

County or Borough.	Total Area of School-buildings in District.	Number of Children at present accommodated.	Number attending the Schools in Dec., 1882.	Accommodation necessary in each District after deducting 10 per cent.	Deficiency of Present Accommodation according to Population.
	Sq. ft.				
Waipawa (C.)	11,000	1,100	1,049	1,413	313
Hawke's Bay (C.) }	7,300	730	705	1,052·1	322·1
Napier (B.) ... }	8,500	850	858	1,393·2	543·2
Wairoa	1,200	120	130	235·8	115·8
Cook (C.) }	1,850	185	242	355·5	170·5
Gisborne (B.) }	2,950	295	379	405·9	110·9
Totals	32,800	3,280	3,363	4,855·5	1,575·5

HINDRANCES TO TEACHING.—I have hinted that the work in many of the schools has been hindered by the continuance of various forms of sickness among the children: but this temporary drawback is not so trying and discouraging to teachers, nor so damaging to the true growth of education, as, first, the presence of young children under seven years of age in the same room with children preparing for the standards, and, second, the short and irregular school life which many of the children seemingly have. There is no one more convinced than myself of the inestimable value of infant training, when rightly understood and rightly carried out, and I should be glad to see due provision made for the education of all the infant children in the district; but I am casting no slight upon the teachers in the country schools when I say that they make no attempt at infant training, and the presence of the little children is simply tolerated to improve the average attendance, which means an increase in teachers' salaries, for improve the schools they do not. And is it to be expected otherwise? Infant training is a branch of education entirely distinct from the preparation of children in standards, and I doubt whether a score of teachers in the colony could be found capable of successfully teaching infants, by which I mean children between the ages of five and seven years. Certain it is that standard and infant children cannot be taught with any hope of success in the same room, and this is what is being attempted in nine-tenths of the schools of Hawke's Bay. I notice that more than 25 per cent. of the children attending school are below seven years of age, and none of them will be presented next year for examination in Standard I. Under present arrangements, the average age of the children in this district who pass Standard I. is actually 8 years 9 months: that is, it takes more than three years from the time when children first attend school until they pass the first examination test, and in the meantime cost the country not less than £12 a head. I venture to assert that the young children in country districts where no special infant training can be given, if sent to school at the age of seven, instead of five as now, with the definite purpose of preparing for Standard I., would learn more at school, and pass the standards earlier, than they do under present arrangements: besides, the gain to the effective teaching of those preparing for the standards would be very considerable. The change might easily be effected by simply raising the capitation grant to £5 on the average attendance, and excluding from school all children below seven years of age. The second great hindrance to school progress is the short school life which many of the children seemingly have. I estimate that at the close of each school year quite one-fourth of the children on the school rolls have been admitted during the year, so that the average school life is not more than four years. For example, there were 1,874 children admitted into the schools of this district last year, and during the previous year 1,778 children were admitted. These numbers alone exceed the total number returned as belonging to the schools in December last. Thus it would appear that my estimate of the average length of school life is much too great, but I have allowed for the fact that a large percentage of those children who are admitted in any one year leave before the close of the year. I refer the short school life and irregular attendance in a great measure to the bad habits engendered at school during the infant period of school life, and I am of the opinion that children would attend much longer and more regularly in country districts if none were allowed to attend school until the age of seven years, and compulsory attendance was then strictly enforced until every pupil shall have passed Standard IV.

EXAMINATION RESULTS.—The number of children present at school on the days of my annual examination was 2,924, viz., 1,605 males, 1,319 females. The examination schedules, however, contained the names of 3,251 children, of whom 1,827 were presented for examination in the standards. The table which follows gives the number of children presented for examination, the number examined, and the number who passed in each of the six standards. For the purpose of comparison, there are also given the standard passes for the years 1881 and 1880:—

1882.	Number of Children presented in Standards.				Number examined.				Number passed.				Passed in	
	M.	F.	Total.	Per cent.	M.	F.	Total.	Per cent.	M.	F.	Total.	Per cent.	1881.	1880.
Standard I. ...	282	231	513	15·3	247	198	445	13·2	213	177	390	11·6	386	373
Standard II. ...	275	244	519	15·1	235	187	422	12·6	184	166	350	10·4	374	334
Standard III. ...	214	201	415	12·3	188	184	372	11·1	171	156	327	9·7	271	207
Standard IV. ...	137	102	239	7·2	109	83	192	5·7	86	70	156	4·6	135	93
Standard V. ...	70	46	116	3·5	56	39	95	2·8	44	26	70	2·1	37	25
Standard VI. ...	17	8	25	·7	16	8	24	·7	12	9	21	·6	10	...
Totals ...	995	832	1,827	54·3	851	699	1,550	46·1	710	604	1,314	39·0	1,213	1,032