

slight inaccuracies and omissions to the teachers, but never saw anything amounting to wilful falsification.

Good order and discipline appeared to prevail in fully two-thirds of the schools that we inspected, and in several the behaviour and attention of the children while under examination were highly creditable; they evidently took a great interest in their work, and endeavoured to acquit themselves as well as possible. We rarely noticed in these schools any attempt at copying or otherwise taking unfair advantage. In the remaining schools the idea of order entertained by the teachers is far too limited. The children are inattentive, sit in all kinds of postures, go through the class movements without the slightest precision, disobey commands, and, in fact, do just as they like. It is needless to say that in such schools the teachers are either uncertificated or deficient in tact and firmness.

In consequence of the annual examination of pupil-teachers being changed from March to December, two examinations were held during the past year. With but few exceptions, both teachers and pupil-teachers regard the change as a good one. The results of the examination in December last compare very favourably with those of previous years. Not only was there a very large increase in the number of those who succeeded in passing in the different years, but the style and character of the work were better.

The usual schedules are attached.

The Chairman, Education Board.

We have, &c.,

W. L. EDGE,
JAMES CUMMING, } Inspectors.

WESTLAND.

SIR,—

Greymouth, 22nd January, 1883.

I have the honour to lay before the Board my annual general report on the schools in this district. There are now thirty-eight schools under the control of your Board, three having been added to the list since my last report. Twenty-one of these are supposed to be carried on under the 88th clause, but with scarcely an exception they differ from the ordinary schools only in name, size, and (in some cases) efficiency. Four of the schools on the list have not been examined for results this year. One, Rangiriri, was closed at the time fixed for my visit, on account of the prevalence of diphtheria in the neighbourhood; another, Clonmore, is a new and very small school, which was examined for classification only; and two at Jackson's Bay have not been visited at all for nearly two years. This neglect has been quite unavoidable, as since the subsidized boats ceased running down the coast there has been no opportunity of visiting that district excepting by the local boat, which only remains at the Bay for a few hours, and there is at present no overland road through to the Bay. Owing to the infrequency of mail communication, and the uncertainty respecting the departure of the "Waipara" for a trip to Jackson's Bay, it is impossible for me to arrange for the assembling of the children from the school at Arawata Flat at the Bay school for examination on any given day, as I might otherwise do. To show the irregularity of the mail communication, I may mention that early in the present month I received a letter from one of the teachers at Jackson's Bay dated the 6th November.

In deference to a generally expressed opinion that my interpretation of the requirements of the upper standards was too strict, I made it my business to obtain from most of the Inspectors in New Zealand copies of the questions set by them at the last annual examination, and I desire here to express to those gentlemen my hearty thanks for their courtesy in acceding so promptly to my request. The papers set by me in the four higher standards were accordingly framed so as to be, as nearly as I could judge, about equal in difficulty, on the average, to those of other parts of New Zealand. It will be admitted, I think, that this year's papers for Standards III. to VI. were, on the whole, considerably easier than last year's. The work, however, of the two lower standards was purposely made more difficult, especially in Standard II., and the percentage of marks required for a pass was increased 10 per cent. This was done to guard against the admission to Standard III. of children insufficiently grounded in the work of the lower standards. It will be seen by the table given below that the percentages of passes in the First and Second Standards this year are 18 and 29 per cent. less, respectively, than those gained in 1881; and in the Third Standard, 14 per cent. less. In the first two cases the result is no more than the increased difficulty of the examination will account for, and the falling-off in the Third clearly indicates the necessity that existed for the stricter examination in Standard II. There is no doubt that many of the failures in the Third Standard this year are attributable to the comparative ease with which the Second Standard could formerly be passed. The passes in the three upper standards exhibit an increase of 3 per cent. in the Fourth, 22 per cent. in the Fifth, and 2 per cent. in the Sixth. There is a decrease of 41 in the total number examined, and of 216 in the number passed. The first has been occasioned chiefly by the adoption of my recommendation to exclude from the examination all who failed to attend 250 half-days during the year, and the second partly by admitting those whose attendance, although above 250, was under 300. Last year these were not included in the list of scholars examined when they failed to pass. As last year's report showed as many as 179 who belonged to this class, I consider that on the whole the results for the past year are good enough to satisfy any reasonable mind, when the full effects of the causes named are understood and considered. The adoption of the regulation referred to, fixing a minimum attendance to admit to the examination, will, I am convinced, have a good effect in the future. This year the examination followed so closely upon its adoption that its effect could not make itself felt to any appreciable extent; but at the next I confidently predict a very large decrease in the number of irregular attendants. It will be seen by Table A that this year as many as 325 children attended less than the 250 half-days required.

The sanction semi-officially given in the new edition of standards to the reduction of scholars to a lower standard, under certain circumstances, has been taken advantage of in a manner and to an extent entirely unexpected. Numerous complaints have been made that children have been put into a lower class, or have been withdrawn by their teachers from the examination, at the last moment and without any previous warning. In order to ascertain the full extent to which this course has been adopted, I