a disgraceful state of disorganization. These statements, and almost daily attacks upon the headmaster in the columns of the same paper, have no doubt done incalculable injury to the school, and have enormously increased the difficulty of preserving order and discipline. In addition to this, special pains seem to have been taken to disseminate these statements by giving them publicity in the influential papers in other parts of the colony, and it is chiefly on this account that I feel called upon to give public expression to my opinion on the subject. I, therefore, have no hesitation in asserting, without fear of contradiction by any person qualified to give an opinion on the subject, that, with respect to discipline, organization, efficiency, and general management, the Hokitika School is, and always has been, equal to any similar school in the colony. It is indeed a source of astonishment to me that, under the wretched circumstances which have prevailed during the past six months, and in spite of a diminished staff and other drawbacks before alluded to, the discipline and general tone of the school remain as good as they are, and that it should have taken so high a position at the late result examination.

In addition to the visit for examination I have, during the past year, visited all the schools north of the Waitaha for the purposes of general inspection. These visits are always made without notice, and in every case I have spent the day, and in some cases more than one day, in watching the teachers at their work, and observing their methods of instruction and the ordinary discipline of the school. It is my custom on these occasions, upon entering the schoolroom, to request the head-teacher to carry on the work exactly as it would have been, and always is, carried on in my absence, or, in other words, according to the time-table. During the progress of the day's work I observe carefully all that goes on, and make notes of anything which strikes me as being faulty or the reverse. I also examine the written exercise-books, and take particular notice of the demeanour and bearing of the teachers and pupil-teachers towards the scholars, and *vice versâ*. I make few remarks and offer no objection to anything while the children are present; but after the closing of the school I bring under the notice of the head teacher anything I have observed during the day which appears to me to call for alteration or amendment. In this manner the teacher's authority is subjected to no check in the eyes of his scholars, and improvements suggested by me in private are the more readily adopted, as they can only appear as the voluntary act of the teacher himself. In addition to observing the work of the school, I take an opportunity during the day to inspect the outbuildings and ascertain whether they are maintained in a proper state of cleanliness, &c.

The staff of teachers now in the employ of the Board is, on the whole, very satisfactory. They are, without an exception, as far as I can learn, persons of unimpeachable morals and of sound intelligence. Most of them are well qualified for the duties they have undertaken, and some of them particularly so. There are a few cases where the want of previous experience in the art of teaching acts as an impediment to otherwise fairly-qualified persons; but, on the whole, and looking at the very low remuneration that many of them are receiving, I consider that the Board has reason to be satisfied with its teachers and pupil-teachers.

I will now mention a few of the defects which I observed at various schools, and which I pointed out to the teachers concerned at the time of my visit.

Registers.—In Circular No. 31, 1879, the Secretary for Education says, "The Minister feels that it is scarcely necessary to advert to the extreme importance of securing the utmost possible care and accuracy in the keeping of the school registers and the making up of the attendance returns." The circular goes on to state that the Inspectors are specially charged with the duty of examining them and ascertaining, as far as possible, that they are correctly kept. I have not of late had occasion to suspect any intentional falsification of the register, but many of them are faulty in one or more of the following particulars: A few teachers had not provided themselves with the proper registers, but were still using those supplied by the Board before the Act came into operation. I have requested these teachers to apply at once for the new registers. In some instances the roll had not been called, as required by the Board's regulation. Even at some of the best schools this is occasionally neglected. In some cases the teachers have been guided by the instructions printed on the cover of the registers, which state that the roll shall be called not more than one hour and a half after the opening of the school. The Board's by-laws, however, not being repugnant to the regulations, are to be observed in preference, and by them teachers are instructed to call the roll not more than one hour after opening. In connection with this part of the subject I wish to observe that some rule to guide teachers with respect to late scholars should be adopted. At present the practice as regards children who enter the school after the roll has been called varies in different schools. Some teachers enter them at the close of the morning's work, while others consider that if they are absent at roll-call they should be considered as absent for that session, and never alter the register when it has been once marked and added up. This is, in my opinion, the proper course, but I have not ventured to lay down the law on the subject, inasmuch as it partakes somewhat of the nature of a financial question. In some schools (including a few of the best) the registers are not so clean and neat as they ought to be. Blots, erasures, and alterations are frequent, and these last being generally made by writing one figure over another, the difficulty of checking the roll is greatly enhanced. Alterations and erasures should be especially avoided for obvious reasons. Another fault in connection with the keeping of the registers is that they are not, in many instances, posted up daily, weekly, and monthly. If used as intended, these registers insure the detection of any accidental mistake at the earliest possible moment, but any delay in the entering-up of the totals at once increases the liability to error and adds to the difficulty of its detection. It is of the utmost importance that the children present should be carefully counted by an assistant or a pupil-teacher in large schools, or by the teacher himself in small ones, before they leave their places and the roll is added up. I have, in several instances, detected an unintentional error in marking the roll called in my presence. As often as not the error is one which tells against the school. This is especially liable to occur where there are many infants, who sometimes omit to answer to their names, and are consequently marked absent. Mistakes as frequently arise from the practice of allowing children to answer "absent" for any child not present. This word, spoken indistinctly, is easily mistaken for "present," and the entry made accordingly. I have always advised the teachers in such cases to allow no child to answer for any but himself, and invariably to check the roll immediately it is called and before the children leave their places. A more general fault in connection with the register is the neglect to fill up the columns for admission number, age, time since admission, and standard last passed. I do not think there are more than two schools in the district where this is done. The admission register is not unfrequently used as a portfolio, and is distended almost to bursting with circulars, blotting-paper, foolscap, forms, &c.

Time-tables.—These are, as a rule, fairly drawn up and carefully observed, but in a few cases they were faulty in construction, the work in a few others was not carried on in accordance with the table, and in two small schools no time-tables were in use. The chief faults I have noticed in the time-tables were want of clearness in the arrangement, too much time devoted to some subjects, too little to others, excessive length of lessons to infant and primer classes. In all such cases I suggested alterations, which the teachers promised to adopt.

Discipline.—This is generally good throughout the district. I noted only two small schools where it was decidedly bad, and two others where, though good in the upper, it was lax in the lower and infant classes. Laxity of discipline, especially in the lower classes, is very often the result of want of occupation, and in all small schools where there is no assistant I think it is better to dismiss the infant and primer classes half an hour before the other children. This would give the teacher an opportunity of imparting instruction to the upper classes in some important branch of the programme, with the advantage of quietness and freedom from distracting influences, while the little ones would come to their work in the afternoon all the fresher for their extra half-hour of recreation.

Organization in most of the larger schools is quite satisfactory. The work is carried on methodically, the changes are made rapidly, quietly, and regularly. In only one large school did I find it necessary to recommend a redistribution of the staff, which was not, in my opinion, being employed to the greatest advantage. I have since been informed by the head-master that the changes I recommended have been adopted with the most satisfactory results. In only one direction is there generally a falling-off in what is desirable, and that is in the tidiness of the disposal, not only of the scholars' books, &c., but in that of the contents of the masters' desks and cupboards. In very few cases is sufficient attention paid to this matter, nor is it at all an unimportant one. Habits of neatness and order are invaluable acquisitions, but, however much advocated in precept, if the teacher's desk exhibits a chaotic mass from which anything that may be wanted cannot be extracted without considerable loss of time, the children are not likely to pay much attention to a matter which the teacher appears to consider superfluous in his own case. I have given hints on this subject to those who seemed most to require them.

Unpunctual Attendance.—This is a serious hindrance to progress at some schools, and is, perhaps, more mischievous in some respects than irregularity, inasmuch as, while losing a very considerable portion of each school day, unpunctual scholars are nevertheless marked as *present*, and being naturally confounded with those whose attendance is both regular and punctual, their failure reflects an amount of discredit upon the schools which they do not deserve. In one small school three children came in half an hour and four three-quarters of an hour after the time. At another several came in nearly an hour behind time. At another two came in thirty minutes and one fifty minutes late, and in the majority of cases I was informed that this was the rule with these particular scholars. In contrast to this, I am glad to be able to refer to one school where unpunctuality was for years almost the rule, but where, under new management, this formidable obstacle to progress has been almost entirely removed. The methods of instruction which prevail at most of the schools are, upon the whole, good. The following defects were noticed at various schools, and pointed out to the teachers before I left the schoolrooms.

Reading was not well treated at a few of the small schools. It was monotonous and jerky at some, and in several the teachers made scarcely any attempt to improve the expression of the scholars by first reading a sentence and requiring the children to imitate the model. The same fault was conspicuous, and generally in the same schools, in the recitation of poetry. There was not in some cases a sufficient testing of the children's comprehension of the subject-matter of the reading lesson, and in one case the teacher allowed the "smartest" boy in the class to answer all the questions, to the neglect of the remainder of the class.

Spelling is generally well taught. I found at one school much time employed by the master in hearing each scholar separately spell the whole lesson, and suggested a method by which he could accomplish his object without the sacrifice of so much valuable time.

Writing in many of the small schools is left too much to chance. The teachers find it difficult to arrange their work so as to give the subject their uninterrupted attention. I have pointed out the necessity for this, and the practice will be adopted as far as practicable. In a few schools scarcely sufficient attention is paid to the manner of holding pens, and, in many, young children are permitted to write on their slates with short stumps of slate pencil—a very bad plan—cramping the children's fingers, and giving them at the outset a bad habit of holding their pencils, which is extremely difficult to overcome. The exceedingly low price at which the Board supplies pencilholders should lead to the abolition of this habit. The holders could be kept in the school, and distributed and collected as the pencils now are, so that very little extra trouble would devolve upon the teachers in consequence of their introduction. I found in some schools that the writing of the primer and lower classes on their slates was not always examined. Nothing can justify this neglect. Children at all disposed to be careless will soon become more so if they find that their work is not regularly inspected. This is true of the mere infants learning to form figures and letters, but it is more so in the transcription exercises of more advanced scholars, which are so useful (when properly treated) for training the eye to correct spelling. If, however, errors are repeatedly committed without correction, the effect of this exercise is rather to defeat the end for which it is designed by accustoming the eye to incorrect combinations of letters, and in such cases bad spelling is likely to become chronic. In connection with writing, I have had, on one or two occasions, to draw the attention of teachers to the necessity of using care in writing on the black-board, whether for copies or for other purposes. If the teacher constantly places a bad model before his scholars, he can scarcely expect them to make much progress in that subject. The instruction at many of the small schools was too individual in its character, and much time was unnecessarily occupied which a collective system of instruction would have saved. I found in two or three instances the upper classes learning by rote small portions of geography, grammar, and history, each child being required to repeat the whole of each lesson word for word, while few or no questions were asked to ascertain how much was understood of what was thus gabbled over. As a rule, too, the lessons thus set for each class were very much in advance of the requirements of their standards, and the home lessons were in some cases too numerous. The exercise-books in use at the different schools ought to supply a fair criterion of the ordinary work of the school, but the credit of some schools would suffer severely if judged by this standard. I have frequently had to draw attention to mistakes, and sometimes whole exercises uncorrected. Nearly all the faults I have alluded to were to be found in the small schools (though some are not confined to these), nor is it surprising that it

should have been so. The difficulties attending the teaching of a small school, unassisted, are very great, and the salary very small. It is impossible, therefore, to secure the services of trained or experienced teachers, and in the majority of cases referred to the teachers are persons who have had no previous experience in schools of any kind. I have always, however, found them painstaking, hardworking, anxious to improve, and willing to adopt any suggestions thrown out by me during my visits.

Singing is taught at a few schools, and vocal music at still fewer.

I may mention, as an interesting fact, that in only one instance have I chanced to hear a teacher endeavouring to deduce any moral principle from the lesson read by the class. I do not for a moment suppose that this is generally neglected, but I was pleased to hear an endeavour to inculcate moral precepts in connection with the ordinary work of the school. The teacher made a personal and practical application of the simple story read by the children, and questioned them in reference thereto, while the answers, though given with sufficient hesitation and variety to convince me that the matter was not "cut and dried" beforehand, showed some familiarity with this style of instruction, and an apparent appreciation of its value. The school was a small one, and the class consisted of very young children; nevertheless, I was glad to see it, and I hope it is not so uncommon in our schools as some would have us believe.

I have made some effort to abolish the filthy practice of cleaning the slates by spitting upon them, and rubbing them with the palm of the hand, the coat sleeve, or some other portion of the clothing. In a few schools the practice of making the children provide themselves with slate-rags has been introduced in consequence of my representations, and I hope this will become general.

The state of the offices is generally satisfactory. The girls' closet at Arahura Road should be surrounded by a close fence, as it is very near to the road; new closets are much needed at Stafford, and when erected should be placed in a less conspicuous position. In two instances I found the younger girls made a practice of playing in and around these buildings—a very nasty and most unwholesome proceeding. The offices at Brunnerton are very much too near each other and to the school. They should be moved as soon as possible.

I found a tendency in a few schools to neglect ventilation, arising out of the fact that in cold weather, to secure warmth at the commencement of the day, the windows are kept closed, and the air rapidly becomes vitiated. Although the change is not easily perceived by those who have been in the room from the commencement, it strikes most unmistakably upon the senses of any one entering from the fresh air.

Teachers' Residences.—It is repeating an oft-told story to refer to the urgent necessity for supplying these as soon as possible, but, in support of it, I may mention that at present, in three cases, the teachers are living in the school building. This is objectionable on many grounds. In one case I found outside the back door, and not more than five yards from the verandah, such things as mutton-bones, heads of red-herrings, empty sardine tins, scraps of cheese-rind, potato-peelings, and tea-leaves scattered about, whilst the verandah was ornamented with cooking utensils. At another small school under the 88th clause, the teacher had boxed in a small space in the corner of the schoolroom, which served him for a bedroom, the schoolroom itself doing duty as kitchen and larder. There was a fine leg of mutton hanging from a rafter in full view of all in the room. The school at Orwell Creek has completely outgrown the accomodation provided, and the Committee are desirous of either having a cottage built for the teacher, and thus setting free the remainder of the present building for school purposes, or of building a new school. I had a consultation with the Committee on the subject, and we went a little into the question of the cost of altering the present building, but the amount estimated as necessary to effect the proposed alterations would go far towards building a plain but more commodious schoolroom on another site, if such can be procured. The Committee intend to communicate with the Board on the subject.

Schoolhouses and Furniture.—In large schools where caretakers are employed, the condition of the buildings and furniture is generally good, the rooms being clean, and the furniture generally well preserved, though there is some difference in this respect even at these schools. It is very gratifying to observe that in many of the schools not enjoying the advantages of a regular caretaker the cleanliness of the buildings and furniture is worthy of all praise. I may mention particularly the No Town, Hatter's Terrace, Donoghue's, and Blue Spur schools as instances. At the last named, the desks, although several years old, are almost if not entirely free from ink-stains; in fact, they have all the appearance of new desks. The present teacher has established a practice of making any scholar who spills ink on the desk scrape the desk clean after school hours. At the same school the boys, under the influence and direction of the teacher, have employed a portion of their play-time in improving the play-ground, and have really saved the expenditure of some amount of money. They have raked off and wheeled away all the large stones, and have wheeled in quantities of fine "tailings" to fill up hollows, and make a smooth surface. This is an example which, I think, is worthy of imitation at other schools, and merits some recognition at the hands of the Committee.

I hope my recommendation respecting the building of a new school at Goldsborough will be acted upon as soon as possible, as it is much needed. Since it has been determined to enlarge the Ross School, I venture to suggest that the school at Donoghue's be converted into a side school at Ross, and that no standard higher than the Third be attempted at Donoghue's. The pupil-teacher at the latter school could then be dispensed with, and might be transferred to the Ross School, if, as is most probable, the attendance there should increase sufficiently to justify an increase in the staff. This, I am sure, would, in the end, be more satisfactory for all parties; and, as nearly all the children at present attending the school at Donoghue's live near that school, or between it and Ross, the distance to the latter would not be excessive for children of twelve years of age, which is about the average of Fourth Standard scholars.

Pupil-teachers.—The examination of pupil-teachers was held, as in previous years, at the schools in which they are employed, and at the time of the ordinary examinations for results. This plan was introduced by me three years ago with the view of saving the pupil-teachers the trouble and expense

of journeying to some central place for the examination—a practice which, I believe, prevails in every other district. Several circumstances, however, have convinced me that it is desirable to revert to the former plan, and I intend to lay before the Board a proposal to this effect at the next monthly meeting. All the pupil-teachers in the district, with one exception, have passed. The credit passes, however, are not so numerous this year as they were last; and in the two upper classes this is, no doubt, owing to the introduction of three fresh subjects—namely, Euclid, European history, and science, at a somewhat late period of the year. It is with much regret that I have to report the dismissal of one pupil-teacher for referring to text-books whilst under examination. At the recent examination nearly all the pupil-teachers were required to give a lesson to a class on some prescribed subject in my presence. This is a most trying ordeal for very young teachers, and I am happy to say that, in the majority of cases, they acquitted themselves very well, displaying a considerable natural aptitude for the work, and familiarity with good methods. Nearly all of them were able to keep their classes in a satisfactory state of "order, attention, and activity." In the case of some of the object-lessons a more minute acquaintance with the subject would have been an advantage; but, on the whole, considering their youth, and making allowance for natural nervousness and timidity, I am satisfied with the proficiency of most of the pupil-teachers in this respect.

I have, &c.,

The Chairman of the Education Board, Westland. JOHN SMITH.

OTAGO.

1. Mr. PETRIE'S REPORT.

SIR,— Dunedin, March, 1881.

I have the honor to submit the following report for the year 1880:—

During the year I visited 52 schools situated in Dunedin and neighbourhood, and in the Counties of Waikouaiti and Waitaki, and I examined, according to the regulations of the Education Department, 71 schools, including the four Otago District High Schools. Mr. Taylor accompanied me at 20 of the largest schools, and undertook the examination of nearly the whole of the written answers. The remaining 51 schools were examined entirely by myself. Nearly all those examined by me were situated in Dunedin and suburbs, and in the Counties of Waikouaiti, Waitaki, Maniototo, and Vincent. Every school in the districts just named was examined, with the exception of the Blackstone Hill Public School, where, owing to heavy rain, only one pupil was present on the day of examination, and the George Street Public School, Dunedin, which had been but a short time in operation.

Considerably more than half the year was devoted to examination in the standards, and less than four months were available for surprise visits for observing methods and management. The number and size of the schools in the Otago District are now such that the annual examination of every school in the standards required by the regulations under the Education Act will occupy a larger proportion of my time and attention every year. This will involve a corresponding curtailment of the time available for checking the registration of attendances, for aiding in the organization of schools, and for assisting and advising such teachers as have had scanty experience of school management. This part of an inspector's duties is certainly not inferior in point of importance to the examinations that now form so large a proportion of his work, and any curtailment of the time he can devote to it is likely to tell on the efficiency of the schools. A proper balance between superintendence and examination can be restored only by increasing the staff of inspectors, or by a great simplification of the routine of examination in the standards.

Actuated by the conviction that superintendence of the schools was being unduly sacrificed for examination in the standards, I made application about the middle of the year for the appointment of an Assistant Inspector. Since the date of that application the attendance at the schools has increased considerably, and the need of assistance has become more urgent. For the last quarter of 1880 the average attendance at the Otago public schools was 16,047. In any other of the Australian Colonies three Inspectors at least would be allowed for so large a number of pupils. Any one acquainted with the routine of school inpection and the comprehensive requirements of the New Zealand system must recognize that two Inspectors cannot overtake in an efficient and satisfactory way the superintendence and examination of schools having so large an attendance. Under present circumstances one of two evils seems unavoidable: either a number of the schools must go unexamined, as happened in 1879, or a number of them will have to go unvisited, as happened in 1880. Great exertions were made during the past year to overtake as much of the work as possible, and I do not see how more can be done in any future year.

RESULTS FOR THE YEAR.—In the 71 schools examined by me (with Mr. Taylor's assistance at 20 of them) 6,745 pupils were examined in the standards. Of this number, 5,148 passed in the standard for which they were presented. The following table shows (1) the number of pupils examined in each standard, (2) the number of pupils who passed in each standard, (3) the number who failed in each standard, (4) the percentage of passes in each standard, (5) the average age of the pupils examined in each standard, and (6) the number of schools at which the different standards were represented:—

	Presented.	Passed.	Failed.	Percentage.	Average Age. Yrs. mos.	Schools at which Standards were represented.
Standard I.	1,768	1,440	328	81	9 1·5	71
„ II.	1,738	1,438	300	82	10 5·4	71
„ III.	1,543	1,071	472	69	11 7·8	70
„ IV.	982	659	323	67	12 8·0	61
„ V.	531	387	144	73	13 6·9	43
„ VI.	183	153	30	84	14 4·0	21

In Standard I. the percentage of passes is somewhat higher than that for 1879. In Standard II. it is somewhat lower, chiefly in consequence of greater strictness in examining the reading and transcrip-

tion. In the latter subject it was expected that three or four lines from the usual reading-book would be accurately transcribed, but in many schools the failures in this exercise were surprisingly numerous, and this was the case even in schools in which the spelling on slates was very well done. This circumstance plainly indicates insufficient superintendence of transcription exercises in a good many of the schools. In Standard III. also there is a sensible decline in the percentage of passes, which is attributable partly to a greater number of failures in reading, but principally to failures in geography and history. In Standards IV., V., and VI. there is also a slight falling off in the returns for the year. The average ages for the various standards agree very closely with those of last year.

A glance at the fifth column in the above table will show that the results in Standards III. and IV. are greatly inferior to those in the lower and the higher standards. This fact, at first sight unexpected, is not difficult to explain. In Standard III. the examination is for the first time in seven subjects, and two of these (more particularly history) are vaguely defined, so that it is difficult to make sure of passes in them. In Standard IV. the low percentage is due to the two circumstances, that the interval between the Third and Fourth Standards is greater than between any other consecutive ones, and that the examination in this standard has been purposely fixed somewhat high, because it represents the modicum of education that is compulsory under the Education Act. These considerations sufficiently explain the relatively low results in these two standards. Though the results in the schools examined by me during the year fall somewhat below those of last year, they afford satisfactory proof that the schools are fully maintaining their efficiency. Last year's results were exceptionally high, and may not be surpassed for some years. The reason for this was that teachers were then allowed to present their pupils for such standards as they considered them qualified to pass—a privilege that was exercised in such a way as to produce unusually high results. During the past year no such choice could be exercised, except in the case of the comparatively small number of pupils who failed to pass the standard examination of the previous year. The great majority of the pupils had to be presented for a higher standard than that which they last passed. When due allowance is made for these circumstances, the results for the year are fully as good as could be expected.

In an appendix to this report will be found a statement of some of the details of the standard examinations for all the schools in my district. In general, the results shown therein give a fairly accurate measure of the success of their management. It seldom happens that a well-managed school, in which the control is good and the teaching well directed, fails to secure good results in the standard examination. In a few cases, however, the results have fallen considerably below what might be expected from their efficient management. Among such I may mention the schools at Merton, Papakaio, Evanasdale, and Pukeuri. I have been unable to make any visit of inspection to a considerable number of schools in my district. None in Vincent and Maniototo Counties were visited except for examination. In the smaller schools in these counties, however, I was able to combine examination and inspection to a certain extent, but in most the examination occupied all the available time. A good many schools in the north coast district also passed unvisited. I have therefore had fewer opportunities than usual of seeing the teaching in the schools. In most of those visited the teaching is being directed with increasing skill. In nearly every case I was highly satisfied with the earnestness and fidelity with which the teachers carry out their arduous duties. There were frequent indications of a genuine desire to raise the quality of the teaching, to infuse an intelligent spirit into the work, and to train the pupils to habits of attention, self-reliance, order, and truthfulness. Cases of weak control rarely came under my notice. In general, the discipline and tone were good, while copying, prompting, and other minor moral delinquencies were less conspicuous than formerly.

In the subjects which do not count in the standard examination there is less improvement than could be desired. In many schools, and more especially in those taught by a single teacher, and having a large number of classes, the pressure of the standard-work causes them to be neglected, and they generally receive but a minor share of attention. I have heard but few object-lessons, chiefly in the smaller schools, and in general they were not given in a methodical or skilful way. The results of the science lessons have likewise been disappointing and meagre. The teaching in this subject appears to be of too abstract and general a character, and to take too little account of facts and processes already familiar to the pupils. I find that the common properties of liquids, solids, and gases, with the nature and effects of which every child possesses some personal acquaintance, are rarely understood. There is the like ignorance, in many cases, of the construction and uses of such common instruments as the barometer, the thermometer, and the common pump. I think it is much to be regretted that the department has not recommended for science teaching the use as reading-books of such works as Chambers's Scientific Reader, or Huxley's admirable Physiography, instead of a syllabus showing the heads to be treated of. An attentive perusal of either of the works mentioned would, in the circumstances of the Otago schools, lead to far better results than flow from the existing arrangements for imparting a knowledge of elementary science.

I have not been able to examine the exercise-books in the various schools so fully as in former years. I fear that these aids to education are, in many cases, real hindrances. All work of this kind requires more thorough and careful supervision than it usually receives. Much of the bad writing in the schools is undoubtedly due to the slipshod way in which exercises in these books are done. The numerous new and well-appointed schools recently erected are being kept in excellent order, and both teachers and pupils deserve great credit for their determination to hand down to those who come after them clean and unmutilated furniture. In some cases the Chairman and members of the School Committees have taken an active interest in this matter, and their exertions have had most satisfactory results. I hope that the example thus set will be generally followed by the School Committees, who, by taking steps to conserve the school buildings, and keep them in good repair, can both further the comfort of the children in the schools, and, to some extent, lessen the cost to the community of replacing buildings that might with proper care last for years to come. I have, &c.,

The Secretary,
Otago Board of Education.

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

2. Mr. Taylor's Report.

Dunedin, March, 1881.

Sir,—

I have the honor to present my report for the year ended the 31st December, 1880.

During the second quarter of the year I made visits of inspection to 40 schools. The other nine months were occupied with the examination of the 67 schools shown in the appendix; in assisting Mr. Petrie with the examination of the larger schools in the district; and with office-work.

The statistics referring to the schools examined by me will be found in the appendix to this report, where a detailed statement is given for each. The summaries for the different standards are included in those given by Mr. Petrie.

Of the 67 schools, eleven show a percentage of passes of 90 and over; thirty-one, from 70 to 90; sixteen, from 50 to 70; and eight, below 50. These results may be considered excellent, good, fair, very moderate respectively. In the case of the eight schools having less than 50 per cent. of passes, the poor results in five of them were attributable, in some measure, either to frequent changes of teachers, or to the fact that a considerable proportion of the pupils were the children of foreigners who had a very slight acquaintance with English. In the other three, although their circumstances were not the most favourable, yet better results might have been produced. Every school that failed to gain 50 per cent. of passes was, according to the Board's regulation, specially reported on. Where it was evident that the unsatisfactory condition of the school was due to the incapacity or negligence of the teacher, his removal to a less important position or dismissal altogether followed.

By a comparison of the results of this year with those of last, the average age for the different standards will be found to be very much the same. The percentages of passes, though a trifle lower than last year, are higher than were expected. Last year's examinations being the first under the new order of things, teachers had the option of presenting their pupils in any standard they pleased, and they, especially those of them who made themselves well acquainted with the capabilities of their pupils, presented them in standards the work of which they were more than fully able to overtake. The consequence was that a high percentage of passes was often the result. This year all those who formerly passed a standard had to be presented in a higher; and, as the passing of a standard in one year taxes the energies and abilities of both teachers and scholars to the utmost, lower results were naturally expected. It is gratifying, therefore, to find that the results this year are in so small a degree lower than last, and to have satisfactory evidence that the schools, with very few exceptions, are efficiently conducted.

The passes in Standards III. and IV. are not quite so numerous as in the others, and it is most likely that such will always be the case, for the work of these standards under the circumstances they have to be passed will always be attended with considerable difficulty unless the syllabus of instruction is modified. In Standard III. the pupils have to face for the first time the seven separate subjects of the examination schedule, six of which they must show a satisfactory acquaintance with before they can gain a pass. Here, history first presents itself in the school course, and in a more extended and indefinite form than in the standards above it. Pupils must have a knowledge of the seven periods in their chronological order, and a few of the leading events connected with each period. The first division is easy enough; but the second, which necessitates a knowledge of about twenty events scattered over the whole range of English history, is not so easily mastered. It might be managed, however, with plenty of time and skilful teaching, were it known what list of events the examination questions would be selected from. Without this, questions may be asked to which the attention of the pupils has never been drawn, for the examiners and the examined may differ widely in the measure of importance they attach to certain events. The results are not likely to be at all satisfactory, unless the history of events for Standard III. are distinctly specified. I do not think that much or any loss would ensue from the excision of history altogether from the work of Standard III., for this subject is taken up in definite and distinct portions by succeeding standards, and the benefit derived from the knowledge of a number of disconnected events cannot be very great. A mistake was made, I consider, in the adoption of the text-book of history so generally used throughout this district. It is called "The Brief History of England," and was adopted solely, I believe, on account of its brevity, which was supposed to render the mastery of its contents a matter of less difficulty than that of a larger work. It contains but a bald statement of facts, the dry bones of history, uninvested with anything calculated to excite interest in them, or to assist the pupils to a recollection of them. If it is to continue in use, and be of profit, it must be supplemented by the teacher from information gathered from a larger book.

In Standard IV. the difficult subjects are arithmetic and geography. In the former the sums set for examination do not partake so much of the straightforward character as in the lower standards, where the processes to be employed are plainly indicated in words; but are so expressed as to require for their solution some thought and a power of reasoning-out the methods for themselves on the part of the pupils, whose chief difficulty at this stage is to determine which process or processes to apply, whether to add, subtract, multiply, or divide, unless expressed in so many words. In order to pass the arithmetic of this standard more successfully, pupils require to be frequently plied with problems connected with their every-day experiences, proposed to them in all varieties of expression, and suited to their different grades from Standard I. upwards. The solving of problems mentally merely ought not to be considered sufficient—the mental process by which the answer was arrived at, the pupils should be required to give clear expression to by a methodical arrangement of figures, or words, or both. This they will find at first no easy matter. The pupil who passes well the arithmetic of Standard IV. shows that he is in possession of powers and a knowledge of principles that, suitably exercised, will enable him to pass with ease the same subject in the higher standards, and is fairly equipped for the commerce of life, although he should never proceed to a higher grade. The geography laid down for the Fourth Standard is very comprehensive, and a complete knowledge of it is, no doubt, difficult to acquire and retain, but it must be faced with determination and diligence, for it cannot be well curtailed, seeing that there is a sufficient amount of this subject allotted to other standards to fully occupy the time at disposal for it.

Reading has improved considerably in most schools. Although there is still room for more improvement, especially in respect of taste and intelligent expression, and although defects require to be pointed out where they exist, yet in very few schools is it positively bad, and in many it is very good.

One prevailing fault is a tendency to rush on at a high rate of speed, in breathless haste, without paying due regard to pauses. Another fault is low and indistinct utterance, which is often sought to be attributed to the timidity of the pupils and other feeble causes. The main cause is the want of tact and resources on the part of the teacher. An educationist of considerable note was wont to impress upon students in training that, whatever faults a school had, they were to be laid to the account of the teacher, and not to be saddled on the scholars. Except in very exceptional cases this is quite true. A school is very much what the teacher makes it—a statement of the truth of which I can give a good illustration. A school in my district, under two successive teachers, was notorious for some years for the backwardness of the pupils in reading and speaking. One had to bend painfully over the members of a class to catch the words read, and it was next to impossible to extract an answer to a question. A third teacher took charge, and after a few months an entire and most welcome change was brought about. Every pupil of every class, from the eldest to the youngest, read in such a clear, distinct, and deliberate manner that one could throw aside the reading-book and listen with pleasure and freedom, and not mistake a syllable. The school was the same, the pupils were the same, but the teacher was different. The foregoing contrast suggests another connected with discipline, in respect of which it is a pleasure to be able to report a most satisfactory improvement. A teacher of an important school, in many respects well qualified, lost control over his pupils to such an extent that he had sometimes to seek refuge from fear of bodily harm in a most ludicrous fashion. It was impossible to conduct an examination of this school with any degree of comfort or satisfaction, because of the general bad behaviour and helpless ignorance of the pupils. Another teacher took charge, who, in a very few months, brought about, apparently without an effort, a complete transformation on the whole tone and character of the school. The former obstinate indifference and rebellious mutterings were succeeded by a willing obedience and a ready response to the wishes of superiors. The circumstances of the school were the same, but the teacher was different. One cannot help, after consideration of cases like these, coming to the conclusion that what is said of poets is true of teachers.

Comprehension of the meaning of passages read, and of pieces of poetry repeated, is not always so full and clear as could be desired. The teaching of so many subjects and the superintendence of so many classes are apt to divert attention from this important matter. It will be found, however, that intelligent teaching, involving as it does suitable preparation of lessons, both as to matter and method, will in the long run produce the best results. Where there is so much to do, and so little time to do it, it would be advisable to combine instruction in several subjects when opportunity offers. A reading lesson could be made not only the means of conveying general information and a knowledge of the meaning of words and expressions, but could also be used at the same time to give instruction in grammar and composition as well. A paragraph or two of a lesson critically examined as to the separate facts stated, the meaning and spelling of any unusual word, the construction of sentences, the character of their different parts, and the parts of speech employed, would accomplish much. I have found this kind of exercise profitable, and one by which the minds of even young children can be reached and interested, when tempered to their capacities.

Composition in some cases appeared to have been carefully taught, but in the majority of schools the specimens of it were rather poor. Although the subjects given for the exercise were thought to be familiar to the pupils, still what they wrote about them was often extremely short and meagre, probably because they had few ideas to give expression to. Object-lessons and lessons on common things, as well as affording an excellent means of furnishing the pupils with stores of information and of increasing their intelligence, could be turned to good account in supplying subjects and materials for exercises in composition and grammar. Pupils must first have some knowledge of a subject before they can express that knowledge in grammatical and fitting language. A text-book that would combine object-lessons, composition, and grammar would be of immense benefit to the pupils, and would be helpful to the teachers.

The examinations for the past year were conducted similarly to those of former years, partly by oral and partly by written work. I do not consider it necessary to refer particularly to every class and subject taught in the schools, as that would be to some extent but a repetition of remarks in previous reports; but will conclude by giving it as my opinion, formed after a perusal of a number of educational reports, that the state of education in this district will compare most favourably with that of any other, either in our own colony or out of it.

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

The Secretary, Otago Education Board.

3. Mr. Petrie's Report on District High Schools.

SIR,— Dunedin, 29th March, 1881.

I have the honor to submit my report on the district high schools for the year 1880.

The following tabulated statements show the extra branches taught at each of the district high schools in the Otago District:—

Port Chalmers District High School.—Examined 29th and 30th November, and 1st December, 1880.

Subject.	Class.	No. of Pupils.	Work done.
English	I.	2	Paradise Lost, Books I. and II.
	II.	16	„ Book I.
Latin	I.	1	Cicero, Four Orations against Catiline; Cæsar, Books I. and II.; and Principia Latina, Part II., pp. 39 to 93.
	II.	1	Cæsar, Book I.
	III.	7	Principia Latina, Part I. to p. 51.
Algebra	I.	5	To end of simple equations.
Geometry	I.	1	Euclid, to Book III., Prop. 20.
	II.	3	Euclid, to end of Book II.

Oamaru District High School.—Examined 24th, 25th, and 26th November, 1880.

English	I.	13	Paradise Lost, Book II., 475 lines.
Latin	I.	4	Principia Latina, Part II., 20 pages, and the whole of Part I.
	II.	2	Principia Latina, Part I., 88 pages.
	III.	10	Beginners.
French	I.	15	De Jardin's French Course, 150 exercises and verbs; 23 pages of translation; extracts from Molière's "Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme," for translation and recitation.
Algebra	I.	2	Todhunter's elementary works, 20 chapters.
	II.	2	„ „ „ 15 chapters.
	III.	10	„ „ „ 10 chapters.
Geometry	I.	3	Euclid, four books.
	II.	4	„ two books.
	III.	9	Beginners.

Tokomairiro District High School.—Examined 9th, 10th, and 13th December, 1880.

Subject.	Class.	No. of Pupils.	Work done.
English	I.	15	Paradise Lost, Book II.
	II.	28	Extracts from "King John."
Latin	I.	6	Cicero de Senectute; Cæsar, Books I. and II.; and part of Principia Latina, Part II.
	II.	4	Grammar, and Principia Latina, Part II. to end of Mythology.
	III.	9	Beginners.
French	I.	5	Ahn's Reader; Ahn's Second Course, to sec. 80; De Fivas, to end of regular verbs.
	II.	12	Ahn's First Course, to end of Exercise 62.
Algebra	I.	9	Todhunter's Elementary, the whole work.
	II.	6	„ „ to end of quadratics.
Geometry	I.	3	Euclid, four books.
	II.	10	Euclid, Book I.
Trigonometry	I.	9	Todhunter's Elementary, 20 chapters.
	II.	5	„ „ 11 chapters.

Lawrence District High School.—Examined 14th, 15th, and 16th December, 1880.

English	I.	4	Paradise Lost, Book II.
	II.	6	Extracts from "The Merchant of Venice."
Latin	I.	2	The Cæsar in S.S.B.A. Series; Principia Latina, Part IV., to page 38.
	II.	2	Principia Latina, Part I. and a portion of Part II.
	III.	7	„ „ Part I., 65 pages.
French	I.	2	Ahn's First and Second Courses, and Grammar.
	II.	6	Ahn's First Course, and Grammar.
	III.	4	„ „ 80 pages.
Algebra	I.	4	Todhunter's Elementary, to "Ratio."
	II.	6	„ „ 120 pages.
	III.	12	„ „ 48 pages.
Geometry	I.	1	Euclid, four books, with exercises on Book I.
	II.	1	„ three books.
	III.	10	„ Book I.

From the foregoing statements it will be seen that there is considerable difference in the amount of extra work done at the different high schools. The Tokomairiro District High School, in this and in most other respects, holds the first place; while that at Lawrence has this year advanced to the second place.

The extra subjects at the Port Chalmers District High School are somewhat more advanced than they were last year. The English and Latin classes answered fairly, but the algebra and geometry papers were only moderately done, and were considerably inferior to what I have usually found at this school.

At the Oamaru District High School there has been little advance beyond the range of last year's work, except in French. English, I was glad to find, has been again taken up as a separate subject. French, Algebra, and English were the subjects with which the pupils showed the best acquaintance. The French class has made sound and rapid progress during the year. Latin was, on the whole, very

fairly known, but the pupils were not sufficiently familiar with the translation of the paragraphs they had read. The geometry class passed an indifferent examination. In this subject I think that too much was attempted.

At the Tokomairiro District High School the range of the extra work was nearly the same as for last year. The Greek class has, however, melted away, and the amount of English read has been much reduced. Most of the extra work at this school has been thoroughly and skilfully taught, and all the classes have made good progress during the year. The mathematical subjects were decidedly the best known. The Latin and French classes made a very creditable appearance, but they were both stronger in translation than in accidence.

At the Lawrence District High School there has been a conspicuous advance in the amount of the extra subjects. In accuracy and thoroughness of work nearly all the classes will bear favourable comparison with those of any other of the schools of this class. The Latin, algebra, and geometry classes answered most accurately. The French and English papers were also creditably done.

I have, &c.,

DONALD PETRIE, M.A.,

The Secretary, Otago Education Board. Inspector of Schools.

SOUTHLAND.

SIR,— Invercargill, 18th February, 1881.

I have the honor to forward my general report for the year 1880.

My time has been occupied in inspecting and examining the schools, conducting the pupil-teachers and scholarship examinations, inquiring into the merits of applications for new schools, preparing examination papers for the schools, for scholarships, and for pupil-teachers, writing reports, and conducting the district high school for the month of July.

During the year new schools have been opened at Chatton, Heddon Bush, Otautau, Pukerau, Pembroke, and Waikaia. There are now sixty schools in operation and one in course of erection. There still remain, however, several places in the district in which school accommodation is urgently needed, and in which it should be supplied as soon as funds are available for that purpose. Of the schools in operation, one (Pukerau, opened in December) has not been visited at all; two (Heddon Bush, opened in July, and Hedgehope, closed during a large portion of the year) have been inspected but not examined; and the rest have been both inspected and examined. Some of the country schools have been inspected two or three times and the town schools several times.

The remark made in my last report respecting the dirty state of some of the schools and out-offices has, I am glad to say, had a good effect. There is, however, another matter to which I must direct the Board's attention, viz., the abuse of the school premises when they are used for concerts and dances. I do not know that there is any serious objection to the use of the schoolhouses for these purposes once or twice a year; but there is certainly very serious objection to scribbling upon the walls both inside and outside, scratching the paint, desks, &c., and otherwise damaging the property. I feel sure that the School Committees are, one and all, wishful to preserve the Board's property, and that it is only necessary to call their attention to this abuse of it.

Much yet remains to be done to the school glebes: many of them are not fenced and some of them are badly fenced, so that in not a few cases they are well nigh useless to the teacher. I am bound to say, however, that not all those teachers that have their ground fenced bestow much labour on its cultivation. But whether the glebes are cultivated or not, if the schools and residences are to be protected against vagrant horses, cows, &c., they should be fenced. In about four-fifths of our schools the furniture is of the most approved type (consistent with economy), but in the other fifth it is defective—in six or seven cases very seriously so. In most schools one now finds a tolerably good supply of black-boards, maps, reading cards, and other requisites. The term "black-boards," as applied to those now in use in many schools, is, however, a misnomer, as they are not black but dark brown; and it is found that boards so painted are immensely superior to those painted black. Teachers are unanimous in their praise of them. No matter how defective the lighting of the schoolroom is, all the pupils within the field of the board can see most distinctly what is written upon it.

TEACHERS.—Exclusive of pupil-teachers and sewing-mistresses, there are engaged in this district 80 teachers, and, of these, 24, or nearly 30 per cent., do not hold any classification either from our own department or any other. A few of these unclassified teachers are doing good work, but the majority of them are largely responsible for some of the low results disclosed by the tables given in another part of this report. They know next to nothing about the work of teaching, are not qualified by education to give sound instruction in the subjects to be taught, and make no effort to qualify themselves. One has no heart to instruct such men in the heart of teaching, for one's efforts are in a large measure spent in vain. The Education Act does not allow their employment when certificated teachers are available. I would suggest therefore that they be summoned to attend the next examination of teachers, and that those failing to answer the summons be compelled to give place to better men. To show how indifferent these teachers are, I may mention that, out of 24, only 5 presented themselves at the examination of teachers just concluded. Most of our classified teachers are, I believe, earnestly endeavouring to overtake the work of the syllabus.

PUPIL-TEACHERS.—The pupil-teacher system is on the whole working well, and is rapidly extending itself through the district. In 1878 there were 11 pupil-teachers employed in 5 schools; in 1879, 17 in 8 schools; and in 1880, 25 in 15 schools. Since 1878, therefore, there has been an increase of nearly 120 per cent. in the number of pupil-teachers employed, and of 200 per cent. in the number of schools employing them. Many of these teachers are doing good work, and give promise of becoming excellent teachers. I should be glad to see the department undertake the work of examining and classifying pupil-teachers. This appears to me to be quite as much the work of the department as that of examining and classifying teachers.

STATISTICS.—I regret to state that I am unable to compare the state of education in this district with that in other districts. Each of the Inspectors has his own ideas as to methods of examining, the nature of the questions to be answered, and the quality of the answering to be exacted for a pass, so that, even if they all tabulated the results of their examinations in precisely the same manner, it would be impossible to institute a just comparison between the several education districts. This is, I think, much to be regretted; nor do I see how it can be obviated without placing the Inspectors under a directing head. They should be officers of the department, and act under the instructions of the Inspector-General. A study of the following tables will show, so far as this can be shown by statistics what is the state of education in this district.

TABLE I.—Showing the Percentage gained of the Passes Attainable in the several Subjects of Examination for the Years 1879 and 1880.

Subjects.	Percentage of Passes in 1879.	Percentage of Passes in 1880.
Reading	87·2	92·6
Spelling	72·2	81·6
Writing	87·1	96·0
Arithmetic	46·4	53·5
Grammar	26·4	38·0
Geography	44·0	58·4
History	17·0	45·2

The results disclosed by this table are certainly gratifying. The examinations for 1880 were as rigorous and the questions as difficult (those in geography and arithmetic rather more so) as those for 1879. Still, in every subject there is shown a substantial advance upon the percentage gained in 1879.

Table II.* is, on account of its length, given at the end of this report, but the results of it are focussed in the following statement:—

Average percentage gained of the passes obtainable { 1879, 66·04 / 1880, 74·79

TABLE III.—Showing the Percentage of Passes gained by each Standard in the several Subjects of Examination for the years 1879 and 1880.

Standards.	Average Age.	Reading.	Spelling.	Writing.	Arithmetic.	Grammar.	Geography.	History.
	Yrs. mos.							
Standard I., 1879	9 6	89·6	86·0	91·4	56·7	...	...	...
„ 1880	9 2	89·7	82·5	96·5	70·2	...	...	...
Standard II., 1879	11 5	86·8	83·3	86·9	41·1	...	46·5	...
„ 1880	10 11	92·9	88·7	95·6	51·9	...	55·9	...
Standard III., 1879	12 5	81·6	55·4	83·3	49·5	29·2	45·3	14·5
„ 1880	12 0	95·1	71·8	95·1	41·6	41·8	42·0	28·4
Standard IV., 1879	13 5	90·5	48·0	80·2	31·0	26·6	34·5	20·6
„ 1880	13 3	91·1	77·0	95·9	30·0	43·0	59·6	49·6
Standard V., 1879	13 11	85·1	37·8	89·2	23·0	15·0	48·7	20·3
„ 1880	13 11	96·1	77·9	85·5	32·7	30·3	34·6	37·5
Standard VI., 1880	13 9	100·0	80·0	100·0	80·0	80·0	100·0	100·0

This table shows that, along with a large general improvement in the quality of the answering, there is also a fairly large reduction in the average age of the several standards. The average age of the Sixth Standard is shown to be less than that of the Fifth, and the results gained by it are higher than those gained by any of the other standards. Of the five pupils presented in this standard, three are the holders of the Board scholarships, and the two others are smart, well-trained boys.

1,467 children (not fit for examination in Standard I.) were presented in the first class. Average age, 7 years 1 month. This class is always tested, and the result recorded in the report sent to the teacher.

TABLE IV.—Showing the Number of Pupils due for Examination, the Number Absent on the Day of Examination, the Number actually Examined, the Number that Passed the Standard for which they were Presented, and the Percentage of Passes in Standards.

	Children Due for Examination.	Absent on Day of Examination.	Actually Examined.	Passed in accordance with Regulation 8.	Percentage of Passes in Standards.
Standard I.	915	37	878	717	81·7
„ II.	864	39	825	566	68·6
„ III.	521	25	496	186	37·5
„ IV.	276	4	272	111	40·8
„ V.	106	2	104	17	16·3
„ VI.	5	0	5	4	80·0

* It has not been deemed necessary to print this table, as it relates to particular schools. In the table are included the passes gained in needlework and those assigned for the efficient management of the infant class.

Therefore 2,687 pupils were due for examination, and, of these, 107, or about 4 per cent., were absent on the day of examination; 2,580 were actually examined, and, of these, 1,601 passed in accordance with Regulation 8. In other words, the percentage of passes in the standards is 62. In the interpretation of this table it is necessary to bear in mind that, according to Regulation 8, "Serious failure in any two subjects shall be reckoned as failure for that standard." In Standards III., IV., V., and VI. there are seven subjects of examination; a child may, therefore, pass tolerably well in four or five subjects, and yet fail for the standard. In the Fifth Standard, for example, only 17 passed out of 104 examined. Now, if we turn to Table III. we shall find that this standard did very well in three subjects—that, in fact, its examination was not wholly a failure, as one would be apt to conclude from a study of Table IV. alone. Of the tables given in this report, No. III. is, in my judgment, the most valuable; for it shows not only the average ages of the standards, but also the quality of the answering of each standard in each subject of examination.

Organization.—This is improving, but not so steadily as one could wish. The following are some of the defects noticed: Too many subdivisions in classes; ill-arrangement of subjects in time-table—heavy subjects not taken up when pupils are freshest, light mechanical subjects not made to relieve those that exact a heavy mental strain—all the subjects of the syllabus not provided for; too many indefinite words in time-table, *e.g.*, "slate-work," "exercise," "desks," and others—words that may mean almost anything; time-table not adhered to; not enough attention paid to junior classes; children not always profitably employed; classes left too exclusively in charge of pupil-teachers; classification too high; basis of classification too narow; not enough attention paid by head-teachers to the training of their pupil-teachers and assistants. Very glaring errors in method are often pointed out by me that ought to have been corrected by head-teachers. I invariably credit head-teachers with the bad methods of their pupil-teachers and assistants.

Reading.—Mechanical reading is generally satisfactorily taught, but the intellectual side of the subject does not receive much attention. This is a serious defect, as, of the two, the latter is by far the more important. If children are not made to understand the language of their books while at school, they will certainly have no taste for reading when they leave. The necessity for constant resort to a dictionary will disgust all but the most studious. It cannot therefore be too emphatically insisted upon that, from the lowest class to the highest, simultaneously with instruction in the mechanical part of the subject, there should be instruction in the import of words, phrases, and allusions, and in the general subject-matter of which the lesson treats. In the advanced classes about half the time allotted daily to the reading lesson should be devoted to the intellectual side of the subject. The difficult words and phrases should be written on the black-board as the lesson proceeds, their meaning worked out or explained—especiallly the exact meaning they have in the particular lesson in hand; and then the pupils should be called upon to construct original sentences to exemplify this meaning. If this is made a *vivâ voce* exercise, as it generally should be, a lot of work can be got through in a short time. When the language of the lesson has been mastered, the pupils are prepared to enter upon a study of the matter, and, when this has been mastered, they will be able to read the lesson intelligently. Children exercised in this manner for the whole of their school life will leave school with a fair mastery of their own tongue, and, moreover, with some taste for reading.

Grammar.—This is on the whole the worst taught subject of the syllabus. It is intimately connected with reading, and success in the teaching of it depends quite largely on the manner of teaching reading. If pupils are made familiar with the import of the words of their reading lessons, they will experience little difficulty in assigning to these words their proper function in the sentence; and herein lies the whole difficulty of the parsing exercise. I do not agree with those who condemn parsing. If intelligently managed the exercise is an excellent one. The following appears to me to be an intelligent method of teaching it. Suppose the class to be the third, and that it has already had several lessons in grammar; and let it be proposed to give the parts of speech of the following sentence: "Bees gather honey all the day." What is the word "bees" used for? To name the little animals that gather honey from the flowers. What are those words called that are used to name? Nouns. What follows, then? That the word "bees" is a noun. What is the word "gather" used for? To tell what the bees do. What are those words called that tell what things do? Verbs. What follows, then? That the word "gather" is a verb. What is the word "honey" used for? To name what the bees take out of the flowers. What are those words called that are used to name? Nouns. What follows, then? That the word "honey" is a noun. What is the word "all" used for? To tell us something about the word "day." What is the word "day" used for? To name the portion of time between sunrise and sunset. What are those words called that are used to name? Nouns. What follows, then? That the word "day" is a noun. You said just now that the word "all" tells us something about the word "day" and you have now shown that the word "day" is a noun. What are those words called that tell us something about nouns? Adjectives. What follows, then? That the word "all" is an adjective. Or thus: "Bees"—used to name the little animals that gather honey from the flowers—words that are used to name are nouns; therefore the word "bees" is a noun. "Gather"—used to tell what the bees do—and words that tell what things do are verbs; therefore the word "gather" is a verb. "Honey"—used to name what the bees take from the flowers—words that are used to name are nouns; therefore the word "honey" is a noun. "All"—used to tell us something about the word "day": the word "day" is a noun. Words that are used to tell us something about nouns are adjectives; therefore the word "all" is an adjective, and so on. I am aware that the language used above is not throughout strictly scientific, but it is sufficiently so for the purpose in hand; and, as the pupils advance in their knowledge of the subject, the teacher can make his language as rigidly scientific as he pleases. In the more advanced classes, besides working out the words in the manner indicated above, the pupils should be made to give their full syntax. The superiority of the above method over any I have seen in vogue is so great that I trust our teachers will make a study of it and adopt it. In the analysis of sentences, words, phrases, and sentences should be treated in precisely the same manner. I have again to report unfavourably of the composition. The subject does not appear to be taught. If the pupils are well drilled in the

functions of words, phrases, and subordinate sentences, there should be little difficulty in teaching them to arrange those parts into a well-ordered sentence. I should like to see Abbott's little book, "How to Write Clearly," adopted in our higher classes.

Spelling.—Oral spelling is generally successfully taught, but in the written work sufficient care is not always taken to prevent wrong images of words being impressed upon the brain. Pupils should never be asked to write words that they cannot reasonably be expected to spell correctly.

Writing.—Recollecting my keen scrutiny of the copy-books in 1879, many teachers presented books with only two or three pages written in them. If carefully written and clean, I have invariably passed them; but I shall not again pass fewer than 20 pages. At Home about 70 pages are required. As a rule the country schools show much better writing than the town schools. The directions given in my last report for conducting a writing lesson are simple, easy of application, and most effective in producing good results; yet I have seldom seen them adopted in our large schools—the very place where they most need adoption. Passing round behind scholars and finding fault with their work is not teaching. The faults should be placed on the black-board, and made the subject of class instruction. Every pupil then profits by the mistakes of his fellows. So long as teachers fail to recognize the necessity for class-teaching in this subject, so long will the quality of the results gained be inferior. In the junior classes I frequently find the pupils writing with bits of pencil about an inch long. This of course is never allowed in a well-managed school. Pupils are there made to write with long pencils, and to hold the pencil as they will afterwards have to hold the pen. More than half the children in the district hold the pen improperly, and sit at the desk in an improper attitude.

Arithmetic.—The mechanical operations are generally satisfactorily performed, but there is a great lack of ability to apply the rules to the solution of easy problems. If one says divide 757,683 by 87, the majority of the pupils will work out the correct answer; but, if the question be stated thus: What number multiplied by 87 will give the product 757,683? more than two-thirds of them will stare at the sum in utter bewilderment, and will either not answer at all, or will multiply 757,683 by 87. In my opinion, abstract numbers are dealt with much too largely both in the lower and in the upper classes. Text-books are too often made to do duty for black-board exercise, and there is a great lack of thorough-going class-teaching. Children should be trained to construct easy problems as well as to solve them. This was suggested last year, but the suggestion has not that I know of been acted upon. Mental arithmetic is a prominent feature in my examinations, and it is satisfactory to be able to report an improvement in this exercise. The addition and multiplication tables are still badly known in the lower classes. One still sees a deal of counting on the fingers in all the classes.

Geography.—Table I. shows a very creditable improvement in this subject. In several schools it is well taught, but in very many the teaching is either very indifferent or very bad. In these latter the factors necessary for effective teaching are almost wholly wanting: (1) A definite notion of what is a fair amount of work for one lesson; (2) a full knowledge of this work by the teacher; and (3) some previous home preparation of the lesson by the pupils.

History.—Considering that this subject is so new to our schools, I think the percentage gained is satisfactory. Considerable difficulty has been felt in the matter of a suitable text-book. This difficulty has, however, now been removed, as, at the request of the Board, the department has sanctioned the use of Creighton's "Shilling History of England." This is an excellent little book for the private study of the pupils, and I hope to see it largely adopted. For their own private use teachers will find the "Epochs of English History," edited by the same author, of great service. They are published at a shilling each, and are thus within the reach of all.

Sewing.—In those schools in which this subject is taught by one of the staff—the mistress or an assistant—the work done is for the most part excellent, but in those in which it is taught by a work-mistress the character of the work is not nearly so satisfactory.

Singing and Drawing.—In most of the large and in a few of the small schools singing is well taught, but in the rest the teachers excuse themselves on the plea that they cannot sing. Drawing is taught in several schools, but in most it is not attempted. Referring to the quarterly returns furnished by the teachers to the Secretary, I find that 2,622 pupils are said to be learning drawing in this district. This return is erroneous. I have found in a large number of schools that, if pupils are learning to draw maps, they are returned as learning to draw. Of course, this is not the meaning of the term "drawing" as defined by the regulations.

Science and Object-lessons.—In some schools an honest, and more or less successful, effort is made to overtake the science work of the syllabus, but in most hardly anything is even attempted. The schools that got the best results in the science subjects invariably passed well in the essentials. Object-lessons are well given by a few teachers, fairly by several, and more or less badly by the rest.

Discipline and Behaviour.—Many teachers are content to work with much more noise than is necessary—indeed than is compatible with anything like sound instruction, and do not appear to regard it as a serious matter if many members of their class are paying no attention to the lesson in hand. This partial attention is fruitful of many evils, not the least of which are the dishonest practices of copying and prompting. In some schools the signal for a change of lessons is also the signal for a babel of noise; and a similar remark applies to the bringing-in from the play-ground and the dismissal. In many schools children are taught not only reading, spelling, &c., but also respect for the feelings of others, and for authority, deference to age, self-restraint, and much else that is summed up in the term politeness, but I regret to say that in some very boorish manners are tolerated. In my view the teacher that does not attend to the manners of his pupils fails to discharge a very important part of his duties.

Records and Attendance.—The registers are generally neatly and, I believe, faithfully kept; but all do not, as required by the Board's instructions, show the classification of the school. The attendance is both irregular and unpunctual. The enforcing of the compulsory clauses of the Act would, I think, greatly improve the quality of the attendance.

District High School.—The school was examined by me in the higher branches in November

last. I subjoin a table showing the work done, the number of pupils learning each subject, and a few notes on the quality of the answering:—

Subject.	Class.	No. of Pupils.	Work done.
Latin	I.	3	Principia Latina, Part I. to page 23.
	II.	7	„ „ „ 72.
	III.	4	„ „ „ 90.
French	I.	14	Ahn's First French Course to Exercise 40.
	II.	4	„ „ „ 70.
	III.	11	„ „ „ 122.
	IV.	3	Histoire d'un Conscrit, two first chapters, and Grammaire des Grammaires, to page 117.
	V.	1	Histoire d'un Conscrit, ten first chapters, and Grammaire des Grammaires, to page 136.
Algebra	I.	6	To multiplication inclusive; Todhunter's Algebra for Beginners.
	II.	2	To fractions inclusive; Todhunter's Algebra for Beginners.
	III.	1	To simultaneous equations; Todhunter's Algebra for Beginners.
Geometry	I.	4	Euclid, Book I.
	II.	4	„ Books I., II., and III., with deductions.

Latin.—Of the first and second classes two pupils answered satisfactorily, and one fairly; the rest fell considerably below fair. The Latin-English translation was, as usual, much better done than the English-Latin. Of the third class one pupil passed a satisfactory examination, but the three others fell below fair.

French.—The answering of the first class was, on the whole, very good. Second and third classes: Reading and *viva voce* translation of French into English, good; written work, rather inferior. Fourth and fifth classes: Reading and translation of author, good; grammar, weak. In both Latin and French a much better knowledge of vocables was shown than in any previous year.

Algebra.—First class: One boy answered fairly, the rest very badly. Second class: One boy got 75 per cent. of the possible marks, and the other 55. Third class: The pupil got 74 per cent. of the possible marks. The second and third classes appeared to have an intelligent grasp of the subject.

Geometry.—First class: Two boys showed a fair knowledge of the work done; the other two hardly any. Second class: One boy passed well, two satisfactorily, and one fairly.

Now that we have a boys' and a girls' high school in Invercargill, the necessity for a district high school can hardly be said to exist. This school might now, I think, be converted into a public school, and permission given to the teachers to teach the higher branches out of school hours.

It has been often said that the examinations are no test of the efficiency of the schools—that, in fact, passing them is a mere knack. Let those who think so peruse the questions hereunto attached, and I venture to say that they will leave the perusal of them with a very different opinion.

I am, &c.,

P. Goyen,

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

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