1883.

NEW ZEALAND.

EDUCATION.

REPORTS OF INSPECTORS OF SCHOOLS.

[In Continuation of E.-1B., 1882.]

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

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

AUCKLAND.

SIR,— Auckland, March, 1883.

I have the honour to submit this report for the year ended 31st December, 1882. The number of primary schools in the education district and the attendance of pupils are given in the following table:—

Quarter ending	No. of Schools.	Roll Number.			Average Attendance.		
		M.	F.	Total.	M.	F.	Total.
March 31	211	8,429	7,825	16,254	6,658	6,038	12,696
June 30	213	8,498	7,829	16,327	6,313	5 657	11,970
September 30	211	8,353	7,676	16,029	6,129	5,457	11,586
December 31	209	8,304	7,797	16,101	6,595	6,046	12,641

The attendance was injuriously affected by the sickness which was prevalent during a great part of the year. The question of the age of candidates for scholarships has come before the Board on several occasions. I append various reports I have written on the subject in accordance with the instructions of the Board. It seems plain that the idea of making boys begin the study of the classics very early arose from the notion that it was necessary to make learners spend a great number of years in the study of Greek and Latin. This notion has now been given up by the most enlightened authorities on the subject. Three or four years are now found enough for the work to which eight or more were formerly given. On this point the writings of Mr. Fitch, Mr. D'Arcy Thompson, and many others may be consulted. See Fitch's "Lectures on Teaching," chapter viii., and Thompson's "Day-dreams of a Schoolmaster."* It seems to me plain that, if the years devoted to the study of the classics can be shortened, the assumed necessity for beginning to study them at an early age disappears, and with it the assumed necessity for maiming the course of primary instruction. We need not quote Professor Huxley to prove that primary subjects are seldom, if ever, taught well in secondary schools.

The report of the Principal of the Training College will show the nature of the work done in the College by means of it during the past year. It will be seen that the influence of the College is not confined within its walls, but extends itself very much further.

* The following is from the *Saturday Review*, 10th February last: "With respect to the folly of causing boys at such an early age to go through competitive examinations, the *Lancet* says, 'There can be no room to question the extreme peril of "overwork" to children and youth with undeveloped brains. The excessive use of an immature organ arrests its development by diverting the energy which should be appropriated to its growth, and consuming it in work.' And Dr. Crichton Browne says yet more emphatically: 'By submitting little boys of twelve or thirteen to competitive examination in the mere school-work, we may be able to select those of the quickest wits and most susceptible of "cram;" but we should certainly not bring to the front those with the greatest grasp of intellect and force of character. To institute such examinations at such an age seems to me to be offering a premium on precocity, which is either the characteristic of an inferior order of mind or the vice of a fine but fragile organization. It seems often to be forgotten that the children of savages walk and talk and attain every step in development earlier than do those of civilized races. Lower organisms are more rapidly evolved and reach complete evolution sooner than higher ones; and in any competitive examinations, instituted in the first decade of life, European infants would be put to shame by negro infants, or even by the progeny of the Australian aborigines. And the same biological law holds good amongst individuals of the same race, those of greater mass and complexity being slower in reaching maturity than those of simpler and feebler mental structure. The premature activity of the brain exhausts its strength or sets up bodily degeneration.'" This is a significant commentary on certain recommendations recently made to the Board.

The system of examination in standards was begun in 1879, so that it is yet, comparatively speaking, in its infancy in this district. We have to some extent been acting tentatively in order to lay a firm foundation on which a reality might stand. This, I think, we have been able to do to a considerable extent. Some of the schools are in by no means a satisfactory state, and must continue so till we can provide better teachers for them. On the other hand there are very many schools in which the work is really excellent; and all the teachers now understand that nothing but good work will be accepted. I may state that we get some really creditable composition, in the shape of letters, from the pupils in the Third and Fourth Standards. I believe that but little composition is exacted from these standards in other districts. This, of course, will make a wonderful difference in apparent results.

I append a table showing the number examined and passed in each standard, also the average age at which the pupils passed.

—	Examined.	Passed.	Failed.	Percentage of Passes.	Average Age at Time of Passing.
Standard I.	2,095	1,633	462	77·9	9·0
Standard II.	2,241	1,427	814	63·6	10·7
Standard III.	1,723	974	749	56·5	11·9
Standard IV.	945	625	320	65·6	13·3
Standard V.	453	277	176	61·1	14·3
Standard VI.	117	62	55	52·9	15·0
Total	7,574	4,998	2,576	65·9	...

It will be seen that the percentage of passes is smaller than that of last year. This is due to more than one cause. A somewhat more stringent test was applied: it was judged that the time had arrived for doing this. Some of the schools did not stand the test. The great amount of sickness which prevailed last year caused irregularity of attendance, which seriously disarranged many of the schools, and, of course, hindered their efficiency. I have thought it right not to lower our requirements in order to enter in a race for results with other districts. I have no doubt that before long we shall reap the benefit of this Notwithstanding the percentage of passes, I am satisfied that the efficiency of the schools has decidedly increased during the year. The rules adopted by the Board in September last, in reference to the sending up pupils for standards, came into force on the 1st January last. These rules will have a beneficial effect, and will help to prevent abuse. Their tendency will be, however, to lessen the percentage of passes. I should be glad to follow the system pursued in South Canterbury, where every child in a school is sent up. The large numbers at some of our schools would make that almost impracticable here; but perhaps we may be able to adopt some modification of it before long.

I will now refer briefly to the teaching in some of the subjects in the schools. In some of the schools there is considerable improvement in the reading. Many of the candidates for district scholarships read really well: on the other hand, a great many of them did not read well; there was too much running of one word into another, and dropping the final consonant—too much monotonous and unintelligent drawling. In the large schools, where of necessity there is a great deal of simultaneous reading, the process is often excruciating. It is a monotonous kind of screaming song, without expression or intelligence. "But if the art of reading, to be of any service, is an expression of the writer's thoughts, and their association with the reader's own, what sort of instruction in the art is that which produces a town-crier's recitative from the reader's mouth, and a responseless lack-lustre in his eye?" This is to be got over by insisting on the pupils speaking instead of singing, by making them speak in a very low tone. They will be heard much more distinctly, and the human voice, after the bird-like scream, is most grateful to the ear.

There is considerable improvement in the writing. Some controversy has arisen as to the method of teaching writing adopted here. It appears to me that the matter is very easily dealt with. When a certain system of writing is adopted, and certain models chosen, is this system to be carried out, and are these models to be copied or not? Is the work to be a reality or a sham? Are the children to be trained to do what they profess to do, or something quite different? It seems to me that there can be but one answer to each of these questions, anything that may be written to the contrary notwithstanding. In connection with this matter, I regret to find that a practice is gaining ground of giving exercises to be written at home on paper, by children who have just passed the Second Standard. This, in the majority of cases, will, instead of helping the teacher, heavily handicap him. Children at this stage should not be allowed to write on paper, except under careful supervision. Teachers should make use of the ninth page of No. 1, Vere Foster's Copybooks, as a guide for their pupils—a guide as to size, as to slope, and as to the beginning and ending of portions of letters. They should cut out this page and paste it on cardboard, and give one card to each desk of their junior classes, and, in some instances, to the members of their senior classes.

Many teachers err by ruling the slates for their junior pupils at too wide intervals; Vere Foster's hand is not half-text, and it cannot be properly written the size of half-text: it is large small-hand. Again, some teachers allow of too upright writing. In many schools the pupils are not prevented from cramming too many words into each line when they transcribe or compose. When the words are crowded the letters in the words will be crowded too. Each word and letter should have plenty of breathing space. Every desk in the junior classes should be supplied with a card, having the large and small manuscript letters written upon it with great care, as a guide in transcription. Blackboard writing will not serve this purpose. It is often of necessity hurried, and besides is liable to be influenced by the state of the teacher's hand, or the state of the teacher's mind. I have found lately in some schools that undivided attention has not been given by the teacher to the writing lesson. This, of course, cannot be allowed to continue. When it is practised the writing is inevitably bad. If a little

more time is required, I would prefer that the writing lesson were omitted on one day of the week. There is another evil tendency which requires to be guarded against—that is, the tendency to give dictation to children in the Second Standard. This is a very effectual way to teach them to spell badly. Even in the Third Standard dictation should be used with great caution.

There is some improvement in the teaching of geography, but it is still very inadequately taught. I am sometimes astonished at the ignorance of this most interesting subject shown by senior classes. Ample instructions how to teach it are given in the standards and in the Board's instructions.

Composition is, on the whole, very fairly taught. There still lingers, however, too much of a tendency to have recourse to reproduction in some one or other of its various disguises. The art of oral composition comes by nature, much as the art of walking does. In training to written composition we should be guided by Nature's teaching. When stilts produce ease in walking the wooden appliances so frequently pressed on our notice will no doubt produce ease in writing.

I have been of late pointing out to teachers that much of the work of the higher standards can be anticipated in the lower. This can be done not only without injury to the ordinary work, but to its advantage, by awakening the intelligence of the pupils. The knowledge which children acquire out of school is to be used as a foundation. Most children have seen a penny, and most children know that they will get twelve pence as change for a shilling, and that sixpence is half a shilling. On this foundation, and with the help of twenty-four halfpence, an intelligent teacher can convey to children some useful knowledge in simple fractions, to their great delight. He can do the same with a pound sterling by the help of twenty shillings, and a crown and half a crown. If he has not the coins he can imitate them on the blackboard, or indicate them by means of the ball-frame. The mystery of the aliquot parts of a pound and of a shilling can be pleasantly revealed in this way. It can be revealed in another way to those who are learning the simple rules. They can be made to see, for instance, how many sums of twenty pence, thirty pence, or the like go to make up two hundred and forty pence. Children should be reminded that they come to school mainly to acquire good habits; that one of these habits is that of investigation, or "the finding out about the things they speak of and hear of." In any school most of the pupils will have often heard of a ton; but it will be found that but few have taken trouble to find out anything about it. Some will know that it is about the weight a good horse can draw in a dray, or 20 cwt. It should then be pointed out that it is of no use to talk about hundredweights unless they know what a hundredweight is. Some will know that it contains 112 lb. Then an effort should be made to get them to a tolerably clear though rough objective knowledge of what a pound is. Sixteen ounces won't help them much to this. Some, again, will know that a stone of ordinary density, about the size of their clenched fist, will represent a pound. They can be easily led to see that a heap of 112 of these stones will represent a hundredweight, that twenty such heaps will represent a ton, or will contain 2,240 lb.: all this by the simple rules. As regards miles, children will tell you that they live a mile or more or less than a mile from the school, but they have seldom taken the trouble to make out what a mile is. This they can be easily interested in doing, and can be brought from the miles to the chains, the yard, the foot, and the inch, the latter being brought home to them, not by "twelve lines," but by three barleycorns, or by the upper joints of their thumb or forefinger; thus again having a concrete foundation instead of building on air. As regards acres, you will perhaps be readily told that there are ten square chains in an acre, but you will often find that very little meaning is attached to this expression; yet simple mensuration is a thing in which very young children take much delight. They will tell you, for instance, that three fives are fifteen, and they delight in verifying this by counting the squares in an oblong, assumed to be three chains, or yards, or feet broad, by five long. I find that in very many cases indeed there is anything but a clear apprehension of the distinction between, say, square yards and yards square and the like (a haziness not unknown to pupil-teachers): this certainly ought not to be. Teachers should encourage their pupils to make chains of flax or other material, and to amuse themselves by measuring distances and areas. In dealing with coins, weights, and measures it is best to begin with the high denomination, the pound, the shilling, the ton, the mile, the acre, and analyse them. This is the true and natural method.

The methods of teaching geography and grammar to young children have been dealt with in the instructions for the guidance of teachers. I would here point out that it is of inestimable value to children to be taught to use their own eyes, to learn—what we all want to learn—to see the things before the eyes. They should be trained to find out and name the objects in the room, and further trained to form some opinion on those objects, to consider whether they think them good or bad, pretty or ugly, and the like. If during the process they pick up something about nouns or adjectives it will not do them any harm, nor indeed does it very much matter.

The practice of gymnastics has been extended to many schools during the past year. Much benefit is arising from it. I find, however, that many who need the practice most often seek to shirk it. This arises from the mistaken idea that gymnastics cause too great a strain on the frame, and are weakening. The contrary is the fact. A course of gymnastics is often the best thing to strengthen a weakly frame. In Hinton's "Physiology for Practical Use" the author says, "We would strongly urge on parents, especially on those whose children are somewhat weakly, the necessity of physical education. Children who have no desire for the sports of their time of life ought not to be encouraged in their sedentary habits without some counterbalancing means of exercise." I append the Instructor's report for last year.

It is very desirable that every school should have a library. Unless a taste for reading is acquired at school many of the country pupils will eventually lose all they have learned. The good and the gain of a taste for reading have been told by many eloquent tongues. One often remembers, contemplating the many young people here who show no vestige of this taste, "What a dreary old age you are preparing for yourselves!"

I must again express my strong disapproval of the large amount of home work given in many cases. Year by year the weight of enlightened authority becomes greater against this stupid, mischievous practice.

I do not think the holidays given here are excessive, taking into account the nature of the climate and other circumstances. If the teachers' examination were not held in January it might be possible

to shorten the Christmas holidays; but I fear a very large proportion of the children would be allowed to absent themselves during January, thus causing a serious loss of income to the district. January is a festive month here, and people do not settle down till after Anniversary Day. To the number of teachers who come up for examination in January a week's freedom from toil at Easter is an absolute necessity, for Christmas has brought no holiday to them. When the teacher's health suffers the progress of the pupil suffers, and otherwise much inconvenience is caused. The education of a nation is not confined to the four walls of a schoolroom. Judicious parents can contrive that education shall not cease, though the school ceases. The interval should give time for much valuable mental and physical training. If the idea that school hours should be the same as the ordinary hours of labour is right, the consensus on this point of the whole habitable globe is wrong. One advantage of adopting the proposal there is no gainsaying—a considerable saving would eventually be brought about in the estimates of the Minister of Education. I may add that the holidays were fixed by the Board after much deliberation and discussion, in which the delegates from certain School Committees took a part. The holidays are specified in the rules and regulations. It is too often forgotten that country Committees have the fixing of the beginning and length of holidays a good deal in their own hands, as will be seen by reference to the Board's rules. Some country teachers have come to town at Christmas without ascertaining what holidays had been settled on by the Committee and sanctioned by the Board. An abuse seemed likely to spring up, but I think that has been stopped.

What has been just said leads to the consideration of the time when the teachers' examination is held. It is held at the end of January, thus robbing the teachers who have to come up of all that recreation which they so much need, especially in this climate. Instead of healthy recreation, which clears the brain and invigorates the frame, they have toil and perplexity. They begin the work of the year with dulled intellects and relaxed frames. It is needless to say that many of them are utterly unfit for work. I think this thing has gone on quite long enough, and ought, in the interests of education and in the interests of humanity, to be put a stop to at once.

I fear that many children under five years obtain admission to the schools. There is a strong tendency in some parents to use the schools as nurseries. Parents presenting children represented as being from five to six years should be required to put their statements in writing. It has been found from experience that this acts as a considerable check.

The pupil-teacher system, as in practice here, is working, on the whole, satisfactorily. The Board has in a few instances been obliged to employ pupils, otherwise qualified, who were some months under sixteen years old. In the future there will be, I think, little or no need to employ any under sixteen. The immense advantage of beginning with pupil-teachers of sixteen who have passed the Sixth Standard must be obvious. The strain of teaching and studying is minimized. The painful sight of the little teacher of thirteen years toiling and teaching is happily got rid of.

The question of district high schools has been more than once considered by the Board during the past year. The Board propose to establish two of these schools in the Waikato District. It is to be hoped that the experiment will prove successful. I append reports I have made to the Board on this subject.

The results of the examination of the Girls' High School, held in December, were satisfactory. The Board, in conjunction with the Headmaster, have made several modifications in the course of instruction, which are likely to be advantageous. There is extreme need for a new building, the one at present in use being utterly unsuitable.

In my last year's report I wrote as follows: "I regret to say that a tendency has begun to show itself here which should not be allowed to grow into a practice. We have been happily free from it hitherto. In more than one case teachers have sought to obtain appointment or promotion by bringing outward pressure to bear. It is easy to see how pernicious may be the results of this tendency. Fitness may cease to be considered. Not the man who has most qualifications, but the man who has most friends, may be he who will get appointments. The possible disastrous results to pupils and parents may come to be left out of sight altogether. This is no vague apprehension. A Royal Commission is now sitting in Victoria to examine into, amongst other things, the causes of the unsatisfactory state of many of the Victorian schools. It has already been made plain enough that many of the schools are in a wretched condition, and it has also been made plain enough that this disastrous state of things has been brought about by patronage. Ministers of Education have repeatedly passed over teachers of whose fitness they were assured in favour of men whose chief qualifications were the good word of a Ministerial supporter. It is, of course, not very likely that things will come to this pass here; but the evil principle is the same when favour and not fitness is allowed to be made the road to appointments. All efficient teachers should resent this; all who have the good of education at heart should resist it." I wish I could say that this tendency has lessened; I know that it has increased and is increasing.

I have, &c.,

RICHARD J. O'SULLIVAN,
Inspector of Schools.

The Chairman, Education Board.

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02. MR. O'SULLIVAN'S REPORT ON DISTRICT HIGH SCHOOLS.

SIR,—

I have the honour to report on the subject of the establishment of district high schools, referred to me by the Board.

I am convinced that it is desirable to encourage the establishment of high schools in the country districts, under the provisions of clauses 55 and 56 of the Education Act. I was at one time of a somewhat different opinion. I feared that the attaching of a high school to an elementary school would be injurious to the latter. I now think that it is worth running some risk for the sake of the diffusion of culture which these high schools should bring about, and which can be brought about by them only.

Large numbers of country settlers cannot afford to send their children to the secondary schools in the towns, and are beginning to look to the establishment of district high schools as the one means by which their families can have the advantages of superior education. It is well that this feeling should prevail. It is a feeling that should be fostered. It will not be well if some time hence the people of New Zealand can be described—as another people have been described by one of themselves—as "the most common-schooled and the least cultivated people in the world."

The instruction in the higher branches should be carried so as to interfere as little as possible with the elementary department of the schools. Pupils should be eligible for the higher instruction when they have passed the Fourth Standard. It is, in my opinion, desirable that they should have reached the age of twelve years—and here we have the authority of Mr. Matthew Arnold to guide us—but I do not look on this as a point of such vital importance as it is when children have to enter the higher schools through the ordeal of a competitive examination.

In a future report I will state how I consider the schools should be worked, and I will try to give an estimate of the probable cost, and to indicate how the cost may be met.

I have, &c,

18th August, 1882. R. J. O'Sullivan, Inspector.

Sir,—

I have the honour to report respecting the probable cost of the district high schools proposed to be established in the Waikato at Cambridge and Hamilton.

It will be necessary in each case to secure the services of an assistant qualified to teach the higher branches. Such teachers can, I think, be procured at salaries ranging from £150 to £250 a year. I do not think that more than £200 need be paid at present. No more than one teacher will be directly required, but possibly some slight addition to the staff of the district school may be wanted. There will be, of course, some incidental expenses for maps and the like. As the high schools will bring but few additional pupils the expense for desks is not likely to be great. Eventually some expenditure for buildings may be required, but that need hardly be taken into account at present. As regards funds, I do not think the capitation allowance should be taken into account, as it is not likely to be much increased by the high school, and the cost of the district school will certainly not be lessened.

As regards fees, I think there should be but one class of fees. It is not desirable that very young children should be tempted to seek admission. The fee should, it appears to me, be at the rate of £8 8s. per annum, this to include the cost of stationery. It is, I believe, probable that these schools are entitled to a part of the revenue from the reserves for secondary education. If the Board think it desirable to establish these schools, it will be necessary to obtain the express sanction of the Minister of Education, and to frame rules for the collection of fees and other matters.

A memorandum *re* the proposed schools at Cambridge and Hamilton is appended: Hamilton promises to send forty-three pupils, but some of these are rather young. Assume thirty at £8 a year or £2 a quarter; cost of teacher, say, £200; sundry expenses, £20.—Cambridge promises to send thirty-six pupils. Assume that thirty are sent, paying £8 a year or £2 a quarter each; cost of teacher, say, £200; sundry expenses, £20.

I am, &c.,

R. J. O'Sullivan, Inspector.

TARANAKI.

Sir,— New Plymouth, 4th January, 1883.

I have the honour to transmit my report on the public schools for the year 1882, together with the usual record of passes.

Occurrences during the past year have caused me much anxious thought, knowing, as I do, individually a large proportion of the parents and pupils making use of your schools.

Something is wanting to complete the present system of education. Intellect is to a certain extent cultivated; conscience is left dormant. I consider that the average age for leaving school is about fourteen, and from this class of youths are recruited the disturbers of public reunions and offenders against good manners. No inducements are offered them to continue their studies, or to cultivate refining and elevated tastes. In the streets alone do they find means of meeting their fellows; and, forgetting the little knowledge they may have picked up at school, they learn what in future years proves their ruin. I have been utterly astonished at the rapidity with which the knowledge picked up in school has been forgotten. Pupils whom I knew fully able to pass into the High School twelve or eighteen months ago, I have been obliged to leave in the lower division, showing, as I stated in my last report, that the knowledge gained in your schools is to a great extent superficial. The pupils are driven through the various class books, without any attempt at weekly repetition lessons, which I referred to in my last report. It is very seldom I find anything in which I can agree with the late Earl of Beaconsfield, but in one of his speeches he said: "The spirit of the Constitution would absorb the best of every class, and not let them fall into a democracy, which is a tyranny of one class, and that the least enlightened." The state of things his Lordship refers to has not, in my opinion, attracted sufficient attention. His Lordship goes on to refer to a question which indicates trouble to the present generation, and will seriously embarrass the next. He says: "Having dismissed the sanctions that appeal to the higher feelings of man, is our scheme of government to degenerate into a mere system of police? I see nothing in such a result but corruption of nations and the fall of empires." I conceive the authorities in charge of the education of our youth should reflect on this ominous utterance, though it does come from a quarter I never have had much faith in.

In close connection with what I have stated, I wish to refer to the last two clauses in Mr. Inspector O'Sullivan's report, dated the 31st December, 1881, because they exactly express my feelings on the subjects therein referred to, so much so that I should have liked to have inserted them in this paper. Another source of disquietude to me is the serious irregularity of attendance of the pupils, even in some of your best-managed schools. Last year I reported that it was improving: it has not continued

Even in the town district there are on an average 120 children (whose names are on the rolls) about the streets and elsewhere every day during school hours, to say nothing of those who ought to be scholars. I have also to remark strongly against the practice of pupils absenting themselves on days appointed for examinations, though warned to attend. This practice is remarked upon by other Inspectors, and has, I regret to say, occurred in the town schools, as well as some country schools, where, owing to bad roads and worse weather, there was some excuse for it. As the Board has not come to any decision on the suggestions already submitted to them to put an end to this irregularity of attendance, I have thought of another plan, which within the last few days I find Mr. Inspector Hodgson, of Nelson, has partially adopted—viz., that no pupil who has not attended at least 260 half-days, or twenty-six school weeks, since the last examination, shall be entitled to a certificate of merit.

As no alteration has been made in the regulations enabling the teachers to devote Fridays to repetition lessons only, I have, as a temporary measure, directed the teachers, where they can get home lessons done, to make them consist of such lessons. In no case do I wish any child to be occupied for more than an hour and a half at most with their home lessons; but this I find objected to, as in so many cases the children are wanted to assist their parents.

Reading in some cases is greatly improved, but in those cases where the schools have been partially closed during this year there is little, if any, improvement, being little more than the utterance of sound without any notion of the meaning of the words.

Writing from dictation is greatly improved, and in some cases very good. Writing is still unsatisfactory, though on the whole I think there is a general tendency to improvement. The copy-books are much cleaner and better kept; there are fewer blots and less scribbling on the backs.

Arithmetic has been fairly taught on the whole, but there is throughout all the schools a great want of power of thought in working out questions. Almost universally the problems can be worked out if the pupils are set a-going; but that is not what I require. I want proof of thinking power, and correctness: without the latter the work is worse than useless, for it engenders a slovenly habit of thought. I have had occasion to advise some of your teachers not to hurry their pupils on beyond the requirements of the standards. It has been the cause of much disappointment to the pupils and myself. I am glad to say, however, that mental arithmetic is very carefully taught, and the answers given promptly and correctly.

Grammar is somewhat improved in written matter. Parsing was not so good as I expected. Letter-writing has at last begun to improve, and in some of the schools very creditable essays, though too short, were presented on given topics.

Geography is the subject best taught throughout the schools. The improvement in map-drawing is very marked, and some of those drawn from memory are very good.

History is very little studied except in the Fourth, Fifth, and Sixth Standards: in the two last I require it; but, where there is so much to be taught of more immediate importance, I have thought it advisable to allow history to be used as a reading-lesson only. Mr. Mill suggested that "History is one of the branches of human knowledge which had best be left to private cultivation."

The record of passes will make it appear that in some schools I have passed a larger percentage of pupils than in former years. It has been caused by the teachers abstaining from the attempt to force pupils through the standards, and thinking that because a pupil has passed one standard he must necessarily be presented the following year in the next.

I have, &c.,

The Chairman, Education Board. W. M. Crompton, Inspector.

WANGANUI.

Sir,— Wanganui, 27th February, 1883.

I have the honour to lay before you my general and detailed report on the schools examined by me for the year ended the 31st December, 1882.

At the outset I remark—(1.) That, since I last had the honour of addressing you in a general and detailed report, the geographical limits of my district have been somewhat extended. I have had assigned to me the new County of Hawera. My circuit now extends from the River Waikanae on the south to the top of Mount Egmont on the north, and includes the Counties of Manawatu, Rangitikei, Wanganui, Patea, and Hawera. The bi-annual inspection of such a wide district involves much fatigue, anxiety, and expense, attendant upon incessant travel on horseback, as comparatively little use can be made of the railway. In the course of the year I have travelled upwards of 2,600 miles on official duty. To visit the two schools at the extremities of my district, in compliance with the Education Act, I have to travel 744 miles. (2.) That, in addition to official work connected with the annual examination of teachers, pupil-teachers, scholarships examination, and heavy office work, I managed to make "surprise visits" to all the schools under inspection. I regret that these visits, from their educational importance, are not more frequent and more prolonged. (3.) That between the 24th August and the 21st December the examinations in all the schools were completed (without hitch), except Taonui, Sandridge, and Oroua Bridge. The two former were closed at the time of my visits, and the latter newly started. (4.) That the examination-schedules were issued, and notification of my visit to each school made, from fourteen days to four months in advance; that the hour named in my circular for beginning the examination was in every case punctually kept; that all inordinate haste was avoided in conducting the examinations; that the unoccupied classes were dismissed—weather permitting—to the playground, so as to give every advantage to those under examination; that in the great majority of cases the usual midday recess was allowed; that, except under very peculiar circumstances, the children were not detained till a late hour in the afternoon; that considerateness and fairness were shown to all parties; that the teachers read out the whole of the dictation; and that friction throughout the examination was only once experienced. (5.) That the irregularity of attendance during the year has been fatal to high results. In consequence, neither the number nor the

quality of the passes, as a whole, is satisfactory. I would urge upon all concerned to co-operate in diminishing daily irregularity. If all parties interested would exercise the power with which they are invested, the strict working average would be greatly enhanced. In future I shall take little account of irregularity of attendance, especially in centres of population, as an adverse circumstance in determining the results of school-work. Self-interest should quicken the sense of duty in Committees and teachers. (6.) That I have great pleasure in noting increased attention to manners. In my district the expressions, "Good morning to you, Sir," "Thank you," "If you please," "I beg your pardon," are in daily use. Touching or lifting the cap is now the usual form of courtesy. (7.) That I am happy to report that the cultivation of taste in the scholars forms now an important part of their education. The influence the teacher has in this matter is great, though there is no direct teaching. Nothing distinguishes one school from another more than its æsthetic aspect. On the occasions of my visits I am struck with the air of cleanness, neatness, arrangement, order, and cheerfulness that pervades the rooms of our really good schools. On examination days festoons of flowers, mingled with leaves, hang prettily on the walls, while ferns adorn the angles and doorway. Bouquets adorn the teacher's table, and others are on the mantelpiece. Mottoes of welcome are in the ascendent. The scholars themselves are clean in hands, faces, and dress, and reflect the tidy and cheerful look of their teacher. Their attitudes, too, in their seats, or on the floor, are erect and active. Even the books and slates are handled with grace and ease. (8.) That in my report of last year I stated that the examinations in Standards I., II., and III. were conducted for the most part orally, and those in Standards IV., V., and VI. by means of written papers, which I received, carried home, and revised after school hours. The number of written leaves of foolscap given in was 7,524, and, as far as it was practicable to do so, I continued the practice adopted last year of carrying the appraised papers to the several schools, in order that the scholors might see the principal errors in their work, and also to give the teachers an opportunity of seeing them. (9.) That collecting, and coping with the numerous considerations that go to determine the exact worth of each scholar's work in detail, and of the school as a whole, make heavy demands upon me in addition to revising such batches of papers as have been worked and handed in this year. (10.) That in accordance with the Order in Council of the 24th September, 1878, subsection 3, I furnished the Chairman of the School Committee with the duplicate schedules containing the names of those children who had risen to a pass in their several standards, so that standard certificates might be issued without unnecessary delay. I regret to have to report that the order, in several instances, has not been given effect to. In future I shall report the schools that do not comply with the injunction of the order.

Schools and Staff.—The number of Board schools in my district is 61. These are officered by 49 certificated teachers (38 male and 11 female); 32 uncertificated teachers (14 male and 18 female); 33 pupil-teachers (10 male and 23 female); and 14 unpaid cadets: total, 128.

Teachers.—I recognize with pleasure the ability and success with which the teachers as a rule discharge their duties, and the standard of efficiency the schools have reached under their management. If education is to continue to advance in my district, cordial relations must exist between the teachers, Committee, and Inspector. I have endeavoured in every legitimate way to secure this essential harmony, and my greatest pleasure is to feel that I have the ungrudging support of the School Committees and the teachers. I further recognize that my task is difficult and delicate, often apparently invidious, and occasionally painful. The physical difficulties of inspection are great; the professional difficulties are not less trying; and, were it not for the cordial co-operation accorded me by all parties, my function would be a very unpleasant one. For the generous confidence shown me by the School Committees and the teachers I tender them my warmest thanks.

Pupil-teachers.—The pupil-teachers form a most important part of our school economy. From their ranks our future teachers will for the most part be drawn. If they are well trained and well taught our schools will be placed under intelligent and skilful masters and mistresses. During the year six pupil-teachers (four male and two female) have completed their term of service with credit to themselves and the Board. The four male teachers have been appointed to schools, and, I am happy to say, are doing good work. One of them (Mr. D. Strachan) has been promoted to be fourth master in the Wanganui High School. The two female teachers have also received important appointments. Miss Isabella Blair has been elected assistant mistress in the Palmerston North School, and Miss Sarah Paterson to be assistant mistress in the Wanganui Infant School. They are discharging their duties with much ability and success.

Attainments of Pupil-teachers.—I shall briefly remark on the work of the thirty-eight pupil-teachers examined in June, 1882. Wanganui was the centre. The revision of the batches of written papers given in forms no inconsiderable part of your Inspector's duty.—(1.) *Candidates for Pupil-teacherships:* These showed weakness in the majority of subjects taken up. Throughout their papers indefiniteness prevailed. This defect obtained especially in answering elementary questions in grammar, history, and geography.—(2.) *Candidates for the First Year:* I was well satisfied on the whole with the papers worked. These gave evidence of ability, thoughtfulness, and careful execution. The answers, however, to questions in school management and geography were not satisfactorily made. The defect that was common was ignorance of elementary facts connected with these subjects. This ignorance, unless remedied, will be a serious evil in subsequent years.—(3.) *Candidates for the Second Year:* Judging from the papers given in, I observed, on the whole, decided improvement, and in by far the majority of cases the subjects prescribed by the syllabus have been read with creditable fidelity. Most of the questions set (as in all the classes) were so worded that a satisfactory answer could not be given without some exercise of thought and knowledge. But marks generally were lost, not on account of the framing of the questions, or from want of preparation on the part of the pupil-teacher, but from sheer carelessness and want of thought in simple matters of detail.—(4.) *Candidates for the Third Year:* The answers to questions in history, geography, and mental arithmetic were meagre, and, judging from many of the answers given, little systematic instruction would seem to have been imparted in these subjects. The loss of marks was generally due more to looseness of answer than to ignorance of the subject. The algebra paper given in was well done, and that in Euclid was also of fair merit.—(5.) *Candidates for the Fourth Year:* In appraising their papers the first thing that struck me was the

great superiority of these as compared with those worked by the candidates of the previous years. The majority of the candidates have acquitted themselves with credit, and a considerable number of them have passed an excellent examination. The tuition in domestic economy, the laws of health, and animal physiology has been well imparted. But the papers worked in algebra disclosed inaccuracies in the knowledge of algebraical rules, and want of care in answering simple questions. No real apprehension of the first principles of algebra was apparent, and all future attempts to gain knowledge of the more advanced portions will consequently be fruitless. The general standard of the papers in Euclid was not of average merit. Only one paper bore signs of facility in working out a proposition.

Teaching.—The teaching power of the candidates was quite satisfactory, and above the average of former years. Some rise considerably above the average, while others fall somewhat below it. Still the general aptitude to teach is very encouraging, and gives earnest of good things for the future.

Needlework.—Mrs. A. A. Browne, the examiner, reports: "I have great pleasure in testifying to the neatness of most of the specimens of plain needlework which I examined. The darning was not so good. In the majority of cases the darns were not extended far enough from the holes, the cotton was drawn too tightly, and no attention had been paid to the threads of the material."

Music.—Mr. R. W. Pownall, the examiner, reports: "As a whole the result of the examination was exceedingly satisfactory. I should like, however, to suggest the use of Taylor's or the Oxford Manual of Music, for the use of pupil-teachers, as being concise and free from confusing technicalities. And I shall be glad to explain the theory to the pupil-teachers of the district, if they can at any time be got together."

Presentation for a Formal Pass.—In this matter of presentation I have in all instances carried out your Board's resolution bearing upon it. All children who had made 250 attendances were presented for examination in the standards. The examination schedules were made out as usual, containing the names of all that were presented for a formal pass. Exception schedules were filled in with the names of those children not eligible for presentation. The exceptions were—(1) Infants who had not been two years at school; (2) children who had been a long time absent from illness or other causes; and (3) children ineligible for presentation on account of physical or mental weakness. The schedules were certified by the Chairman of the School Committee, and delivered to me on the day of examination.

Statistics of Individual Examination.—To continue the practice adopted in former reports, I have drawn out the subjoined tables,* which embrace the following particulars: (1) The number of children on the roll in each school and in each county on the days of examination; (2) the number of children present on the days of examination; (3) the number of infants who had been less than two years at school; (4) the number of children who had been a long time absent from illness or other causes; (5) the number of children ineligible for presentation owing to physical or mental weakness; (6) the total exceptions; (7) the number of scholars examined for a formal pass; (8) the number of children presented in the several standards; (9) the number that rose to a pass; (10) the number that failed to rise; (11) the percentage of the total number presented for a pass; (12) the number of scholars that rose from a lower to a higher standard in the course of the year; (13) the number that passed in reading, spelling and dictation, writing, arithmetic, grammar, geography, history, and sewing; (14) the average age of the children in the several standards; (15) the strict working average for the past year; and (16) the total number of children individually examined.

The exact number of schools under inspection in the five counties is 61, and the staff employed in these schools—Certificated teachers, 49; uncertificated teachers, 32; pupil-teachers, 33; unpaid cadets, 14: total, 128. On the days of examination the roll number was 2,558 boys and 2,366 girls: total, 4,924. The gross number present was 2,200 boys and 1,972 girls: total, 4,172. The number of infants who had been less than two years at school was 793 boys and 702 girls: total, 1,495. The number of children who had been a long time absent from illness or other causes was 204 boys and 301 girls: total, 505. The number of children ineligible for presentation on account of physical or mental weakness was 20 boys and 10 girls: total, 30. The total number of allowances was 2,030. The number of children presented for a formal pass was 2,640. Of these scholars, 702 were presented in Standard I., 643 in II., 611 in III., 425 in IV., 196 in V., 63 in VI. Of these, 569 rose to a pass in Standard I., 513 in II., 366 in III., 288 in IV., 136 in V., 49 in VI.: total, 1,921. And there failed to rise in Standard I., 133; in II., 130; in III., 245; in IV., 139; in V., 60; in VI., 14: total, 719. The percentage of passes on the total number examined for a formal pass was 76·8. The number that rose from a lower to a higher standard in the course of the year was 630 boys and 685 girls: total, 1,315. There passed in reading 2,479, in spelling and dictation 2,111, in writing 2,478, in arithmetic 1,912, in grammar 979, in geography 1,219, in history 857, and in sewing 863. The total number of passes in these subjects was 12,898. The average age of the scholars presented for a formal pass in Standard I. was 8·4 years; in II., 9·7 years; in III., 11 years; in IV., 12·5 years; in V., 13·6 years; in VI., 14·5 years. The strict working average for the past year was 1,893 boys and 1,731 girls: total, 3,624. The total number of scholars individually examined was 4,172.

The number of certificated teachers has increased from 40 to 49 (or 22·5 per cent.); the number of scholars on the registers from 4,462 to 4,924 (or 10·3 per cent.); those present at inspection, from 3,918 to 4,172 (or 6·4 per cent.); the strict working average, from 3,386 to 3,624 (or 7 per cent.); those presented for a pass, from 2,376 to 2,640 (or 11·1 per cent.); those who passed fell from 1,926 to 1,925 (or ·2 per cent.); those who failed have risen from 450 to 719 (or 57·5 per cent.); those who rose from a lower to a higher standard, from 1,315 to 1,315 (or equal to last year); while the whole number of children individually examined has increased from 3,820 to 4,172 (or 9·2 per cent.).

Remarks on the Fourth Standard and those above it.—*Fourth:* The number of candidates has increased this year to from 306 to 425 (or 38·8 per cent.). Unfortunately this large increase is caused by children being put up for examination in schools where many of them stood on the border line between failure and success when examined the previous year for a pass in the Third Standard. Had it not been for the influx of these incapables, and other unfortunate circumstances

* Not reprinted.

(well known to your Board), the results would compare favourably with those of the previous year. I regret, in consequence, to have to report that the proportionate number of successes has fallen from 76 to 67 per cent. The proportion of failures to successes is much too large, and it appears to me to be needful to specially report that in future I shall increase the difficulty of the requirements necessary to secure a pass in Standard III. It is satisfactory, however, to note that in our efficient schools those who succeeded in getting a pass have done so with credit, and of those who failed to pass a considerable number failed by only a few marks.—*Fifth:* As compared with the previous year, the number of candidates has increased from 94 to 196 (or 108 per cent.), and the number of passes from 85 to 136 (or 60 per cent.). The number of successes is quite satisfactory, but the quality is not what it should be. It must improve. Judging from the written papers, some of the children are well taught, though many of them are ill taught, and, in consequence, I find stupid errors running through the papers of a whole school. The fault, obviously, rests with the teacher, or possibly with some text-book used by the children. Rote learning is very evident.—*Sixth:* The number of those presented has risen from 31 to 63 (or 103 per cent.), and the successes from 28 to 49 (or 77 per cent.). The quality and number of the successes are altogether satisfactory. I have pleasure in noting that there is a marked improvement in the directness and straightforwardness of the answering, though there is still room for further advance. More intelligent oral teaching, instead of mere "book drill," will secure definiteness in the answers.

Remarks on the Third Standard and those below it.—*Third:* I cannot express anything like satisfaction with the results of this standard. So great, indeed, is the deficiency of passes that it seems to me impossible to escape the conviction that either the demands are too numerous and heavy, or that the teaching is bad. The results in arithmetic are poor. The absence of intelligent method in dealing with it is very apparent. An extra cypher or two in a multiplier or a dividend is enough to vitiate a child's working beyond the hope of securing a pass. The lessons in arithmetical notation are deficient in systematic arrangement and clearness. I cannot speak favourably of the scholars' ability to solve the simplest arithmetical problem. The results in geography are of a very unsatisfactory character. There are more failures in this subject than in any other, though this might not be expected. My conviction is that the fault lies more in the teaching than in the subject itself. When geography is efficiently taught the scholars acquire habits of accurate observation and definite statement, which will be handy for the intelligent conduct of life. If vivifying methods of teaching the subject were followed, I would have great faith in the possibility of better results being obtained, and greater hopes of substantial progress being made.—*Second:* I cannot speak in terms of satisfaction of the results in this standard. The number and quality of the passes in it as a whole are not satisfactory. This is due in great measure, I have no doubt, to faultiness in the teaching of geography. Beyond the rote repetition of the definitions little is known of the subject. But if I have to accuse myself of anything, it is of leniency with respect to the geography in this standard.—*First:* On the composition of this standard depends in large measure future success. It is not conducive to good schoolkeeping to place scholars in it that are not well up in its subjects. Too early presentation must be resisted, for when it is made difficulties of no slight kind will be experienced in getting up the work necessary to secure a pass in the Second; and when the Third is reached the work becomes intolerable. In future no scholar will be allowed to pass that may fail in any subject prescribed for this standard.

Discipline.—I observe with great pleasure that the well-trained children of our best schools are distinguished by habits of orderliness, punctuality, and obedience. There is scarcely such a thing as the tardily obeyed command or the sullen countenance. The finer sensibilities of the children are not now torn to pieces by calling them "dunces" and "blockheads."

I have, &c.,
R. Foulis, F.E.I.S.,
Inspector of Schools.

The Chairman, Education Board.

WELLINGTON.

Sir,— Wellington, 31st March, 1883.

I beg to present my ninth annual report on the work of the primary schools in the Wellington Education District. In the early part of the year I inspected all schools in operation, with the exception of the small schools at Kaitoke and Tenui; and, in the latter part of the year, all the schools—fifty in number—were examined in the work of the standards.

Standard Passes.—Since the introduction of the standard system the effective work of schools has been everywhere measured by the number of passes or failures in the standards; and, in most districts, the practice has grown up of determining the issue of an examination by the percentage of passes made on the number of children presented—that is to say, broadly speaking, on the number taught. But, although examination by standards has been in force for nine years in the district, the successful work of a particular school has not been, at any time, wholly gauged by such a percentage, nor have the passes been considered of equal value. It constantly happens that there is a wide difference of value between the highest and lowest passes in the same class of a school, and the number of strong candidates in one school often far exceeds that in another, irrespective of numbers attending. Also the quality and neatness of work in one school may be in advance of those of another, which may have produced approximate percentage results. An examiner, having determined what is the minimum of work required to constitute a pass, will evenly apply the test to all schools; and he must also accept the minimum degree of the quality of the work. It is then contended that a percentage of actual passes, struck on the number of expected passes, will fairly indicate how far the teacher has overtaken his work in obtaining a minimum result; for it must constantly be borne in mind, in this estimate of results, that a standard pass is not all that an examiner looks for.

But a difficulty arises in determining the number of expected passes. It should include all in the classes who are over eight years of age. But, as many children attend badly, others are deficient in mental ability, and some may be absent from examination on account of illness, it would evidently be

unreasonable to expect every child to pass. It probably will be necessary, as the education of the colony advances, to define an expected pass more exactly. In my late examinations I did not expect any candidates to pass who came under any of the following disabilities: (*a*) Under seven and a half years of age; (*b*) attended less than 250 half-days; (*c*) absent from examination with sufficient reason; (*d*) more than one full year under the age for the standard in which he was presented (assuming eight as the age for Standard I.); (*e*) evidently of weak intellect. I should state that I have not refused to examine any candidates presented; but if, on examination, candidates failed who came under any one of the above conditions of exemption, their names were erased from the schedules. On the other hand, I added the names of any children over eight years of age who, having made 250 attendances, had not been entered for Standard I. It will thus be understood that, whereas there are 4,230 children on the books over eight years of age, the number of expected passes was only 3,511. But I do not think it is at all satisfactory to find so many as 719 children of standard age unpresentable.

Examination Results.—The number now on the books is 6,602, showing the increase of 333 on last year's return. Owing to the prevalence of measles the number present at examination did not so nearly approach the total number on the books as it has done in past years. The number passed in standards this year is 2,864, or 81·6 per cent. of the 3,511 expected passes. Last year 2,772 passed; but I cannot compare the percentage of results this year with that of last year, because the percentage of this year is struck on reduced numbers. I look upon the presentment (3,511) as a weak one, and for this the parents are responsible; but the percentage of results, representing the teachers' responsibilities, is fairly satisfactory. At the same time there is much weakness here and there; and, with more efficient teaching and management, a much higher quality of work is attainable. The appendix to this report will give the particular numerical results of each school in each standard; and the general condition of the schools will be also briefly described under the following classification of them—a classification necessary for purposes of comparison.

City Schools.—Of the six Wellington City graded schools, excluding infant schools, the Thorndon, Terrace, and Newtown Schools made a fair presentment of the children over eight years of age; but 94 boys and 87 girls in the Mount Cook Schools, and 147 children in the Te Aro School, were unpresentable, chiefly on account of bad attendance. A serious outbreak of measles reduced the attendance in several of the city schools, but I do not think it increased the number of these bad cases of irregular attendance, which display a state of things calling for some action on the part of the Board and the School Committees. The examination results, as determined by standard passes, were good in the Thorndon, Te Aro, Newtown, and Terrace Schools, moderately good in the Mount Cook Girls' School, and, on the whole, weak in the Mount Cook Boys' School. The percentages of passes varied from 90 in the Thorndon to 67 in the Mount Cook Boys' School. The classes which showed the highest quality of work were the first four standards at Thorndon, Standards III. and V. at Te Aro, and Standard VI. boys at Mount Cook. The Thorndon School shows improved teaching in nearly all classes. The Te Aro School scarcely maintains the high standard of last year; but the work is generally sound. The Terrace School suffers much from being unnecessarily crowded, and from noisy discipline; and the work of Standard III. was weak in arithmetic, geography, and history. The Mount Cook Boys' School is unfortunate in retaining the services of teachers previously reported by me as being of poor teaching ability. The Mount Cook Girls' School is by no means so well managed as it was two or three years ago, its organization being defective, and the teaching-power distributed with poor judgment. The Newtown School is distinguished by good discipline, good numerical results, and fair all-round work. In the Thorndon School the headmaster gives thorough instruction in physical science and singing. The first assistant in the Terrace School is a skilful teacher of freehand drawing. Sewing is taught in all the schools in the city where girls attend; but the instruction given in the Thorndon School by the Normal Mistress, and in the Mount Cook Girls' School, is superior to that given in the others. The surrounding circumstances, which may be taken into account in an estimate of expected results in the city schools, tell most in favour of the Terrace School, and least in favour of the Mount Cook Boys'. The situation of the Terrace School, in the narrows of the city, remote from the poorer dwellings, attracts children from other districts. More pupils have been admitted than there are places for; and this has led to increased difficulties in the management. Taking the whole city into consideration, the overcrowding of the school was unnecessary, there being at the time empty classrooms in adjacent schools. The three infant schools are all under skilful management; and the interest of the teachers in their work is well sustained. The classes prepared for Standard I. came up strong in all sections of their work, and all passed as well as any First Standard candidates in the district. It is noticeable that a large number of children are returned as being over eight years of age in the Te Aro Infant School. As I now examine standard classes in these three infant schools twice a year, it is advisable that all children over eight years of age be drafted out after each half-yearly examination.

District Town Schools.—Of seven schools, which come under the second classification, Featherston made the best presentment, 104 children qualifying for examination out of 108 on the books of standard age. Masterton, which has attained the size and importance of a large city school, this year produced the best percentage of passes made in this class of schools—90 per cent. The percentage results are also high at Clareville, Featherston, and Carterton. The standard passes at Greytown and the Lower Hutt fall much below the average, the work at Greytown being weak in all standards except the Second and Fourth, and that at the Lower Hutt in all except the First and Second. At Greytown the work of the Third Standard was almost a complete failure. In the upper classes of these two schools, taught by the headmasters, the results both in quantity and quality were far from good. The passes made at the Taita School were hardly so good as in previous years. The best taught classes brought up for examination in these schools were the first four standards at Masterton, Standards I. and VI. at Featherston, Standard IV. at Greytown, and Standards V. and VI. at Carterton. I must especially commend the Third Standard class at Masterton. Sewing is only fairly taught throughout these schools; and the instruction in drawing, though common to all, is by no means good. An effort is being put forth in most of them to teach, by means of experiments, the elements of physics; and they have lately obtained small sets of apparatus for the purpose. For general accuracy

and neatness of work, well ordered rooms, and careful supervision of the children, the Masterton and Carterton Schools are deserving of much commendation.

Country Schools.—Karori, Wadestown, Ohariu, Tawa, Judgeford, Kaiwaiwai, Park Vale, and Eketahuna Schools continue to do good service, and are, more or less, in a satisfactory condition. Great improvement in the work, and in the number of standard passes, was shown at Kaiwara; and a marked improvement at Matarawa, Kaitara, Mauriceville, Upper Hutt, and Makara; also the new school at Petone gives fair promise of satisfactory work. Although the instruction given at Johnsonville is good in higher standard work, and fairly good in all standards, and that given at Gladstone is moderately satisfactory, the condition of these schools is much to be deplored; only 22 children being presented for standard examination out of 76 on the books at Johnsonville, and 17 out of 44 at Gladstone. No passes were made in the higher standards at Tenui, and the result of the examination can only be looked upon as moderately satisfactory. A high classification for a country school is now reached at Opaki; and, considering the fact that all the children examined were presented in the higher standards, the results are good. Two schools, Fernridge and Waihenga, which for several years past have produced good work, show a falling-off this year. As the teachers are competent, and I believe industrious, it appears, at first sight, difficult to account for this, and such cases are certainly exceptional; but I think it arises in the former school from underestimating the work required, and in the latter partly from a preponderance of children of less than average ability, and partly from the continued ill health of the teacher. The work in both schools was not bad in method, and the written work of the Waihenga School was very neat, but the pupils had not sufficiently covered and traversed the ground. I observe, however, that there is some danger of successful teachers becoming overconfident of continued success, not only in country schools, but in one or two of the larger schools; and I will take this opportunity of reminding such teachers that no amount of experience or knowledge will avail in producing a return of good and improving work year by year without the exercise of patient industry, combined with a careful study of the methods to be used, in order to meet the advancing requirements of the times. The weakest of the country schools are those at Porirua, Pahautahanui, and Maungaroa, in all of which much better work should be looked for. For quality of work the Karori, Kaiwara, Tawa, and Opaki Schools take the lead. Needlework is not taught in the following schools: Karori, Makara, Kaitara, Matarawa, Fernridge, Mauriceville, and Eketahuna; and I beg to recommend the Board to assist each of these schools in obtaining a sewing-mistress.

Rural Schools.—Owing chiefly to the accidental removal of families to other parts of the country, small schools fluctuate, from year to year, in the numbers attending. I am sorry to note that four of the rural schools are reduced to very low numbers from this cause. Only one or two of them call for any special report, the others having produced at least fair results, considering their circumstances. The Waingawa School has been in a reduced condition for several years, and the few children who should have been present for examination were mostly kept away by a heavy rainfall. The Kaitoke and Tauherenikau Schools were the least satisfactory.

Third and Fourth Standard Work.—The greatest number of failures occurred in Standards III. and IV.; yet in the Thorndon School 81 children passed Standard III. out of 85 presented, and they were strong candidates in all the subjects. In the same school 55 passed Standard IV. out of 60 candidates. Again, in the Masterton School 54 passed Standard III. out of 55 presented, doing excellent work in all subjects; and in the Greytown School 20 passed Standard IV. out of 23 presented. Cases might be multiplied in country schools where these standards are carefully taught by the head-teacher. In point of fact, these standards are very well passed in many country schools. In the cases cited above the classes were under skilful and painstaking teachers. And it may be fairly said that, in schools in which a break-down occurred in one or both of these standards, the classes were not under thoroughly efficient teachers; and the head-teachers must generally be held responsible for the failures, because they were not mindful of the fact that these standards represent the heart of the school, both in strength and vitality, and that some of the best teaching power must be brought to bear upon them, and certainly a full share of the head-teachers' supervision and assistance. Standards III. and IV. will always be the most difficult to pass, for many reasons, the principal being the increased number of subjects requiring thought on the part of the pupils, and aptness and intelligence on the part of the teacher. It is in these standards that the first principles of grammar, the first broad ideas of geography and history, and the first exercise of thought and its expression in sentence, are taught; and in this work the skill of the best teacher is most tried. In the first two standards the memory and perception of a child are the chief faculties called into play; but in the Third and Fourth Standards the intelligence is awakened and the reflective powers exercised.

Teacher and Parent.—There are disturbing or strengthening influences affecting school life other than those directly affecting the school work. Apart from the question of scholastic qualification, one teacher succeeds where another fails. It is sometimes accepted as an educational maxim that a good teacher can overcome all difficulties. Certainly a teacher who succeeds in winning the respect of the community amongst whom he labours exercises an outside influence strongly in favour of his school; whilst the teacher who seldom approaches those around him meets with many outside difficulties. In travelling from one district into another, the contrast which two adjacent districts present with regard to the interest taken in school matters is quite surprising. In one the interest shows itself in the regularity and punctuality of the attendance, in the energy of the School Committee, in the up-keep of the school, in the importance attached to the examinations, in the tidiness of the children, in their manners and brightness, and in a hundred little ways which an observant eye can readily detect; whilst in the other the want of general interest is conspicuous by the absence, more or less, of nearly all these good signs. In relation to a child, the teacher is the *alter ego* of the parent, and a good understanding should exist between them. Also the teacher, in order to understand and make due allowances for differences of circumstances, character, temperament, energy, and intelligence, must make himself acquainted with the homes of his pupils; for, by so doing, he will not only be guided in his work, but he will, from time to time, remove any misunderstandings which may arise in the minds of parents from the *ex parte* statements about school life brought home by the pupils. There should

also be a law of mutual attraction in this matter; and the parent should gravitate towards the teacher as much as the teacher towards the parent.

Class Reading-books.—The schools are by no means as well provided with class reading-books as I could wish. I do not mean to convey the impression that any of the schools are without class readers; but it is not sufficient that a child should be provided with only one book for the year. In England it is an instruction from the Education Department that "all standards must have one ordinary reading-book; and, in addition to this, in all standards above the Second there must be a historical reading-book; and, lastly, the geographical or scientific text-book will count as the third reading-book." I think it most desirable that the same amount and description of reading matter should be afforded the children in this district; and I recommend to the notice of the Board the necessity of insisting upon the use of at least a historical reading-book in addition to the ordinary reader. I also recommend local Committees to furnish a third reading-book for each class in a school, the books remaining the property of the school. Such a set of books would not involve a large outlay; they would last at least three years; and, as children too often tear, spoil, or lose their own books, it is advantageous for a teacher to have a fresh and complete set handy for use at any time. As the newly-published historical and geographical reading-books are interesting, graphic, and instructive, they are therefore great aids to learning. Again, the English code directs that "Robinson Crusoe," or any other such inexpensive work, may be used as a class reader; and with this I cordially agree, having used "Robinson Crusoe"—a book almost unsurpassed for the purity of its English—as a class reader many years ago. Such connected reading is, in my opinion, of far greater value than the scrappy paragraphs which some prefer to make use of. I am sorry to find teachers complain of the difficulty in obtaining supplies of books—and sometimes books are supplied to the pupils at an exorbitant price. A local storekeeper in the Wairarapa charged 1s. 6d. each for books costing 4d.

The Teacher and his Work.—After reviewing the results of the year, I am of opinion that much good and conscientious work continues to be done. The instruction in grammar and composition is improving, but they are still the weakest subjects. On the whole, I was much pleased with the neatness and order of the answers on paper, and the good results from the earlier use of the pen. I am persuaded, from close observation of the teacher and his class-work, that nearly all bad results arise from positively bad teaching; also, I think, there are a few teachers who have earned good reports in past years, but who are not sufficiently improving. In the work of the four higher standards the candidates in many schools scarcely touched the questions in grammar and geography requiring thought and observation; and in arithmetic the problems or sense questions, in nearly all standards, were often unattempted. These are matters to which attention has been again and again directed, but the unimproving teacher looks too much about him for excuses for neglect in taking up this work, and, when failure arises, really in consequence of weak or defective teaching, it is anybody's fault but his own—most likely the Inspector's for putting questions of the kind. I also still notice that the head-masters of large schools too frequently allow their time to be frittered away by the petty details of management. The entrance of a stranger into such schools practically leads to a stoppage of the work. Each teacher apparently assumes that the visitor has come to see him on personal matters, and not to see his method of imparting instruction. The head-teacher not unfrequently leaves his own work, and distracts the attention of the visitor by taking him off, probably against his will, to see a map made by a prodigy of a pupil, or for some such trivial matter; and the visitor finally leaves without having seen the intelligence of a class awakened. The greatest courtesy any teacher can pay a visitor is to offer him a seat, and to go on with his own work without ostentation.

Payment by Results.—In order to reduce to a minimum the defects in class teaching already pointed out, special inducements should be held out to good teachers for thoroughness of work done. At present no difference is made between the hardworking, skilful, and successful teacher and the less energetic routine working man, except so far as the attendance is affected; and there is nothing, beyond the chance of promotion, to stimulate a teacher to put forth all his energies and devote himself to his work. I am aware that a sense of duty is a powerful monitor in the breasts of many; but I think the successful teacher should be rewarded for his diligence, and the unsuccessful suffer for his indolence. If the scale of salaries were revised, and about 10 per cent. of the salary paid as a merit grant, partly for percentage of passes made and partly for thoroughness of work, I feel confident a great improvement would take place in examination results. The Board already admit the principle of payment in accordance with the amount of work as determined by the numbers taught; I simply recommend that payment be also made in relation to the value of the instruction imparted.

Standard VII.—One hundred and thirty-six children having passed in Standard VI., it may fairly be assumed that many of them, especially the youngest, would remain another year at school to do advanced work. I know of children who had been ordered to leave school because they had passed the highest standard. This, I think, cannot and should not be insisted on. The time has come when, as in England, a seventh standard should be added. Perhaps the Education Department will move in the matter. In the meantime, if instructed by the Board, I will draw up a temporary syllabus, and next year examine candidates for Standard VII.

Drawing.—A system of payment by results would also enable the Board to make grants to such schools as efficiently teach one or more of the class subjects outside the standards. For the want of some such system the teaching of class subjects—drawing, singing, needlework, drill, and elementary science—languishes. Of these subjects free-hand drawing is most widely taught, but the instruction is not often given intelligently, although the work of a teacher is much simplified by the excellent books now published for use in State schools, at twopence each. The mere inspection of drawing-books, like the mere inspection of prepared needlework, is often delusive, because the examiner does not know how much of the work has been done by the teacher, or what amount of assistance the pupil has received. I therefore purpose, with the sanction of the Board, arranging for a special annual examination in drawing, to take place on a fixed day in all schools in which drawing is taught. The results will be announced as passes in Grade I. or Grade II., freehand outline work; and lists can be published of successful candidates, with the names of the schools in which they were taught.

Suggestions to School Committees.—I should like to make, through the Board, a few suggestions to School Committees, which may be useful; and I feel sure they will be accepted in a kindly spirit:—*Reading-books:* I have already suggested the purchase by the Committee of a set of class reading-books; and I particularly recommend the use of Nelson's Historical Reading-books.—*Libraries and Museums:* Every school should have a library containing a selection of readable and instructive books, a standard dictionary, a large atlas, a standard history of England, and an encyclopædia. In addition to this, each good school should have a small museum of simple objects.—*Upkeep:* In large schools the walls and rafters should be swept clear of dust at least twice a year; and the windows should be cleaned oftener than they usually are. In infant departments a more frequent renewal of diagrams and objects should be made.—*Playgrounds:* The playgrounds should be sufficiently large; and very few of them are planted at the sides or in the corners. Unless this is well done, and the young trees protected and attended to during the first two or three years of their growth, the trouble of planting will be thrown away.—*Prizes:* Whilst Committees are very kind in providing pleasant excursions and festivities for the children, they are, as a rule, much too indulgent in the matter of prize-giving. I do not altogether approve of giving prizes in primary schools, and I certainly cannot advise that it should be done unless the prizes are few and well earned. I have known several instances in which prizes have been given to every child in a school, and other cases in which prizes were given to children who failed at the standard examination. I recommend that much of the money available for prizes should in future be devoted to the school library.—*Sewing:* I recommend the Board to ask each School Committee to invite two or more ladies in each district to report to the Committee on the quality of the needlework. This should be done a week or two before the standard examination. The ladies should be requested not merely to inspect the prepared work of each class, but also to give out a small piece of work to be done in their presence. The Committee would then be good enough to report to the Inspector.

Normal School.—At my visit to the Normal School on the 25th October there were present eight out of ten students in training for Class D certificates, and all the eleven in training for Class E. There were also in attendance ten out of eleven private students entered for the term. I inspected the class work done on paper during the year, and heard two or three model lessons given on subjects named by me an hour or two before. Knowing that one of the true tests of a good teacher is an ability to do thoroughly well that which he has to teach, I submitted to all students in training for certificates a set of the arithmetic and grammar papers given to candidates for Standard VI. The highest marks obtained by any of the nineteen students were 94 per cent. in arithmetic and 85 in grammar. In arithmetic four students obtained 80 per cent. or more, and four others obtained 50 per cent. or more; and in grammar two obtained 80 per cent. or more, and fifteen others 50 per cent. or more. I have often observed in unsuccessful teachers that which is here apparent in inexperienced teachers: that is to say, they have not thoroughly mastered the elementary work which they are required to teach. I further examined *vivâ voce*, and with the aid of the blackboard, the few candidates for Class D who had taken up algebra and Euclid. Taking the school as a whole, I was as favourably impressed with the management this year as I was last; and the results of the certificate examinations have been very satisfactory. Since the opening of the Girls' High School the private-student element has withdrawn. This is not to be regretted, inasmuch as few of the private students were equal to Standard V. work; and the class was a drag upon the legitimate work of the Normal Department.

Conclusion.—I think very great laxity is shown in several of the schools, and more particularly in one or two of those in the City of Wellington, in attention to the cleanly and orderly appearance of the class-rooms and premises, to the complete furnishing of the rooms, and to the conduct and manners of children in the playgrounds. I would also recommend teachers to give their best attention to the study of individual character, to the judicious and careful giving-out of home lessons, reasonable in quantity and suitable in kind, and, above all, to the training of the learner to exercise thought and observation, as well as memory.

I have, &c.,

Robert Lee,

Inspector of Schools.

The Chairman, Education Board.

TABLE OF RESULTS.

Wellington City Schools.

School.	On Books.	Present at Examination.	Over 8 Years of Age.	Presented in Standards.	Passed.	Percentage passed.	Numbers presented and passed in each Standard. —	I.	II.	III.	IV.	V.	VI.
Thorndon ...	380	358	378	338	305	90	Presented	39	87	85	60	47	20
							Passed	39	85	81	55	33	12
Te Aro ...	514	489	512	375	317	85	Presented	46	86	107	81	38	17
							Passed	45	73	92	59	36	12
Terrace ...	294	276	244	223	182	82	Presented	28	41	44	42	37	31
							Passed	28	39	23	38	32	22
Mt. Cook Boys'	391	368	382	288	192	67	Presented	41	66	73	48	32	28
							Passed	29	52	42	38	10	21
Mt. Cook Girls'	366	355	354	267	208	78	Presented	38	66	73	48	25	17
							Passed	35	63	42	43	17	8
Newtown ...	374	346	185	170	147	87	Presented	41	40	42	33	9	5
							Passed	40	40	32	24	6	5
Thorndon Infant	187	125	20	27	27	100	Presented	27	...	...	...	...	...
							Passed	27	...	...	...	...	...
Te Aro Infant...	453	230	63	46	46	100	Presented	46	...	...	...	...	...
							Passed	46	...	...	...	...	...
Mt. Cook Infant	554	487	25	74	74	100	Presented	74	...	...	...	...	...
							Passed	74	...	...	...	...	...
Totals ...	3,513	3,034	2,163	1,808	1,498	83	Presented	380	386	424	312	188	118
							Passed	363	352	312	257	134	80

District Town Schools (over 100 on Books).

Masterton ...	486	391	318	272	246	90	Presented	61	83	55	29	30	14
							Passed	61	83	54	21	17	10
Clareville ...	112	97	79	64	56	88	Presented	17	12	14	13	3	5
							Passed	16	12	13	10	2	3
Carterton ...	270	263	193	164	137	84	Presented	48	33	45	12	13	13
							Passed	47	32	28	9	12	9
Greytown ...	220	205	174	148	101	68	Presented	31	43	32	23	17	2
							Passed	20	42	11	20	8	...
Featherston ...	160	150	108	104	89	86	Presented	19	28	22	18	10	7
							Passed	18	26	21	11	6	7
Taita ...	106	92	63	54	40	74	Presented	12	9	12	8	7	6
							Passed	11	9	10	3	4	3
Lower Hutt ...	205	170	143	107	70	65	Presented	37	14	23	19	5	9
							Passed	32	14	12	8	1	3
Totals ...	1,559	1,368	1,078	913	739	81	Presented	225	222	203	122	85	56
							Passed	205	218	149	82	50	35

HAWKE'S BAY.

SIR,— Napier, 31st January, 1883.

I have the honour to submit for your information my general report upon the progress and condition of education in this district for the year ended the 31st December, 1882.

POPULATION.—According to the statistics of population which have recently been published by the Government, I find that, exclusive of Maoris, the population of the four counties included within the Education District of Hawke's Bay is nearly 21,000. For school purposes this population is classed into 33 school districts, in each of which there is a duly elected School Committee for the management and promotion of education.

TEACHING STAFF AND ATTENDANCE.—Thirty-six schools were in operation at the close of the year, in which were engaged 35 head-teachers, 11 assistants, and 43 pupil-teachers.

AREA AND ACCOMMODATION.—The superficial area in the schoolhouses, exclusive of those which do not belong to the Board, is about 31,000 square feet. This area is sufficient for the convenient accommodation of 3,100 children. At the close of the school year there were 3,363 children returned as actually attending school. This shows that the schools are full, and some of them overcrowded, although, as I shall have occasion to show further on, a large percentage of the children in the district have not yet been brought within the operation of the Education Act. All the school-buildings and residences which have been erected during the past four years are in fair order and repair, but I think the time has arrived when every building should be repainted and every schoolhouse distempered internally, if only to avoid unnecessary loss in the future.

School Attendance.—At the beginning of the school year 2,907 children were returned as attending school. During the year there were admitted 1,874 children, and 1,418 left, thus leaving 3,363 children as belonging to the schools in December last. Compared with the number of children returned as attending at the end of December, 1881, there is a difference of 257 pupils in favour of the past year. The average attendance shows a slight increase compared with the previous year, but the attendance at school has been very unsteady, and many of the teachers have been severely tried in preparing for the standard examination by the prolonged existence of sickness among their pupils. In the latter part of the year an improvement took place in the school attendance, but both the average attendance and the number on the school rolls are far below what they ought to be. During the year 1881 the average attendance at school throughout New Zealand amounted to 76·4 per cent. of the roll number, but for the past year the attendance in the schools of this district was only 74·7 per cent. of the roll number. Last year I took occasion to refer to the fewness of girls as compared with the boys attending the district schools, and I also pointed out the great irregularity which prevails among the girls who attend school. This inequality in school attendance of nearly three hundred between the boys and girls still continues, although, from the admirable statistics of population, to which reference has already been made, it appears that there are in the district actually more girls than boys of school age. But this is not all, nor even is it the worst phase of the school attendance question. The statistics have brought to light the fact that there is a large number of children scattered throughout the district who have not yet been brought within the beneficial operations of the Education Act. To make this clear, I have compiled a table showing, according to the census returns, the population and children of school age in each county and borough under my inspection, alongside of which I have placed the number of children who were actually attending school in December last. The following is the table*:—Population: Males, 11,755; females, 9,233: total, 20,988. Children of school age in the district: Males, 2,693; females, 2,702: total, 5,395. Children on school-roll, 31st December, 1882: Males, 1,830; females, 1,533: total, 3,363. Percentage of children attending school: 62. Number of children not attending district schools: Males, 863; females, 1,169: total, 2,032. Percentage of such: 38. From this table these somewhat remarkable results are obtained: First. That, whilst the total population of the district includes 2,522 more males than females, there are more females than males of school age. Second. That altogether there are 5,395 children of school age in the district, exclusive of Maoris. Third. That of this number only 3,363 are accounted for as attending the district schools in December last. Fourth. That 863 males, or 32 per cent., and 1,169 females, or 43 per cent. (or in all 2,032 children), of those of school age in the district do not attend any of the Board schools. I am aware that there is a goodly number of children attending the Catholic schools in Napier, kept by the Sisters and Christian Brothers, and there is also a number of small private and adventure schools scattered throughout the district; but, if 540 children, or 10 per cent. of those of school age, are considered as belonging to those schools, there still remain 1,492 children, or more than 27 per cent. of the total number, unaccounted for in this education district. With these facts before me, and knowing well what efforts have been made by some School Committees to enforce attendance at school under section 89, I am inclined to doubt the efficacy of the so-called "compulsory clause" of the Education Act; and, further, I am of the opinion that irregularity at school will continue to prevail until a purely compulsory attendance clause is introduced for children between the ages of seven and twelve years, and until the beneficial legislation of last session relating to the "employment of females and others" is made operative equally in the country district as in towns, and equally in houses as in workshops.

School Accommodation.—But, even were the conditions as to school attendance modified as here suggested, another great difficulty and educational hindrance at once presents itself. All the school-buildings in my district are full, and in some places even overcrowded, and further accommodation must be supplied before attendance can be enforced. Strange as it may appear, the right of education which has been conferred upon every child in New Zealand by the passing of the Education Act is certainly curtailed in this district, for children cannot be educated unless school accommodation is provided; and that it has not been provided for present requirements is evident from the fact that the school attendance in December was greater than the accommodation provided. But I do not see how the needful provision can possibly be made so long as the rule operates of Government voting a small building grant for the supply of schoolhouses, and then dividing the amount *pro ratâ* of the population, irrespective of the school requirements of the several education districts. In such districts as Auckland, Taranaki, Wanganui, Westland, and Canterbury, the accommodation last year was greatly in excess of the requirements, but not so in Hawke's Bay. I have stated that there are 5,395 children of school age in the district, and, after deducting 10 per cent. for those children attending other than district schools, there still remain 4,855 children for whom accommodation ought to be provided. Now, the present school accommodation, including the schoolhouses at Patutahi, Takapau, Tamumu, Mohaka, Waerengahika, and Te Ongaonga, all of which have been erected or provided at the sole expense of the people in those districts, is only sufficient for the accommodation of 3,280 children, so that there is an actual deficiency of school accommodation for 1,575 children, even when the accommodation is included in the six buildings which do not belong to the Board. This deficiency is general throughout the district, as the following table will show:—

* Totals of the entire education district only are reprinted.

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 that 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

From this table it appears that the number of children who annually pass the standard requirements is steadily increasing. In 1880 there were 1,032 children who passed the examination, in 1881 the numbers were 1,213, and for the past year 1,314. Judged by the passes alone there is evidence of progress in the schools, but it is when a comparison is made between the children who passed during the last three years in Standard IV. and upward that the progress becomes most marked. In 1880 no pupils passed in Standard VI., 25 succeeded in passing Standard V., and 93 Standard IV.; in 1881 there were 10 children who passed Standard VI., 37 Standard V., and 135 Standard IV.; but in the year just closed there were 21 passes in Standard VI., 9 of them being girls, 70 in Standard V., and 156 in Standard IV., or a total of nearly 19 per cent. of the number of children who passed in any standard during the year. When it is remembered that every boy and girl who succeeded in passing one of these standards must have obtained 60 per cent. of the marks obtainable in reading and definition, spelling and dictation, writing, arithmetic, grammar and composition, geography, and English history, the foregoing results are encouraging. I do not wish to be misunderstood: education is making progress in this district, but the credit must be divided among a comparatively small number of schools. To some of the teachers school work is too much of a mechanical routine, and the principles of teaching appear to be little understood. During my visits of inspection I paid special attention to the methods employed by teachers when giving lessons such as reading, arithmetic, geography, history, and grammar, and I can well understand why so many children fail to reach the standard requirements. The reading-lessons, even in some of the larger schools, continue to be taught (?) by head-teachers and, of course, their junior teachers in a way which a moment's consideration ought to tell them cannot be successful. The form of procedure is generally as follows: Just before the lesson begins the teacher borrows a book from one of the pupils, who is told to "look over," inquires from the class the page or lesson to be read, bids A, B, and C "go on," or "next," until, perhaps, the children have read twenty or thirty words each. Sometimes a few spelling tests are given, and then the lesson is over, finished as it was begun, without thought on the part of teacher or taught, and without the display of a single quality worthy of a teacher of young children. In one school a teacher, at my request, gave a first lesson in multiplication to Standard I. Seven figures were set down in a line on the blackboard, and underneath the unit was placed the figure 3, and the teacher thus began: "Three fours are —— ?" The answer from the top boy was "16;" "Tell him," said the teacher, pointing to the next pupil: "16" was the answer for the second time. "No, they do not," retorted the teacher, "they make 12: set down 2 on the line, and carry 1." On the wall, near at hand, hung a counting frame, but "to tell," rather than "to train" by means of concretes, was the correct thing to do, at least in the opinion of the teacher; and thus the lesson went on, mechanical, lifeless, and resultless. I need not say that the teacher was untrained and uncertificated, and I give this example to show the danger of employing unskilled persons in a profession which, of all others, requires careful preparation and training, if the children are to become citizens characterized by intelligence and self-reliance. With much of the work in some of the schools I am able to express my entire satisfaction. These schools, in the order of merit, are—Gisborne, Napier, Taradale, Takapau, Wallingford, Makatoku, Port Ahuriri, Ormond, Te Ongaonga, Havelock, Waipawa, Wairoa, and Kaikora. Several of the other schools are in very fair working order, but it is when the really good schools are placed in contrast beside those where the work and general tone are unsatisfactory that is one is inclined to think it would be an advantage to keep schools closed rather than place them in the hands of half-hearted and incompetent teachers. The paper work done by the pupils in Standards V. and VI. has been mostly of a high order, although I observe there is a tendency in these standards to neglect reading and writing as separate class subjects, and as a consequence, some of the pupils only obtained just pass marks. The gold medal annually given by Mr. H. S. Tiffen to the boy or girl in Standard V. or VI. who passes best in my annual examination has proved a great incentive to the children, as it marks out the winner as the dux of the year in the schools of the district. Last year the medal was won by Mary Hall, of the Gisborne School, and the year previous by Kate Dunn, of the Napier District School.

Optional Subjects.—The optional subjects, such as drawing, military drill, and elementary science, receive but little attention. Gisborne and Napier are the only schools where extras, except military drill, are successfully taught, although there are a number of other schools where singing is taught with a fair amount of success. At Waipawa the master teaches gymnastics very successfully. but in no other school, as far as I am aware, is there even an attempt made to teach the subject, Where the standard requirements under Regulation 7 are so very exacting, much cannot be expected from the country schools under Regulation 9. In my opinion some of the optional subjects are of much more importance for the children to learn in certain districts than the compulsory subjects, and I could wish it was in the power of an Inspector to recognize a so-called optional subject in place of a compulsory one for examination purposes. This would allow more scope for the teaching of such subjects as drawing, elementary science, singing from note, drill for boys, and needlework for girls, and any other subject which the circumstances of a district might specially require. In England, the only obligatory subjects are reading, writing, arithmetic, and needlework for girls; and subjects such as history, geography, and grammar are made class subjects: that is, they may be taken up by an upper or lower division of a school, but the children constituting a division are not individually examined. There is also a third list of subjects called "specific subjects," the examination in which is individual, and they include agriculture, botany, domestic economy, animal physiology, &c. These subjects can only be taken by pupils in the upper standards, and no pupil may take more than two of such subjects. This freedom of action in the teaching and choice of certain subjects for examination I should much like to see adopted here. Under present arrangements the teachers, more especially in the smaller schools, find the time at their disposal barely sufficient for the preparation of the children in the compulsory subjects, and the consequence is that such utility subjects as drawing, physical training, and the elements of natural science, being optional, are neglected, in order that certain compulsory subjects of far less value might be memorized by the children, only to be forgotten when the examination is over.

Sewing.—I have already reported upon the great improvement in this subject, which has, no

doubt, been brought about by having all the sewing specimens sent to Napier and examined by three committees of ladies, who allot marks and report upon the general character of the sewing sent from each school. The prizes annually offered by Captain Russell of a sewing-machine, lady's workbox, &c., for the best specimens of newly-seated trousers, man's nightshirt, and darned pair of stockings, have greatly promoted the teaching of this subject under its various aspects, and, now that these prizes are to be awarded at the annual examination of the standard specimens of sewing, I anticipate still further improvement. The very suggestive reports of the lady examiners are appended herewith.*

PUPIL-TEACHERS.—Once more I have to express my regret that nothing has been done for the benefit of the ex-pupil-teachers who have now completed their term of service under the Board. This district is in great need of teachers experienced in school work, and for years I have looked forward to the time when young teachers trained in our best schools could be obtained to fill vacancies as they occur. There are now six ex-pupil-teachers, and after July next I anticipate there will be eight or ten more. A twelve months' or two years' course at a training institution would be the making of these teachers, if only suitable arrangements could be made for them to attend. The sum of £7,500 is voted annually for the special training of teachers, and, as this district employs one-twentieth of the pupil-teachers engaged in the public schools of the colony, it seems only just that a proportionate amount of the training grant should be employed in the training of our ex-pupil-teachers, for the benefit and advancement of education in this district.

Appended herewith are Tables A and B, showing the general condition of the schools, and the results of the standard examination for the past year.* I have, &c.,

The Chairman, Education Board. H. HILL.

MARLBOROUGH.

SIR,— Blenheim, 19th October, 1882.

I have the honour to lay before you my report on the public schools in the Marlborough District for the year 1882. Twenty-four schools have been examined, at which 1,145 scholars were present on examination-day. The number on the rolls at the same time was 1,359, the number in 1881 being 1,247. The time at my disposal during this part of the year did not admit of my visiting Kekerangu, which would have involved the loss of six days; but this school will be examined in March next. I have seen no reason to alter the favourable estimate that I formerly gave of the tone and discipline of the Marlborough schools. In the rare instances where the order is not as perfect as might be desired, extenuating circumstances—such as overcrowded and inconvenient schoolrooms—are not wanting. I have still to regret that more than two hundred children should have thought fit to absent themselves from the examinations. An inspection of the table giving the number on the roll, as compared with the number present at examination, will show at once to which of the schools these defaulters chiefly belong. It is impossible to make a general statement that shall be equally or approximately true as to the degree of success with which the several subjects included in standard work are being taught in a number of schools, each of which differs widely from the rest in some point. I will endeavour, nevertheless, briefly to summarize my impressions as to the quality of the work in this district.

READING.—The reading on the whole is quite as good as can be expected, when the extremely limited time for practice in this subject that is at a teacher's disposal is considered. All that the best teacher can do is to put his scholars in the way of reading so as to be understood. The children and their parents must do the rest. Scholars who get no more instruction or practice in reading aloud than the little that can be given in school hours—and even that little from a single well-thumbed set of class-books, often almost got off by heart—can hardly be expected to read with much taste or expression. Much may be done by encouraging the older children to read aloud the newspapers at home. The multifarious reading contained in even the dullest local paper will afford better practice than class-books, which offer but little variety.

WRITING.—Writing is, on the whole, better taught than it was formerly; but, although downright failures are very few, the work still, to my thinking, falls far short of what can be accomplished by no extraordinary amount of skill and pains. Even now I cannot call to mind more than four schools in which the handwriting throughout is as good as it ought to be. A few picked specimens of neat penmanship by the older scholars will not compensate for the slovenly work of the rest of the school. I observe that several teachers do not put copy-books into the hands of their scholars until they have passed the First Standard. But the school-life of most children is too short to permit the postponement of this stage of the work until a scholar is between eight and nine years old. Little fault can be found with the spelling, comparatively few scholars being unable to stand the tests applied.

ARITHMETIC.—But it is in arithmetic that the work is least satisfactory, the number of failures in this subject outnumbering those in all the other subjects put together. And two-thirds of these are what I class as "total failures"—that is, the candidate could not work correctly more than one of the six or seven sums set; or, in a large majority of instances, not so much as one. The arithmetic is, as a rule, far too loose and inaccurate. Most of the scholars, and, as it would appear, some of the teachers, seem quite content with mere approximations, and even the older scholars generally break down in the easier questions from this cause. A striking example of this was given in the work of the Fourth Standard, where one of the questions set was a simple account, consisting of only four items, any one of which might easily be reckoned without the help of a slate. More than a third of those who attempted this sum brought up wrong answers. And yet I have certainly not attached too little weight to this subject in my examinations, as I have invariably rejected a scholar who fails in arithmetic, however good the rest of his work may be. Incorrect arithmetic is absolutely worthless.

GRAMMAR, ETC.—Formal grammar is fairly taught in almost every school: composition is more

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* Not reprinted.

unequal. In a few schools the task of writing a dozen lines on a simple subject, generally taken from the every-day experience of the pupil, seems almost insuperable. In other places lengthy and well-expressed letters are written with great facility. On the whole, this part of the work is creditably done, and is certainly much better than it was two years ago. Geography, both physical and political, is now successfully taught almost everywhere, map-drawing from memory being in some cases admirably done. Many of the older scholars can also give a rational explanation of the causes of the commoner natural phenomena, such as tides, wind, and rain.

History.—History has lately received even more than its fair share of attention, if I may judge from the full and accurate papers written by many of the more advanced pupils. I feel, indeed, so sure that more time than can be well spared from subjects of greater importance is now being devoted to preparing scholars for the examinations in history and political geography, that I purpose largely curtailing my next year's papers on these subjects. By making the geography and history papers shorter and easier, an examiner may set free the teachers for giving additional instruction in such all-important matters as arithmetic, penmanship, and composition. The sweeping away of a mass of mere memory work, much of which will be too surely and speedily forgotten by most of the children, will also be no small boon to those who are harassed by long night lessons.

Standards.—I hold that the standards, especially as interpreted by the regulations, leave an Inspector perfectly at liberty to make, from time to time, such modifications as I have indicated, and that they prescribe rather the maximum than the minimum that he may exact. It is obvious, for example, that the geography of the Third Standard, in which "a knowledge of the chief mountains and rivers of the world" is included, among other things, must, if applied to children of ten years old, be construed with some latitude. The fact is that the standards, after several years' wear, have come to be treated much like a coat which, though ill-fitting at first, by dint of letting-out in one direction and curtailing in another on the part of the wearer, has been made to adjust itself tolerably well to his person, and has developed into quite a comfortable garment. I have this year devised practical remedies for the two most serious evils pointed out in my last report—the presenting of children for the First Standard at too early an age, and the bringing forward for standards scholars who had not attended "with reasonable regularity."

About six months before my examinations began I issued a circular to all the head-teachers in the district, giving them notice that, with the view of preventing, as far as possible, the presenting of very young children for the First Standard, I should construe the requirements at that stage very strictly, and should exact the utmost that was sanctioned by the regulations. The change, though involving much extra work at the outset, was cordially welcomed by the teachers—who were, indeed, the real gainers—and has been followed by the happiest results. A mass of little children, some of whom could barely manage to get through the former comparatively easy work of the First Standard, are now excluded, while those who have passed are well fitted, both by age and attainments, to grapple with the Second Standard. Some few exceptionally clever and well taught little ones of seven years old have contrived to get through the ordeal; but it is suggestive that those schools which persisted in bringing forward very young scholars failed most signally—in one instance seven out of eight proving unequal to the prescribed task. I have also ventured to define the term "reasonable regularity" by fixing it at not less than 260 half-day attendances (or twenty-six school weeks) since the previous examination. To give effect to this change, head-teachers were requested to enter on a separate list, at the foot of each examination schedule, the names of all scholars who had fallen short of the prescribed minimum. The failure to pass of any such regular attendant has not been recorded. It appears to me that these two safeguards for the teacher as to age and attendance are quite sufficient to warrant me in expecting, and, indeed, insisting, that in future every scholar who has passed the First Standard, and has made 260 half-day attendances since the previous examination, shall be presented for a higher standard. I can conceive of no possible reasons but tender years or irregularity of attendance which can now justify a teacher in withholding a single scholar who has passed the First Standard. Until then, considerable discretionary power must necessarily be left to the teacher. I am aware that in every school—I might almost say in every large class in every school—there is a certain residuum of dunces, whom no amount or species of training will fit for successive yearly steps in standard work. But the number of these is, after all, very small, and the few who break down at a second year's trial will probably be withdrawn from school by their parents, who will recognize the incapacity of their hapless offspring for further progress. The plain rule—that every scholar shall, year by year, be presented for a higher standard, under the conditions as to age and attendance which are now secured—will relieve many teachers of doubts as to their duty in this matter which now trouble them. It will also prevent the less scrupulous from snatching a temporary advantage over their neighbours, and will give an Inspector a better measure of the work really done at a school than he has under the present half-permissive system.

Home Lessons.—I have protested so often, and so strongly, against the ever-growing practice of inflicting long night lessons on our school children that I feel a certain reluctance in recurring to this subject, which is, however, far too serious to be passed over in silence. If one may believe the angry and often repeated complaints of parents, some of our most zealous and successful teachers are the worst offenders in this respect. But so firmly am I convinced that their successes are won in spite of, and not because of, the excessive evening tasks which they still impose, that I call upon them to give one year's fair trial to the plan that I recommend—not for the first time. Let no home task of any kind be set to any child under nine years old. After that age, and up to thirteen, let the tasks be such as will not exceed from half an hour's to an hour's steady work each evening, according to the age of the pupil. An hour and a quarter's work ought to suffice for the most advanced of our scholars. If a child cannot, year by year, keep pace with the requirements of the standards (as construed in this district) with such an amount of extra work, superadded to the five hours of unremitting labour that he has to undergo every day in any well-conducted school, then the fault lies in his own incapacity. The brain of such a scholar will not be strengthened, but actually weakened, by the additional strain put upon it. To me, a little school-girl, returning home laden with a pile of books to be pored over when she ought to be in bed, is a sorry sight. The notion that wisdom, or even book-learning—a very different

thing—can be increased by trying to pour something more into a vessel that is already full, is on of the most mischievous superstitions of the nineteenth century.

I subjoin my usual short estimate of the present state of each school.

I have, &c.,

The Chairman, Education Board. W. C. Hodgson, Inspector.

NELSON.

Sir,— 22nd December, 1882.

I have the honour to lay before you my report of the Nelson public schools for 1882. I have inspected and examined 71 of the 73 schools now at work. The number present at examination was 3,536, the number on the roll at the time being 4,102. The number on the roll at the close of the December quarter was 4,092. I have to regret the absence of no less than 566 scholars on examination day, no sufficient reason for such absence being given, except in a very few cases. On the whole, I think that the schools are at least as well taught as they were last year. They are certainly better disciplined. Although the percentage of passes is somewhat higher than that obtained in 1881, the number of scholars presented for standards was less by 396, the passes being fewer by 218. But comparison even on this limited basis is difficult, owing to the much greater strictness with which the First, and to a certain extent the Second, Standard requirements have been intentionally construed this year, with the object of keeping back very young children; and it will be seen from a glance at the tables that it is in the two lowest standards that the falling-off in numbers chiefly occurs.

It is by this time hardly necessary to remind the Board how incomplete, and possibly misleading, any estimate of our schools based upon passes and percentages alone must be. With extended experience of the working of the standards, remedies, or at least palliatives, suggest themselves, which afford relief in those cases where the pinch is most keenly felt. I have this year devised plans by which two of the difficulties which give most trouble to teachers and Inspectors may to a great extent be overcome. Hitherto I have found the pernicious habit of presenting very young children for the First Standard almost incurable, especially where sanguine and inexperienced teachers were concerned. Remonstrances on the part of an Inspector, and even the demonstrating how unfavourably this practice affected the school life of the children and the future welfare of the school, were of no avail, I have, therefore, settled the matter by increasing the difficulty of the requirements at this stage, especially in reading and arithmetic, to the utmost extent permitted by the regulations. The result has fully equalled my expectations, and is far from being unpopular with the teachers, who perceive that the change will ultimately be for their benefit. The hitches that were sure to occur sooner or later where very young children had been pushed forward too fast will be fewer now that a better start is secured at the outset of standard work.

The much-mooted question as to what constitutes reasonable regularity of attendance I have attempted to solve by requesting teachers to enter on a separate list, at the foot of the list of candidates on the examination schedule, the names of those scholars who have made less than 260 half-day attendances since the previous examination. The failure to pass of any of these is not recorded. I saw that under the former permissive system grave irregularities, and even abuses, were not uncommon. Scholars who had attended badly, or who were considered dull, were either kept at home on examination day or, though present, were not brought forward for examination, so that the state of the school was in some instances actually judged by a carefully picked sample. These practices also naturally produced heartburnings on the part of the scholars thus left out, and discontent on the part of their parents. I am, therefore, emboldened by the success that has attended the two foregoing experiments to insist that, in future, all scholars who have passed the First Standard shall be presented for a higher standard year by year. The more difficult entrance examination will exclude nine-tenths of those too young for the work, and irregularity of attendance, being duly allowed for, can no longer be pleaded as an excuse for withholding a scholar. I have felt that, under the system of allowing a wide latitude to teachers as to what scholars they should bring forward, a fair comparison of the work done at different schools—one of the prime advantages claimed for a system of standards—was unattainable. The only practical difference will be that, instead of leaving it to the teacher to find out for me which of his scholars are dunces, I shall have the pain of doing that for myself, my consolation being that the brunt of the wrath of disappointed parents will fall hereafter, as is most fitting, on the Inspector instead of the schoolmaster.

It is difficult to account for the wide discrepancy between the performances of children on ordinary schooldays and the performances of the same children at an examination. That it really exists no one can doubt who has observed the unfeigned surprise and disappointment so often exhibited by teachers at the shortcomings of their scholars, especially in arithmetic and grammar. And this disappointment is not confined to novices, who may be supposed to be imperfectly acquainted with the powers of their pupils, but is also felt by experienced teachers. The difficulty or the unwonted form of the questions put will not explain the matter, for the requirements of each standard, as construed in this district, are by this time pretty generally understood, and it is a common remark of the teacher that his scholars had solved with ease similar or even harder questions a few days before. If the notable device—so much in favour with the distrustful portion of the public—were adopted, by which, with the view of securing their impartiality, Inspectors are to be periodically transplanted, thus insuring ignorance of the history and peculiarities of each district, and indifference to its welfare on their part, and uncertainty and the fear of the unknown on the part of the children and teachers, the problem would be easy enough of solution. But, having been at some pains, during many years, to win the confidence of the children of Nelson, I venture to assert that an examination is now hardly more dreaded than an ordinary schoolday, and that nervousness plays a very small part indeed on these occasions. I am not sure that the habit of copying, so difficult to prevent in a full school, has not something to do with the unlooked-for failures at an examination, where every one has to work independently, and where undetected cribbing is well nigh impossible. The general introduction of

the dual desk, and the giving a different set of questions to each of the two occupants of a desk, would go far towards remedying the evil, though not unattended with difficulty in practice, especially in a crowded school. Doubtless other plans by which complete isolation at certain kinds of work may be secured will occur to teachers who know their business. Closely connected with this subject is the necessity for frequent rehearsals, both to test the attainments of the scholars and to familiarize them with the procedure of an examination. At these rehearsals it is essential that the conditions as to isolation, method, and strict attention to work that are required at the annual examination should be strictly observed. If this were done in every school, as it has long been done in some of our best schools, I do not see how a teacher could fail to gauge his pupils' capacities with a close approach to accuracy. Far more practice is also needed in what may be called the mechanical part of the work. The absence of *form* in the papers sent in is so general and so marked as to convince me that in many instances this by no means unimportant matter has been entirely disregarded. It is pitiable to see the helplessness of children who have to be told at an examination, apparently for the first time, that they must not copy out the questions, and that their answers must be properly numbered, and not jumbled together in a confused mass. Nor is it any part of an Inspector's business to teach these little details, at a time when his attention and that of the scholars are occupied with fifty other matters. It is poor work when troops have to be put through elementary drill on a field day. The value of habits of neatness can hardly be overrated, and slovenliness in the form of the work, however good the substance may be, always seriously affects my estimate of a school, knowing well how this fault will tell against the children in the battle of life.

The constant changing of teachers from school to school—a growing evil—reached its height this year. At the beginning of almost every month a long list of advertisements for teachers has appeared; the Board and School Committees have been worried with the never-ending task of selection; and the efficiency of our best schools has been seriously impaired by the inevitable change of system that follows every change in the staff. The process of disintegration has been carried on with a monotonous regularity. A having left the district or the service, B, from a neighbouring school, steps into his place, leaving a vacancy to be filled up by C, also a fellow-teacher in the same district; and so on in a vicious circle, which if not peremptorily cut short by the Board might affect a dozen schools. If promotion were the object of these changes, something might be said in their favour, but pure restlessness is at the bottom of most of them, the emoluments of the post abandoned being usually nearly or quite on a par with those of the post sought. The Board, in self-defence, has been driven to make a rule that a year must elapse between the date of appointment to one school and the date of application for another; but even this is inadequate to deal effectually with the mischief. It is not unreasonable to require that a man who deliberately selects a position the emoluments and requirements of which are perfectly well known to him should remain there for at least two years. A shorter period will be insufficient to enable him to make his mark in the school, if he studies his own reputation: it will certainly be insufficient to enable the Board, or its Inspector, to form any decided opinion as to his merits as a teacher, especially at the outset of his career. For my own part, if I had to choose a schoolmaster, I should carefully eschew the man of many schools, knowing that, whatever else he might be, he was certainly fickle. It is not very long since I referred to a difficulty that threatened to make shipwreck of our schools—the difficulty of getting decently qualified teachers to supply vacancies. Until quite recently the Board and the School Committees have been reduced to making their choice from a list of candidates (for the most part utter strangers) on the slender and untrustworthy evidence of written or printed testimonials. Some of these, on the face of them, betray the unfitness of the writers to give an opinion of any value on the matter. Others, sent in by veteran teachers of five-and-twenty years' standing, and bearing date from almost as many different schools, testified only to the want of tact, fickleness, or incapacity of the senders. But two fresh sources are now available, which, taken together, will, it is hoped, suffice for most of the probable requirements of our schools for some time to come.

During the past year, several young men who have completed their education at Nelson College have sought and obtained employment, either as assistant masters or as masters of small country schools. All are doing good work. Two of them, being former winners of College scholarships, are familiar with the routine of our public schools and the working of the standards. They also possess such a tincture of scholarship as is implied by the ability to pass the senior Civil Service examination, and, if not actually learned, have at least laid such a foundation as will enable them, by subsequent study, to raise a respectable superstructure of learning. Above all, their character and antecedents are known. I see only two objections that can well be urged against the employment of candidates of this class—their youth, and their comparative ignorance of the technicalities of school management and the art of teaching. But the force of the first objection is diminishing daily, and in the course of two or three years will disappear altogether. As to the second, I believe that the difficulty of mastering the mere details of school work are prodigiously exaggerated by those who have had special training in these by no means all-important matters, but who, during the process, may well have missed some other things of vastly more consequence, which it would be invidious to specify. To magnify the mysteries of one's craft is a trick of very old standing. An intelligent young man, who has been really educated and not merely instructed, will be ignorant of but little that is really worth knowing in this direction at the end of a year, especially if he is not too conceited to profit by the advice and example of his more experienced fellow-teachers in the neighbourhood, who are always ready to help beginners. These latter remarks, of course, apply to many others beside pupils of Nelson College. The probationers, of whom there are now twelve at work (all but one being young women), will in a short time furnish the Board, at small expense, with an excellent body of assistant teachers in large schools, and mistresses in small ones. As the more important posts fall vacant they may well be filled by the older and more capable teachers at present in the service of the Board.

I have no intention of departing from my former practice of giving a detailed estimate of the state of each school, so long as this course meets with the approval of the Board. That I should have been, more than once, coarsely and publicly assailed in print for having exposed the indolence or incom-

petence of the few of our teachers to whom either of those epithets still applies, is what might be expected. But there are too many zealous and competent men and women now seeking employment to leave any room for drones. My only regret is that it is not in my power so far to intensify the expression of my disapproval, in certain cases, as to overcome that dread of the hard work almost inevitable in every other occupation, which seems too strong even for the disgust occasioned by my outspoken criticism. In making his report two courses only seem open to an Inspector—either to place a confidential account of the state of each school in the hands of the School Committee or the Board, leaving a copy with the head-teacher, or to publish a plain statement as to the present condition of each school—a statement carrying with it such guarantees for its accuracy and fairness as the "fierce light" of publicity gives. A man who knows that his every word is liable to be called in question will be tolerably cautious as to what he prints. In the one case, the exact state of every public school is made known to every member of the public: in the other, this knowledge may be, and usually is, confined to a dozen people. And I appeal to the experience of the past whether, in every case but one, even my severest strictures have not been fully indorsed by the School Committees and parents concerned. The solitary exception, moreover, tells in my favour. Having deliberately adopted, I shall firmly adhere to the open system of reporting, being convinced that the good teacher will largely gain by it, and that the bad one will get what he naturally shrinks from—his deserts.

I have, &c.,

The Chairman, Education Board. W. C. Hodgson, Inspector.

NORTH CANTERBURY.

Sir,— Christchurch, 31st March, 1883.

We have the honour to submit the following general report for the year ending the 31st December, 1882:—

Owing to several causes, the work of inspection was considerably interrupted during the past year, rendering it impossible to overtake the examination of all schools in the district by the end of December. The few schools omitted were, however, examined before the date of this report. At our first conference, in June, we decided to adopt a uniform standard and style of examination, and to draw up several sets of questions. Further, we agreed to jointly examine the large town and borough schools—viz., Normal, Gloucester Street, West Christchurch, Sydenham, Lyttelton, Ashburton, St. Albans, Kaiapoi, Rangiora, Lower Heathcote, and Richmond. Not only did we examine the above together, but we also examined two of the smaller country schools, and we have thus every confidence in stating that all examinations last year were, as far as possible, conducted on exactly similar lines.

The number of schools in operation during the whole or part of the year was 132. Of these all were examined in standards except five. The five schools not so examined were Newland, Port Levy, Kowai Bush, Waiau, Waikari; and in each case there were valid reasons for the omission. In addition to the schools examined, ninety-three received at least one visit of inspection.

The total number of scholars on the registers at the dates of our examinations was 16,781, an increase of over seven hundred upon the previous year. There were present at examination 13,848; and here also there is a considerable increase, last year's number being 12,663. Table No. 1 shows the enrolments and attendances for the years 1880, 1881, and 1882.

Table No. I.

	Enrolment.	Present at Examination.	Percentage.
1880 ...	15,849 ...	13,043 ...	82
1881 ...	16,076 ...	12,663 ...	79
1882 ...	16,781 ...	13,848 ...	82

From the above table it will be seen that the percentage of those present at the examinations is somewhat in excess of the previous year, and just the same as that for 1880. We have taken some trouble to find out the cause of so many children being absent on examination-days, and fear that it is attributable to the fact that in these schools the backward children are not only not encouraged, but, in some cases, actually forbidden to be present. In a few instances the attendance was lowered by the state of the weather.

New schools were opened during the year at Methven, Lismore, Pendarves, Kirwee; and side schools at Malvern, Wakanui, and Oxford West. In the case of Lismore and Pendarves the buildings are altogether out of proportion to the number of children at present attending, or ever likely to attend. In the matter of furniture the schools in this district are generally well supplied, and nearly all are in possession of sufficient teaching appliances. Greater care is bestowed on the keeping of the school property than was formerly the case. There are still, however, some schools where we have noticed the desks unnecessarily inked, scratched, and otherwise damaged. As was pointed out in a previous report, the teachers are not in all cases to blame for this, as Committees are in the habit of letting the rooms for dances, entertainments, &c., the furniture on such occasions being bundled anywhere out of the way. It would be well if some simple contrivance were devised for hanging maps on when in use before a class. At present it is not uncommon to see the maps thrown over the tops of easels or blackboards, and this practice soon destroys them. A map-rack to place the maps on when not in use is also required in the majority of our country schools.

The attendance at several of the town schools is fairly satisfactory, but there is yet much room left for improvement. The number of children to be seen playing about the streets during school hours is an undoubted indication that many parents do not appreciate the advantages of a free education. It is a matter of regret that the attendance at the great majority of the country schools is still very irregular and inconstant. Teachers complain—and very often justly so—that they find it impossible to efficiently prepare their pupils in the essential subjects of the syllabus, not to mention the optional. We feel bound, however, to state that, where the teaching is earnest and efficient, there the

attendance is marked by a fair degree of regularity; whereas in those schools where the teaching is unskilful, perfunctory, and lifeless, the scholars naturally attend irregularly and take but little interest in their work. Teaching of the kind last mentioned is rapidly disappearing, and in at least two-thirds of the schools now in operation the teachers are zealous, and fairly trained for their important duties. Punctuality is, on the whole, well observed. The masters of the town schools and of some few of those in the country have printed absentee forms, easy to fill up, in which they let parents know of the absence of their children, and request their co-operation in securing greater regularity. Perhaps the general adoption of these forms might have a good effect on the attendance.

Again, as regards our town schools, it is gratifying to note that a noticeable falling-off has taken place in the number of children moving about from school to school. Such changes are to some extent unavoidable, as parents remove from one part of the town to another; but they are too often due to mere caprice, and are prejudicial both to the progress of the children and the welfare of the schools.

The organization of all schools where more than one teacher is employed may be stated to be quite as satisfactory as the nature of the buildings will admit. The time-tables in these schools also show a fairly judicious arrangement of work and employment of the staff. Teachers of small schools still find it very difficult to so arrange their work as to overtake the varied requirements of the standards, and we would respectfully recommend that such teachers be afforded an opportunity of attending the model school recently established in connection with the practising department of the Normal School, for the purpose of seeing the best methods of instruction and organization. The general management of the infant departments of the larger schools is, we think, steadily improving. A fair share of attention is given to the special needs of infants, and an effort is made to make the time spent in school pass as pleasantly and profitably as possible. There is still, in a few instances, a tendency towards making the learning by rote of Royal Reader No. I., a little slate writing, and the ability to add a few columns of figures together, the sole objects of the teaching. In country schools where the number of children below Standard I. is very small, and where they have no teacher or room to themselves, it would be unreasonable to expect much in the way of infant training. In such schools all that can be expected is that they should be taught their letters, a little writing, tables, &c., in much the same way as the children working in standards are taught. We question very much the advantages obtained by sending children between five and seven years of age to these schools. They are certainly out of the way of their parents, but in the way of the teachers. Our own experience leads us to believe that, as a general rule, children who begin their school life at seven years of age are just as far advanced at ten as those who began at five. The time between five and seven years of age spent in a small school is too often time wasted, and a wearisome toil rather than a pleasure.

Table No. II. shows the number presented in each standard, the number passed, the average age at which the scholars passed, the percentage of passes, and the number of schools at which scholars were presented in the different standards:—

Table No. II.

—	Number presented.	Number passed.	Average Age.	Percentage of Passes.	Number of Schools at which Scholars were presented.
			Yrs.		
Standard VI. ...	135	86	14·5	64	34
Standard V. ...	440	220	13·6	50	76
Standard IV. ...	1,075	597	12·8	56	107
Standard III. ...	1,878	1,130	11·7	60	121
Standard II. ...	2,115	1,802	10·2	85	129
Standard I. ...	2,081	1,923	8·9	92	128
Totals ...	7,724	5,758	...	74	...

From the foregoing table it will be seen that, although there is a considerable increase in the amount of candidates presented for examination in the four higher standards, yet there is a slight falling-off in the percentages gained in these standards. A far greater number of schools than was formerly the case are now attempting the work of the higher and more difficult standards, and in some of these the teachers have as yet failed to understand the full amount and quality of what is demanded to secure a pass. Under all the circumstances, the results, at least so far as regards the majority of the schools in the district, may be considered fairly creditable. In too many schools the inferior results are undoubtedly due either to the irregular attendance, or to the frequent changing of teachers. In the case of some few schools the low percentages gained do not admit of any satisfactory explanation: the requirements for passing, although somewhat different from previous years, have not been perceptibly raised, and the failures can therefore be attributed only to the want of thoroughness in the teaching and injudicious classification. The children presented in Standards II. and I. were, with comparatively few exceptions, carefully and intelligently prepared for such work as they attempted. Head-teachers are now beginning to recognize the fact that very much of the future success of their pupils depends on the nature of the instruction and training that they receive in the lower classes, and that it will not do to leave the teaching of these classes altogether in the hands of pupil-teachers. More supervision is adopted, and the children are frequently tested in the work gone over.

The subjects forming the present course of instruction are, as might be expected, taught in our schools with varying success and intelligence. And although we fail to see the great usefulness of making any general remarks on the way the different subjects of the syllabus are treated, yet, in accordance with the prevailing custom of Inspectors in other education districts, we have determined to point out briefly what has come under our notice.

READING.—Sufficient time is allotted to this subject in the schools generally, but there is too frequently a total want of previous preparation of the lesson to be read, alike on the part of the teachers and pupils. There is perhaps no branch of instruction so important and valuable: yet, judged by what we have observed on the occasions of our visits, there is no part of the school work more carelessly and mechanically taught. In far too many instances we might reiterate the faults so often and so fully commented on by Inspectors, and say that the reading is indistinct, expressionless, and the meaning of the passages read but little understood. In the higher standards of some schools the majority of the pupils' reading was intelligent and expressive, and they manifested a good knowledge of the words and allusions occurring in the lessons. As regards the recitations, as a general rule all that can be said is that the children were fairly word perfect, the teachers considering it their duty simply to hear the lines, without in any way attempting to correct errors, explain difficulties, or set before their pupils a good model to imitate. Nearly all teachers pay great attention to the letter *h*, but the final *g* is generally allowed to be cut off with impunity.

SPELLING AND DICTATION.—These subjects are well taught in nearly all schools. We have noticed cases of careless correction, and that no attempt was made to impress the corrections, when made, on the memory of the children.

WRITING.—The penmanship in many schools was very creditable, and the papers handed in by the scholars on examination days were remarkably neat and carefully written. In those schools where the pupils write best, it has been found that in the case of the junior classes frequent use was made of the blackboard for copy-setting, showing the proper formation, height, slope, joinings, &c., of letters. The copybooks are now for the most part neatly kept, and there is almost a total absence of that scribbling on the covers, and indeed throughout the books, so common in previous years. Far greater care is also shown in preventing the carelessness into which children left to themselves during a writing-lesson inevitably fall. Mülhauser's system of teaching writing has been adopted in a few schools, and with marked success.

ARITHMETIC.—The results of examination in arithmetic in Standards I. and II. showed very thorough instruction, the children doing what was required of them with accuracy and rapidity. Considerable attention is evidently paid to the teaching of numeration and notation in these standards. In Standard III. the failures were altogether too numerous, and were largely due to carelessness in taking down the sums from the printed cards. In a large proportion of the schools examined the children either failed to attempt the simple problems set, or worked them in such a way as to show that their teaching had been too mechanical and unintelligent. Too much dependence is placed on books and too little on the laws of mental development. Day after day the questions are put on the blackboard just in the way they are to be worked, and not the slightest attempt is made to make the scholars think or reason for themselves. In order that better results may be attained in Standard IV., it is absolutely necessary that the instruction given in this subject in the lower standard (III.) should be thorough, practical, and, if possible, advanced beyond the requirements, for the gap between the two standards is a very considerable one, and will seriously task the energies of both teacher and pupil. In preparing the questions for Standard IV. we endeavoured to make them practical and adapted to the transactions of daily life. In Standard V. the results were only moderate, and frequently the papers showed an utter inability to apply the knowledge of the rules which had been learned. The same remarks apply generally to Standard VI. Defective teaching in mental arithmetic, particularly in Standards III. and IV., was very common, and in many schools it is neglected altogether. Mental arithmetic, when properly taught, is of great assistance to the instruction in slate arithmetic.

GRAMMAR AND COMPOSITION.—The grammar of Standards III. and IV. was satisfactory, the children being fully up to the simple work required of them. The parsing of Standards V. and VI. was fair, but it was very rare to find that analysis had been logically and intelligently taught, except in some of the best town and country schools. Composition receives a fair share of attention, and is mostly creditable. Some teachers, however, seem to think that the only object of a composition exercise is to test the memory of the pupil, and not to strengthen the observing and reasoning faculties.

GEOGRAPHY.—Only passable results are ordinarily obtained under this head in Standards II. and III. There is too much rote teaching in regard to the elements of the subject. The definitions are merely committed to memory, without any attempt at explanation. The children know but little about the geography of their own district, or of the relative positions of the continents, oceans, &c. Some very good work was done in the higher standards, the memory map-drawing being in many cases exceptionally good.

HISTORY.—Except in a very few schools, the answering in this subject was quite as full and accurate as could reasonably be expected.

EXTRA SUBJECTS.—Elementary science is taught in nearly four-fifths of the schools where there is a Fourth Standard, and with improving success. In at least twenty-five schools the answers to the questions set showed a very fair comprehension of the portions of the programme taken up for examination. In about 80 per cent. of the schools visited object lessons are professedly given, but too often the want of previous preparation and the bad methods in use impair the efficiency of the lessons. As given by many teachers, they are quite useless. Many headmasters now carefully revise the notes of object lessons to be given by their pupil-teachers, and where such is the case a considerable amount of accurate and useful information is acquired by the children, while at the same time their observing and reasoning faculties are developed. In some instances the notes of lessons asked for on the day of examination have been found to consist of almost verbatim copies of lessons in some text-book on the subject. Singing and drawing are taught in a fair proportion of the schools. The teaching of singing is evidently popular with the children, and in many schools they sing very nicely. The instruction given in drawing is in many cases of little or no value. Answering in domestic economy varied from fair to very good. Sewing is taught in almost all schools under the Board, and, as far as we are capable of judging, with very fair success.

The registers are generally correctly and neatly kept. In a few instances we had to point out

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.

We have, &c.,
W. L. Edge,
James Cumming,
Inspectors.

The Chairman, Education Board.

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

have compiled a table,* in which the fullest information on the subject is given. The result shows that the number not examined in the standards in which they have been studying during the year is as follows: Second presentation, 61; withheld by teachers, 54. From this, however, should be deducted 10 in Standard V., and 2 in Standard VI., whose retention is justified by a special resolution of the Board's; also the 13 examined again in Standard VI., there being no higher class into which they could be removed. This will leave a total of 90 children in the district considered by their teachers to be unfit for promotion, or unable to pass in their respective standards. In reference to this matter, it may be pointed out that there is a distinct verbal contradiction between the second clause of "The Standards" and the explanatory note attached. In the first it is ruled that "no scholar shall be examined in a standard he has already passed." In the second, after providing for the removal of certain children to a lower class under certain circumstances, we are told that "such child shall be examined with the lower class to which it has been found necessary to remove him." It appears to me, however, that the two should be read together, and that the contradiction is more apparent than real; the first merely prohibiting the examination in order to prevent the returns being unduly increased by the entering of the same children twice as passing the same standard.

SUMMARY OF RESULTS FOR 1882.

	Average Age on 1st July, 1882.	Examined.	Passed.	Percentage.	Percentage in 1881.
	Yrs. mos.				
Standard I.	8 2	287	219	76	94
Standard II.	9 5	284	185	65	94
Standard III.	10 1	349	210	60	74
Standard IV.	11 11	265	184	69	66
Standard V.	12 10	143	109	76	54
Standard VI.	13 9	42	39	93	83
	...	1,370	946	69	83

The note alluded to states that "as soon as it becomes apparent" that a child is for any reason unable to keep pace with his class he should be removed, &c., and I am of opinion that this is a valuable privilege to which the teacher is certainly entitled; but the late examination has convinced me that it is a privilege that should be carefully restricted within well-defined limits. It is not unreasonable to expect that a teacher should discover the weakness of any scholars within two months from the commencement of the year's work, and I therefore propose that any re-classification thought necessary shall be effected before the end of March, and that the examination schedules shall contain the names of all children who are classified under the several standards in that quarterly return. This would not prevent the promotion of any unusually clever child from the primer or any other class to a higher one, and the names of any who might leave the school in the interval could be indicated in the schedule. Special cases, such as serious illness, absence from home, &c., would probably be met by the minimum limit of attendance, but, if not, could be considered on their merits. But the standing rule should be that every child must be presented for examination in the standard in which he is enrolled in the March quarterly return.

Another feature in Table A deserving of attention is the number of absentees. This number (66), though not excessive in the aggregate, is not very evenly distributed, and the absence of scholars on examination day, if passed over without notice, might open the door to a serious abuse. It will be seen that there were more absentees at Kanieri than at either of the two large schools, whilst Stafford, Ross, and Woodstock contributed more than their fair quota. The percentages of scholars on schedule who were absent at the principal schools are—Greymouth, 3 per cent.; Hokitika, 3·7 per cent.; Kumara, 0·6 per cent; Ross, 4·5 per cent.; Stafford, 7·7 per cent.; Goldsborough, 4·5 per cent.; Kanieri, 13 per cent.; Brunnerton, 3·6 per cent.; Cobden, 2 per cent.; Paroa, 0 per cent.; Woodstock, 17 per cent. Some endeavour should be made to arrest the progress of this evil, and one method of doing so would be to consider all absentees as having failed, unless good and sufficient reason could be given for such absence. In connection with this I may remark that when the teacher's own children are kept away from the examination he can hardly expect other parents to be scrupulous on the subject. Yet this has been done to my knowledge in several instances.

In comparing some of our figures with those of the neighbouring district, I find there is, on the whole, very little difference in the apparent results; but of course such a comparison is of very questionable value, and proves nothing either one way or the other, inasmuch as the schools in the two districts may be, and probably are, working under widely differing conditions. The figures are inserted merely because the public attention has been specially directed to the comparison during the past few days by writers in the local papers:—

Districts.	Number on the Roll.	Examined in Standards.	Percentage of Roll Number examined.	Percentage of Scholars examined who passed.	Percentage of Roll Number passed.
Nelson ...	4,102	1,962	48	74	†35
Westland ...	2,933	1,370	47	69	32

* Not reprinted. † This is 31 in the printed report, but it is evidently a mistake.

Although I have stated above that, on the whole, the results for this district are fairly satisfactory, it must be admitted that, taking the schools separately, there are some very notable differences to be explained. Leaving the 88th-clause schools out of the question for the present, it will be seen that the percentage of the scholars examined who passed varies from 4 per cent. at the Arahura Road to 94 at Kumara. Now, assuming that anything less than 70 per cent. must be regarded as unsatisfactory, we find that 9 out of 17 schools have fallen below this point. It is of course easy to throw the blame upon the stringency of the examination, but this excuse fails to have much weight, when it is observed that excellent results have been obtained in all the standards, from the lowest to the highest, in some of the schools both large and small. Taking the First and Second Standards, in which (as was stated above) the examination this year was more exacting than heretofore, we find Greymouth, Stafford, Cobden, Paroa, Woodstock, and Kynnersley and several 88th-clause schools, passing all presented in the First Standard; and Greymouth, Kumara, Paroa, Donoghue's, and one 88th-clause school passing all presented in the Second; whilst several pass from 85 per cent. and upwards in both standards. In the Third Standard, which gives a lower percentage than any other, the following percentages of passes were obtained: Kynnersley, 100; Paroa, 91; Kumara, 90; Cobden, 83; Grey, 75; Hokitika, 73. In the Fourth Standard, Grey passes 93; Kumara, 91; and Hokitika, 73 per cent.; and several small schools passed all they presented. In the Fifth Standard, Kumara, Stafford, Kanieri, Brunnerton, and Cobden pass all presented; and Hokitika, 87; Greymouth, 80; Paroa, 80; and Ross, 74 per cent. In the Sixth Standard all but two schools presenting scholars passed all presented. From these facts it is evident that the low results in certain schools and standards cannot be attributed to the severity of the examination, but that the explanation must be sought for elsewhere. I shall here give a general statement of some of the causes which, in my opinion, have assisted to produce the undesirable features which are discoverable upon a careful examination of the Tables A and B, reserving the application of them for the confidential report which will accompany this.

The Board will recollect that at the examinations held in 1880 and 1881 I excluded from the ordinary returns the names of all scholars who had attended less than 300 half-days, when they failed to pass. This year I discontinued the practice in consequence of the resolution fixing 250 as the minimum attendance to admit to the examination. I find, on looking through the examination schedules, and omitting a few schools that had been closed for a portion of the year, there are 275 scholars whose attendance was less than 300, although more than 250 half-days. Of this number 88 failed, and, if these are excluded from the calculation, the percentage of passes will be increased from 69 to 74. Now, adding these 275 to the 325 who are returned on Table A as having been excluded from the examination on account of deficient attendance (*i.e.*, less than 250 half-days), we have 600 children whose attendance has been very irregular; and this, it must be remembered, is exclusive of scholars below Standard I.; or, in other words, of the 1,878 children preparing for standard examination, 600, or 32 per cent., were irregular in their attendance. I have no means of comparing our district with any other in this respect, but it is evident that the irregularity of one-third of all the children in the district must have a serious effect upon the progress of the whole. In my last report I spoke very strongly on this point, and this year there does not appear to be less ground for dissatisfaction with the attendance. I have reason to believe that the adoption of the minimum limit of attendance in connection with the annual examination will materially diminish this irregularity, but much more could be effected by the united efforts of teachers, Committees, and parents, than by any regulation that could possibly be framed. In a private report sent in some two years ago in reference to this subject, I pointed out that the best authorities on educational affairs are almost unanimous in attributing excessive irregularity to inefficiency in the management. One writer says, "Excessive irregularity is frequently assigned as the cause of the low state of a school, but it is much oftener the effect, for both parents and children naturally become indifferent when the discipline and instruction are of a worthless character."

Unpunctuality, another form of irregularity, is also, I am sorry to say, very noticeable at some schools; and the same writer, referring to the subject, says, "Among the many circumstances that may be considered indicative of a badly conducted school, this [unpunctuality], when allowed to run to an extreme, is perhaps the most infallible of any. The unpunctuality of the children is almost always the consequence of indifference, or want of firmness and vigilance, on the part of the teacher." With regard to punctuality, a striking contrast is presented to an observer outside certain schools when the school-bell rings. In one case, at the first sound of the bell every child in sight may be seen to start off in a brisk walk, or a run, to endeavour to reach the appointed spot before the bell shall have stopped. At another no such anxiety is to be noticed. The children, however far from or near to the building at the time, appear scarcely to hear the bell, and certainly to attach no importance to its warning, but continue to saunter along with listless indifference, that shows they are under no apprehension of unpleasant consequence from their unpunctuality; and from ten to fifteen minutes afterwards groups of children may be seen leisurely making their way towards the school, as though they had abundance of time to spare. There is no doubt that irregularity is to some extent unavoidable where the scholars live at an excessive distance from the school and when the weather is very wet; but these two conditions are not more general in this district than in some others, and certainly cannot be admitted as an excuse for unpunctuality. The distance to be travelled requires a certain well-known time for its accomplishment, and it is only necessary to start so much earlier to insure punctual arrival at the school.

It is a common and to a great extent a fair complaint that the requirements of the standards are too numerous and exacting; this being not unfrequently coupled with another—which at any rate cannot be urged this year—that the local interpretation of these requirements is too severe. We also hear about insufficient time between one examination and another, and of staffs inadequate to the work required of them; but, after all, the question may be asked, "Is the time made the most of, and are the staffs employed to the greatest advantage in every case?" I have reason to believe that in some schools the work of teaching is not carried on with uniform regularity throughout the whole of the school year. It begins languidly, and increases in vigour as the time for the examination approaches, and

reaches its maximum at very high pressure during the month or so before the appointed day. During this time the children and the teachers (in a school where this system is in vogue) have a bad time. Increased home-lessons, detention in school after hours, and extra work generally, reduce the more weakly constituted children to a condition which renders them unfit for the approaching ordeal; and complaints of anxious parents and guardians very naturally make themselves heard. But the examination day comes and goes. Now what a contrast! for, although this may happen a month or six weeks before the close of the quarter, I may, without exaggeration, say that in some cases the school work positively ceases as far as any attempt at progress is concerned. The time-table might as well be removed from the walls for all the useful purposes that it serves for the remainder of the year, and, after wasting all this valuable time, the weakness (if any is apparent) in the results is attributed to the strictness of the examiner, the irregularity of attendance, the insufficient staff, &c., while the truth is that the work has not been steadily pursued from the date of one examination to that of the next.

I do not know that the state of things described above is to be seen often in this district: it is sufficient for me to know that it exists, and that, if not repressed, there is danger of its spreading. With this is intimately connected the falling-off in the attendance immediately after the examination, which is made a matter of complaint at some schools; and I have no hesitation in asserting that, where this is the case to any great extent before the last week of the school year, it is almost entirely due to the fact that there is little in the shape of instruction worth stopping for. Many intelligent parents have noticed this total relaxation of work after the examination, which is as injurious to the scholars, morally, as the high-pressure system before was injurious physically and mentally. To account for the falling-off in any other way is to admit the suspension of all order and discipline for the remainder of the year. I believe it will be found that in schools where the work is carried on as systematically after the examination, and up to the end of the term, as it was before and during the remainder of the year, the attendance will continue up to the average until at any rate a week before breaking up. In some cases, where the results are either poor, or, though good, not so good as on former occasions, the local Committees must be held accountable. In one important school the services of a teacher were retained for a year after his unfitness for the position he held was known to every member of the Committee, and a special report on the subject had been forwarded to them. In another case an unfavourable report sent to the Committee two years ago was altogether ignored by them, and the teacher's cause was stoutly upheld, with the consequences that might have been expected.

In some of the schools under the 88th clause, where the results are bad, the small attendance causes the teachers' remuneration to be so ridiculously inadequate that it would be absurd to expect them to be properly qualified, and unjust to blame them for an inevitable failure. The Board has endeavoured to carry out the recommendation made in my last report relative to the employment of ex-pupil-teachers in such schools, but at present with indifferent success, the majority of those available being females, who are naturally disinclined to leave their homes for the small remuneration afforded by such schools. Three of these schools are now under the charge of youths, only one of whom has been a pupil-teacher in the service of the Board, though the others were formerly scholars at one of our public schools. The results at two of these were very poor; but for this the teachers are not to be held responsible, as the schools were closed for some time, and had not been long reopened at the date of the examination. Next year will show whether they are capable of satisfactory work. At a few of the 88th-clause schools the figures show a very good percentage of passes. Here I wish to state that the remark made in my last report, to the effect that in some cases these schools were "worse than useless," applies to them only as at present carried on. Their failure, in most cases, is not so much due to the teachers' inability to perform useful work as to the hopeless endeavour made to accomplish the whole work of the standards, which certainly is beyond their power. The consequence is that the simple subjects, which they might teach successfully, suffer through the loss of time thus fruitlessly occupied. If the subjects of instruction at these schools were limited to reading, writing, spelling, dictation, arithmetic, and letter-writing, it might be expected that fair results in those subjects would be obtained, and the children in the remote districts, where these schools are generally situated, would at any rate have laid a foundation upon which, if opportunity offered, a more ambitious structure could be afterwards erected. I do not know whether the adoption of such a syllabus for schools having, say, less than twenty children would be any infringement of the Act. If the Board should think well of this suggestion, the matter might be referred to the Department. So far from being, as was intended by the framers of the Act, merely aided schools, it is quite an exception to find the inhabitants directly benefited by these contributing anything towards their support; nor is this always owing to the poverty of the districts, as is evidenced by the large sums of money that are raised in some of them by public subscription for various objects during every year, not forgetting the almost universal collection for the purpose of provoking and perpetuating petty local jealousies by the annual distribution of (so-called) prizes, in connection with which I may add that the sums of money thus worse than wasted would form in many instances a substantial, welcome, and well-earned addition to the poorly-paid teacher's salary.

Having been led thus to allude to the subject of prizes, I may as well express my firm conviction, founded on an experience of five-and-twenty years, that, whatever may be their value in schools of a higher grade and of a private or semi-private character, prizes in elementary schools are often mischievous, generally useless, and always unnecessary. If, as is often the case, they are lavishly distributed, the ease with which they are obtained must neutralize whatever stimulating effect they may possess. If, on the other hand, they are reserved for the two or three scholars at the head of each class, the effect on the remainder must be the reverse of encouraging, since there are nearly always a few scholars who are recognized by their class-fellows as beyond the reach of successful rivalry, and, though to these the prospect of receiving a valuable prize may be an additional incentive to exertion, they are, as a rule, the very scholars who least require it. I believe that the publication of lists showing the order of merit and the number of attendances of the scholars in each class would be far more beneficial to the true interest of the scholars, and to the welfare of the school generally. The publication might be effected either through the columns of the local papers, or by means of lists suspended in the reading-room or other place of public resort. I am aware that these opinions are opposed to those held by

some high authorities, and I doubt not that there are circumstances and communities where prize-giving may be comparatively free from the evil with which (in my opinion) it is here surrounded. In this district there are scarcely any private schools, and children of all classes sit on the same benches. At the distribution of prizes it not unfrequently and very naturally happens that the children of the better educated and more prosperous parents are the gainers of the prizes, and there are, unfortunately, not a few persons ever ready to attribute this to undue favour shown to one class over another. The following is the opinion expressed by a well-known authority on school matters on the subject of prizes: "But it is of importance to know if it be advantageous to education that we force it, or stimulate it by artificial means, by rewards, distinctions, or distribution of prizes; and it is of especial importance to know whether this artificial emulation ought to be employed in schools for the people. The question thus stated I do not hesitate to answer in the negative. . . . . It is not allowable to sacrifice the least of the pupils to cause others to make rapid progress; and still less to nourish bad passions in them for the benefit of instruction alone. Any means which might benefit the majority at the expense of several others, or even of a single one, ought to be rejected as immoral. By awarding public prizes to success there is a danger of filling the strong with vanity and pride, of overworking the middling, and of entirely discouraging the weak."

In comparing the results at the different schools as tabulated, attention should be directed to the columns showing the average age of the classes and the percentage of marks obtained. A school that passes all the scholars presented with a low percentage of marks is not to be supposed superior to one in which a few failures occur if the percentage of marks in the latter case be considerably higher. Of course reference must be made to the number of scholars presented; and after all, as I and others have repeatedly pointed out, there are many marks of excellence which cannot appear in a table of results, and the ability to answer correctly a few questions in the different subjects of the programme is not the only nor even the chief object to be aimed at by a really conscientious teacher. Of course any great deficiency in this respect cannot be overlooked; but if the teacher, both by his example and his teaching, be successfully training his scholars in habits of order, obedience, industry, courtesy, and general morality, any slight inferiority in the tabulated results obtained at a single examination of his school may justly be leniently dealt with, and he may fairly be trusted to use every exertion to improve in this respect also. The total failure of the scholars presented in the Second and First Standards at two schools to which pupil-teachers have lately been appointed, shows clearly that the teachers have fallen into the not uncommon error of intrusting the work of those standards too much to the care of these young and inexperienced assistants; but as, under the regulations recently adopted, the employment of a pupil-teacher will be discontinued at both these schools, the same error cannot be repeated. The excellent results recorded in the case of the Kumara School are the more noteworthy, inasmuch as this is the only school in this district where every subject of the programme has its place on the time-table, and is regularly and systematically taught. In the case of the Hokitika School, I am convinced that the results would have been far better than they are, if proper steps had been earlier taken to procure an efficient assistant. The good position occupied by the candidates sent up from this school to the scholarship competition is one proof of excellent teaching. A still more convincing one is to be found in the fact that in the competition for Sir W. Fox's prize the two candidates at the head of the list for the district, including Westland, were scholars from this school, and that they were competing with pupils from the Education Districts of South Canterbury and Southland, and from the Counties of Clutha, Bruce, and Tuapeka. The results at Stafford, Cobden, and Paroa are also very creditable to the teachers of those schools. At Kynnersley a very good year's work has been done by the teacher, who has since left the district. The teacher at Red Jack's has also made a good commencement, every child presented having passed. The highest standard attempted here was the Third, in which one scholar was presented.

Elementary science has been taught at the schools, and with the results given below. I beg to suggest that for the future the branch of science to be taken up shall be the same at all schools, and shall be annually prescribed by the Board; and for the current year I recommend the adoption of Foster's Physiology.

RESULTS IN ELEMENTARY SCIENCE.

Schools.	Standard IV.			Standard V.			Standard VI.		
	Examined.	Passed.	Average Percentage of Marks.	Examined.	Passed.	Average Percentage of Marks.	Examined.	Passed.	Average Percentage of Marks.
Greymouth	...	...	...	20	9	46	8	6	53
Hokitika	...	...	...	30	29	80	10	10	81
Kumara	22	17	57	20	17	66	2	2	53
Stafford	19	2	35	10	8	71	2	1	44
Goldsborough	...	...	...	8	...	9	...	...	...
Kanieri	14	...	11	4	...	25	...	...	...
Brunnerton	...	...	...	3	3	75	...	...	...
Cobden	...	...	...	3	3	67	4	4	82
Maori Gully	...	...	...	5	...	35	1	1	72

Drawing was taken up at Ross, Kumara, Kanieri, and Woodstock, the junior class drawing on slates, and the fourth, fifth, and sixth on paper. The slate drawing was not, in my opinion, quite so good as last year. The copies were prepared by Mr. Rae, of Greymouth, and the work of the upper standards was examined by him. He reports to the effect that the work on the whole was not equal

to that examined last year: that the drawing of the sixth class at Ross was fairly good; that of the same class at Kumara "not as good as Ross." The work of the fourth and fifth at Kumara was superior to that of the same classes at Ross, the greater part of which is characterized as very bad, while that of Kanieri and Woodstock is "the same as Ross." Vocal music is taught at Hokitika, Ross, and Kumara, but, as far as I am able to judge, the results were not quite so good as they were two years ago. At Kynnersley also this subject was taught with fair results. The boys are drilled at stated times in the Greymouth, Kumara, and Ross Schools, those of Greymouth being the most proficient. The condition of the examination papers with respect to cleanliness, neatness of arrangement, and handwriting affords a very fair indication of the amount of personal interest taken by the head-teacher in the work of his school, and, it is to be presumed, of his estimate of the value of these qualities. At some schools good writing and neat work were the rule. Of these I may mention Stafford, Paroa, Kumara, Ross, Cobden, and the Fifth and Sixth Standard work at Hokitika. Of the small schools the Third Standard work at the Upper Crossing was exceptionally neat and well written. Bad writing and slovenly arrangement of the work are the rule at a few schools where the general results are good; but efforts should be made to effect an improvement in this respect also, since the two excellences are by no means incompatible, and slovenly habits once acquired are seldom thoroughly shaken off, and prove a serious obstacle to advancement and success in after life. In arithmetic the number of failures was, as usual, greater than in any other subject, although geography closely approached it in this respect. It is quite possible that the slovenly writers alluded to above occasionally suffer a loss of marks in consequence of the confused jumble of figures which in their case does duty for an arithmetic paper, although, at the expense of much valuable time, I generally succeed in ferreting out the figures intended for an answer. Mistakes so frequently occur from the hasty scribbling down of figures that it is not surprising that, as a general rule, the neatest papers contain the greatest number of correct answers. In geography more attention should be paid to map drawing, with which I was disappointed this year. With a few individual exceptions the map drawing throughout the district was inferior, and in some cases very bad, and even worthless. In history the work of the upper standards was fairly well performed; but in the Third, as before, and as is to be expected, the scholars, as a rule, have only a confused idea of a number of isolated facts. Answers such as the following were common: "Sir Walter Raleigh invented the potato. He sold some to Queen Elizabeth, who cooked them; the people would not eat them, so she was obliged to give them to the pigs." "Magna Charta led the French and relieved Orleans." "Augustine came from Rome to teach the Anglo-Saxons how to dine, to make roads, to eat and dress, and other useful things." With regard to English history, I wish to recommend the Royal Reader Junior History for Standards V. and VI., and propose to make it the basis of the history examination for these standards next year. The English composition in the upper standards on the whole showed some improvement, but in the third and fourth classes it abounded with errors in the spelling of the simplest and easiest words. Sewing is taught as usual at all the schools having a female assistant. It was very good at Greymouth, Stafford, and Paroa. At Hokitika it was inferior in some respects, and the work prescribed had not all been accomplished. The time devoted to this subject at this school (two half-hours a week) is insufficient for the purpose: at least twice as much is necessary. On this account I reduced the percentage of marks allowed to the girls from 10 to 5 per cent.

Confidential Reports.—In my report for the year 1879 I announced my intention of, and gave my reasons for, adopting the plan of furnishing the Board, when I thought it desirable, with a confidential report upon the various schools; and I have accordingly since been in the habit of doing so. In addition to the reasons then given I may mention this additional and, in my opinion, very sufficient one: The fact of a teacher failing to give satisfaction in a given position here, does not of itself prove that he is incapable of satisfactory work in any department of teaching or under any other circumstances; his want of success in fact is not a crime; and, seeing the wide publicity that is now given to the Inspector's report in the colony, it would be the height of cruelty to blazon abroad the weakness of a teacher, and thus partially debar him from obtaining employment elsewhere more suited perhaps to his temperament and attainments. A man for instance may be possessed of respectable or even high classical or mathematical attainments, and may unite with these the most amiable character and gentlemanly behaviour, and yet be wholly unable to carry on the work and maintain the discipline of a large department of an elementary school. And to forbear publishing this want of success in any particular to the whole colony has been criticised as "un-English." If it be so I trust that my reports will always merit the criticism. If the cause of complaint is stated to the Board and the Committee concerned I consider I have done my duty, and it remains with them to take what action they consider that the circumstances demand. The case, however, would be widely different if a person should be found guilty of an offence which manifestly unfitted him for the important duties of a teacher in any community and under any circumstances. In such cases, which happily are of very rare occurrence, it would be the imperative duty of all who were cognizant of the facts to give them such publicity as would place it out of the offender's power to occupy a position for which he had proved himself unworthy.

Pupil-teachers.—Twenty-one pupil-teachers were examined at their own, and in some cases a neighbouring, school. Two of these were examined for admission to the highest or first class, both of whom passed, one with credit. Ten were examined for admission to the second class: of these, nine passed (four with credit) and one failed. For the third class two were examined, and both passed. In the fourth class seven were examined: four passed (one with credit) and three failed. From the table it will be seen that the pupil-teachers at Kumara and Hokitika Schools all passed with credit, as well as two out of three at the Ross School, the whole of whom also take up Latin as an extra subject. The marks gained in Latin are recorded on the table, but, in accordance with the regulations, are not included in the marks constituting a pass. The Hokitika candidates took up the second year's work in this subject, all the others the first. In all cases the translation of English into Latin seemed to present the greatest difficulty to the candidates, as indeed was to be expected. The elementary-science papers of the two higher classes were very good throughout, the two candidates from Kumara

receiving full marks. Questions relating to the application of the provisions of clause 13 of the pupil-teachers' regulations in certain cases will be submitted to the Board in another place. One pupil-teacher from Kumara took up freehand and model drawing, and was examined at the annual examination of teachers. There are two matters in connection with pupil-teachers which I wish to refer to here. First: It occasionally, indeed frequently, happens that on the occurrence of a vacancy for a pupil-teacher in any school there are several candidates anxious for the position, and sometimes the applicant who has the most friends on the Committee is appointed in opposition to the expressed opinion of the head-teacher. Some Committees, in order to avoid the imputation of partiality, decide the matter by reference to the number of marks gained by the several candidates at the ordinary or a special examination. In both cases the gravest error is committed, the latter being perhaps the more mischievous inasmuch as it bears a plausible appearance of justice and impartiality. Under no conceivable circumstance is it just or desirable to appoint a pupil-teacher to a school without the fullest consent of the head-teacher. He alone, if at all fit for his position, is capable of judging of the fitness of any of his scholars for the office, and it is as much his interest as his duty to select that one in whom he recognizes the most desirable qualifications. Now, mere ability as a student may consist with an utter unfitness for the work of teaching, and, even were it not so, the gaining of a few more marks at a single examination is by no means a conclusive proof of intellectual superiority; and, unless this superiority is combined with the many other qualities which are desirable in the character of one destined to exercise so much influence over the young, it should not be allowed to unduly influence the choice. The head-teacher who has been daily and hourly observing his scholars, probably with this object in view, perhaps for years, whose anxieties will be increased, whose reputation will be imperilled, and whose increased labour will be unrewarded if the object of his choice should prove to be unfit for the position, may surely be trusted at any rate to look after his own interests, which in such a case are identical with those of his school. I am happy to say that the Board has shown itself alive to this important question by resisting an attempt to appoint a pupil-teacher to a school against the wishes of the head-teacher. But I have reason to believe that other appointments have been made which are not approved of by the head-teachers, although they have been naturally unwilling to oppose, and, perhaps, seriously offend, the Committee. The remedy is entirely in the hands of the Board, for local Committees have nothing whatever to do with the appointment of pupil-teachers. The only clause relating to the subject is the 50th, which reads, "The Board of any district may engage and employ any number of apprentice pupil-teachers," &c., and the Committee is not once named in this connection.

I would therefore ask the Board to ascertain the views of the head-teachers of all schools to which appointments of this kind have been recently made as to the desirability or otherwise of rescinding them, especially under the latter portion of clause 2 of the pupil-teachers' regulations; and I strongly recommend the Board to refuse steadfastly to appoint any pupil-teacher not approved of by the head-teacher, such approval to be given in writing. In the event of a teacher making a recommendation which appeared to be injudicious, the Inspector might be consulted. The course recommended above is rendered absolutely necessary on account of the recent alteration in the scale of staffs, which has reduced them to the lowest point compatible with any hope of efficiency, and which is based on the hypothesis that *every* member of a staff is thoroughly competent.

The second matter which I wish to bring under your notice is the necessity of restricting in some way the appointment of pupil-teachers. For reasons into which I entered very fully in a letter to your Board in May, 1881, when the present regulations were under consideration by the department at Wellington, I consider that certain conditions should be complied with before the Board fetters itself with the responsibility and expense of training up a young person for the office of teacher. One of these conditions is that the head-teacher of the school be thoroughly competent, not only to teach, but to train in good methods of teaching, the pupil-teacher committed to his charge. Another should be that the school itself be sufficiently large to afford ample opportunity for the practice of every branch of teaching required under the standard regulations, and that the person to be appointed be not merely the most suitable that could be selected from amongst the scholars, but absolutely fit for the position. These desiderata might be secured by some such regulations as these: (1.) No head-teacher to be trusted with the teaching and training of pupil-teachers whose certificate is of a lower grade than D1, without the approval of the Inspector. (2.) That no school having less than sixty scholars on the roll shall be allowed a pupil-teacher. (3.) That, in cases where it may be deemed necessary to provide assistance to schools not entitled to the services of a pupil-teacher, stipendiary monitors may be employed, as in England, under regulations and at a rate of pay to be fixed by the Board. These stipendiary monitors would differ from pupil-teachers in two important particulars. They would not be engaged for any fixed time, but would be liable to be dismissed at a month's notice. They would have no claims on the Board for training or special instruction, and would, consequently, be less costly to the Board. The object aimed at is to provide the teachers of small schools with assistance, when required, at a moderate cost; to avoid the possibility and responsibility of inducing young persons to take up teaching as a profession without being in a position to afford them the instruction, and, above all, the training, so indispensable to success; and consequently "to guard against the inevitable failure and disappointment that must, sooner or later, arise, if teachers of inferior and limited experience, and having charge of small schools, are allowed to undertake the instructing and training of pupil-teachers."

In all the calculations necessary for the compilation of the tables appended to the report, I have, as usual, omitted fractions, unless they exceed ½, when the whole number has been increased: thus 94·6 would appear as 95, but 94·5 as 94.

I have, &c.,

The Chairman, Education Board. JOHN SMITH, Inspector.

OTAGO.

1. Mr. Petrie's Report.

Sir,— Dunedin, 7th February, 1883.

I have the honour to submit the following report for the year 1882:—

During the year I paid one or more visits of inspection to forty-six schools, and examined seventy-two according to the regulations of the Department, besides taking part of the extra branches at the four district high schools. Mr. Taylor assisted me at nineteen of the largest schools.

At the beginning of the year it was decided to make an important change in the method of recording the results of the examinations, with the object of making the gross percentage of passes a more accurate estimate of the condition of a school. Any statement of the percentage of passes at a school is at best but a rough measure of its efficiency; but the percentage of passes in standards as formerly given fell far short of the accuracy which such a numerical estimate may possess. It labours under the radical defect of placing on a level all who fail to pass a standard, thus ignoring the varying degrees of merit attaching to those who fail in their standard. In the four highest standards a pupil can pass in seven subjects, and pupils who pass in seven or six of these subjects are reckoned to pass the standard for which they are entered; while those who pass in five subjects, or in fewer, are marked as failing in their standard. But of those who so fail some may have passed in five subjects, and come very near to the passing-point, while others may have passed in only one or two subjects. It is but just that a numerical estimate of a school's condition should take note of these minor differences, and allow them such weight as they are entitled to. To do this it was decided to substitute a return of the percentage of passes in subjects for the percentage of passes in standards. This percentage of passes in subjects, which has been made out for each school, at the cost of considerable additional trouble, may, for shortness' sake, be called the gross percentage. It will generally differ from the percentage of passes in standards, and will in nearly every case be higher. It affords, I believe, a fairly exact measure of a school's efficiency, and a just basis for comparing the condition of different schools. The change has been made solely in the interests of teachers, whose work it places before the public as accurately as the nature of the case permits. The adoption of the gross percentage above described as the numerical estimate of the efficiency of a school made it necessary to abandon the practice of reckoning half passes, and to record definitely for each subject a pass or failure. One consequence of the change has been a slight reduction in the percentage of passes in several of the standards. In effect, the requirements for the standard pass have been slightly raised; but, if fewer passes in standards have been gained, the successful pupils have shown a higher degree of merit. The foregoing remarks apply only to the requirements for passing a standard. The requirements for passing in a single subject have not been altered except in reading and history. In the former, fair comprehension of the language of the lessons has been made a *sine quâ non* of passing, while in the latter the standard has been materially lowered. On the whole, the standard of attainments required during the year in separate subjects has remained practically what it was, the increased strictness in reading being fully counterbalanced by the greater laxity in judging of history. The results of the examinations held during the year are summarized in the following tables:—

Table I.: Showing the Average Age of each Standard, the Number presented, the Number passed, the Percentage of Passes gained, and the Number of Schools at which each Standard was represented.

——	Average Age.	Number presented.	Number passed.	Percentage of Passes.	Number of Schools.
	Yrs. mos.				
Standard I.	9 1	2,414	2,268	94	152
Standard II.	10 2	2,352	1,796	76	154
Standard III.	11 7	2,354	1,466	62	149
Standard IV.	12 6	1,757	989	56	139
Standard V.	13 5	983	609	62	114
Standard VI.	14 3	414	345	83	75
Totals	...	10,274	7,473	73	...

Table II.: showing the Percentage of Passes gained in the several Subjects of Examination.

Subjects.	Percentage.	Subjects.	Percentage.
Reading...	84	Grammar	73
Spelling...	86	Geography	82
Writing...	91	History	80
Arithmetic	68		

Table III.: showing the Percentage of Passes gained under each Standard in the several Subjects of Examination.

——	Reading.	Spelling.	Writing.	Arithmetic.	Grammar.	Geography.	History.
Standard I.	94	95	95	84	...	...	...
Standard II.	81	87	85	75	...	79	...
Standard III.	83	80	90	61	74	83	78
Standard IV.	76	82	92	51	72	76	79
Standard V.	83	85	97	56	65	88	83
Standard VI.	92	88	97	75	85	95	90

From Table I. it will be seen that in Standards I. and V. the average age is the same as it was last year, while in all the other standards it is somewhat lower. Seventy-three per cent. of the 10,274 pupils examined passed in the standard for which they were presented. The number is somewhat below that for last year, but, considering the change in the method of recording the results already explained, the result is by no means unsatisfactory. In comparing it with the corresponding result in other parts of New Zealand, it should be borne in mind that in Otago it is not a select number of pupils who have attended school regularly that is examined, but every child not an infant that has been more than six weeks in attendance. Were those only examined who had made 260 attendances (as in some other parts of the colony) the percentage of passes would be very much higher. While there has been a decline in the number of passes in Standards II., III., IV., and V., there has been a considerable increase in Standards I. and VI.

Table II. contains a very instructive statement of the percentage of passes in the seven subjects in which the individual examination is held. The results it records are on the whole of a very satisfactory character. In reading, spelling, writing, geography, and history 80 or more passed out of every 100 examined. In arithmetic and grammar the results, though lower, are such as the schools and their teachers need not be ashamed of. This table shows the actual state of instruction in the schools of this district with much greater accuracy than any statement of passes in standards could possibly do.

Table III. shows the percentage of passes in each subject for each standard separately. To those who are acquainted with the working of the programme of instruction the variations in the numbers in the different columns will not be unexpected. In general, where there is a low percentage there is a wide interval between that standard and the one next below it in the particular subject considered. The difference in the numbers in the different columns is further fairly proportioned to the difficulty and abstruseness of the subjects, grammar and arithmetic fitly showing the lowest percentages. It may be worth while to add some further observations on this table. In Standard I. the results in reading, spelling, and writing are excellent; and in arithmetic they are very good. The children presented in Standard I. are, of course, the youngest that are examined. The work is done by the classes standing in front of the Inspector, the questions being given out orally. The very high percentage of passes shows very clearly that the classes at this stage have been well taught, and that the examination is conducted in a kindly way. Were there any general feeling of timidity or nervousness caused by the Inspector's manner of dealing with or speaking to the children, the results would show more decided traces of its effects.

The results in Standard II. are on the whole very good. Spelling, which is dictated *vivâ voce* by the Inspector, is the best subject, again showing that direct intercourse with the Inspector does not prevent the scholars from answering well. The passes in reading have been reduced by failures in the explanation of words; but they are still high. In arithmetic and geography, where the results are lowest, the questions are written on the blackboard, and the answers worked out by the pupils at their leisure on slates at the desks. The failures in arithmetic are mainly due, I think, to want of care and attention rather than to ignorance; but in geography, where the work is definite and the questions proposed plain, they are probably due to faults of teaching.

In Standard III. good work has been done in nearly all the subjects. In reading and spelling, the only subjects in which the Inspector has direct oral communication with the scholars, the results are good, and the same is true of writing, geography, and history; but in the last-mentioned subject passes are in this standard allowed for very little. In arithmetic and grammar, which are always answered at the desks from printed questions, the results are much lower. In arithmetic, indeed, they show decidedly inferior teaching, for the questions set are perfectly plain and straightforward, while there is nothing to prevent the pupils, seated as they are at their desks, from doing their best. In most cases the time allowed is sufficient for working the questions more than once. In grammar I think the results very fair, for the subject is rather abstruse, and, besides, a certain facility in framing simple sentences is required, to secure which no small skill on the part of the teacher is needed.

In Standard IV. the results in spelling, writing, and history are good; in reading, grammar, and geography they are fair; and in arithmetic bad. The failures in reading have been mainly caused by inability to explain the language of the lessons. The books usually read by this class are of a difficult character, and much attention to the meaning of words and phrases is necessary to make sure that the scholars fully understand what they read. I hope that the attempt to test the comprehension of the language of the lessons, which has been made this year for the first time and will be continued in years to come, will stimulate attention to this important matter, which has always been a weak point in the work of the Otago schools. To this day not a few schools are to be found where the pupils cannot explain the meaning of the poetry they have committed to memory. The very poor results in arithmetic are partly due to the great interval between this standard and the one next below it; but this consideration will account only in part for the numerous failures: the examinations in the subject are intentionally kept up to a fairly high level, but even at that they are not difficult. A lately appointed Inspector of Schools in another district of New Zealand, who has had recent and extensive experience in teaching under the departmental programme of instruction, informs me that he considers the arithmetic papers set in this district rather easy. If this is so, it seems a fair conclusion that the teaching of arithmetic at this stage is on the average at fault.

In Standard V. the results are very good in all the subjects except arithmetic and grammar. No doubt a good deal of back work has to be made up in arithmetic at this stage, which will largely account for the low average of proficiency. For the low figures in the grammar column the character of the teaching is, I think, responsible.

The results in Standard VI. are excellent in most of the subjects, and satisfactory in all. No fewer than 414 were examined at seventy-five different schools. The appearance made by these pupils is most gratifying, and shows that a large proportion of the schools are capable of doing the most advanced work much better than one would expect from their performance in the intermediate standards.

Of the many causes that lead to failures the most usual are irregular attendance and unskilful

management and teaching. Nervousness doubtless has a certain effect, but this cannot be great, for the failures are fewest just in those cases where nervousness should most show itself—namely, in the work done orally, and especially in the First and Second Standards. It is in arithmetic and grammar—subjects that are always answered by the pupils on slates or paper—that failures are most numerous and common. In these circumstances the pupils should answer as well as they are capable on the average of doing; and I have little doubt that in the great majority of schools such is the case. Results in these subjects may disappoint an Inspector, but they should not greatly disappoint a teacher, who has tested and knows the capabilities of his class. Still, from various causes, teachers are now and then sorely puzzled and disheartened by unexpected failures. Some no doubt over-estimate the capabilities of their pupils; others neglect to accustom them to the routine of examination; while others create a degree of excitement that is highly unfavourable to accurate and representative work. The routine of examination varies but little from year to year, so that pupils could easily be made familiar with it. Neglect of this precaution causes a good many failures in rural districts. I suppose a certain amount of excitement is inseparable from annual examinations; but in a well managed and well taught school it does not materially affect the results. In some cases, however, its effects are appreciable enough. For this, I believe, many teachers have themselves to thank, as they habitually place the annual examination before their pupils in a light that tends to generate and foster the feeling in question. One further cause of failure arises from the circumstance that many teachers adjust their instruction to the range of the examinations during the past two or three years, and neglect to teach the syllabus in its entirety. Where this has been done the scholars will be unprepared for any slight change in the range of the examination. During the present year this has happened in connection with the meaning of words, and mental arithmetic, which were then for the first time introduced into every examination above Standard I.

Some information as to the standard expected in each subject may not be devoid of interest. In Standards IV., V., and VI. reading must be fairly fluent and distinct, with correct pronunciation of all words of ordinary difficulty: in addition, four words or phrases are given for explanation, two of which must be satisfactorily done. In spelling, a fair passage (usually taken from a lower book than the one the class is reading) of about four lines has to be written to dictation, besides six words selected from the ordinary reading-book or a lower one: those who have not made more than one mistake in dictation and two in the words pass. In writing, the copybooks must show fair care, and be like the head-lines; if mistakes have not been corrected by the teacher the writing is judged with greater strictness. In arithmetic, grammar, and geography a pass is granted if three-fifths of the work is correctly done; and in history if half the questions are fairly answered. Grammar (including composition) is usually examined last, and if the pupil has failed in one subject, but done fairly in all the others, the standard as above defined is relaxed somewhat. The lower standards are treated in a similar manner. To pass in a standard, pupils must not fail in more than one subject. I do not see how any one acquainted with the kind of questions set in this district can reasonably complain of the severity of the standard of proficiency exacted in each subject. It has received the most careful consideration, and appears to both myself and my colleagues calculated to encourage accurate and thorough work on the part of the pupils, without discouraging the teachers. Each Inspector has an identical copy of the pass requirements for each subject of each standard, so as to secure as great uniformity as possible. I believe that there is no more difference between the results of an examination by my colleagues and myself than between my own results on two consecutive days. From the nature of the case, no two examinations can be of exactly equal difficulty, but every care is taken to secure as near an approximation as possible to equality in this respect. In my report for last year I took occasion to point out some faults of teaching that appeared to me more or less prevalent in the district. I regret that, in public discussion of these strictures, a much wider application was given to them than I intended, or the condition of the schools warranted. The faults complained of are being slowly remedied, and I trust that more frequent visits to the more backward schools, and personal intercourse with the teachers, will expedite their disappearance.

In the teaching of reading I can report some considerable improvement. Geography and history have also been more carefully and skilfully taught than heretofore. In arithmetic increased attention is being given to blackboard drill, though the results in Standards III., IV., and V. are this year less satisfactory than usual. Composition has in most schools been better done than formerly, but in formal grammar little progress has been made in Standards III. and IV. The results in this subject, however, have suffered more than in any other from the want of familiarity with the routine of examination already referred to. Writing has been on the whole carefully superintended, the mistakes have been more generally marked, and a higher percentage of passes gained. Spelling, as usual, is one of the best taught subjects.

During the year I have devoted a good deal of attention to the object lessons. These have been given in all the schools I have examined. In a few schools the number of object lessons given has been absurdly small, not more than half a dozen in twelve months. The subjects of the lessons were for the most part suitable, and in many cases the children possessed a good knowledge of what they had been taught. I have occasionally had to express disapproval of the arrangement of the matter. Unless descriptive of animals they should be so arranged as to bring out the striking properties of the object, and then show how these properties lead up to its uses. If this connection is skilfully elicited, the exercise cannot fail to be of great value. I have been much pleased with the increased attention and care bestowed on these lessons. In the larger schools, and in not a few of the smaller ones, suitable lessons on some branch of elementary science are given, generally with satisfactory results. In no case has more than a small portion of the course laid down in the syllabus been overtaken. Elementary physics, physiology, and physical geography are the branches usually studied. I have generally found the physical geography best known, and the physiology worst. The circumstances of small schools do not admit of much attention to this part of the programme, and in some I have not objected to its being dropped.

Statements are sometimes made to the effect that pupils in the public schools have far too much

to do, and that the mental work required of them is insidiously undermining their physique. Such statements are, I believe, wholly devoid of foundation. The pupils are, as a rule, remarkably rosy and robust. Even in the largest schools, where a great many pairs of lungs are cooped up within the walls of a moderate sized room, the general healthy appearance of the children is very striking. The school hours rarely exceed five. Add to this an hour and a half of home study, and the total time pupils devote to their education is by no means excessive. In most schools on the Continent of Europe the more advanced pupils are in the schoolroom for as many hours as the total of school and home work here amounts to. If there is scope for play and games, the school children of Otago have abundance of time to devote to them. If in some cases the physique of public school pupils is not what it might be, I believe that other causes than the time and attention given to their education can be readily assigned. One of the most pleasing features of the Otago schools is the excellent behaviour of the pupils. In this respect the schools now stand on a much higher level than they occupied when I first came into contact with them. No feature in connection with the schools reflects greater credit on the teachers than this. During the examinations the children have done their work honestly, and in general with satisfactory care and attention. Rarely has there been occasion to complain of copying and other offences of that class.

Singing is taught in all the larger and in a considerable number of the smaller schools. In several of the larger ones the older pupils sing with great correctness and expression. It is to be regretted that the subject is not taught more widely, for when well handled it exercises an admirable influence on the pupils, an influence that every teacher would do well to have at his command.

In connection with the Board's scholarship scheme, I am happy to be able to record that four of the holders of senior scholarships have lately gained junior scholarships at the University of New Zealand, being the only competitors from Otago who attained to that distinction. They have all attended the Dunedin High Schools for several years.

I have, &c.,

The Secretary, Education Board. DONALD PETRIE, M.A., Inspector.

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2. MR. TAYLOR'S REPORT.

SIR,— Dunedin, 14th February, 1883.

I have the honour to submit my report for the year ended 31st December, 1882. The number of schools examined by me was fifty-two. I also assisted Mr. Petrie with the examination of nineteen of the larger schools, and made forty-five visits of inspection. The districts to which my attention was directed were not quite the same as those of former years. I examined a number of schools in Vincent County which used to be taken by Mr. Petrie, who, instead, examined a corresponding number in the Tapanui and Clutha districts; while Mr. Goyen examined the schools in the Peninsula and Taieri Counties, formerly taken by me. The examinations have been conducted, with the exception of one or two slight changes, on the same lines as before, and in accordance with the regulations of the Education Department. If the requirements of the standards are of a burdensome and exacting nature it should be manifest that the Inspectors cannot be held responsible for them. Their duty is to see that the regulations are carried into effect, whatever hardships may be entailed on themselves or others.

The buildings, except in a few instances, were well suited to their purpose—commodious, well furnished, and in a state of good preservation. The exceptions were in the localities of least importance, where the Board would not be warranted in incurring any considerable expense, on account of the small number of pupils attending school. The playgrounds, though generally limited in extent, and not naturally very suitable on account of unevenness of surface, have, as a rule, received considerable attention from Committees in the way of levelling, fencing, and, in a number of cases, surrounding them with belts of trees and shrubs, which in a short time will afford excellent shelter and shade, and add greatly to the appearance of many treeless districts in Otago. Any assistance granted by the Board to such Committees as show a disposition to exercise themselves in thus beautifying and improving its property would be money well spent. Teachers would readily give their sympathy and co-operation to Committees in work of this kind, and would induce their pupils to take a pride and pleasure in their surroundings, and so free them in some measure from the senseless and destructive larrikin spirit so prevalent in some quarters.

CLASSIFICATION.—Classification is very much determined by the programme of instruction and the annual examinations. The only difficulty in connection with it is to be found in schools with but one teacher, having all the standards represented and a number of infants besides. The tendency is to subdivide the latter into three or four groups, and so to fritter away valuable time with nine or ten classes. In schools of this kind the infant classes ought not to exceed in number two at the most. It will be found that eight classes are more than one teacher can satisfactorily deal with.

TIME-TABLES.—The framing of a time-table, when a teacher has only one or two classes in hand, is comparatively an easy matter; but it is quite the opposite when one teacher has in charge seven or eight classes. Then, it requires some skill, careful consideration, and repeated experiment to construct a time-table that shall meet the requirements of the syllabus, and do justice to every class and branch of school work. Though neglect is not to be passed over, yet some leniency and assistance have to be accorded to the inexperienced whose time-tables are not satisfactorily arranged, and not always adapted to the changing circumstances of their schools.

DISCIPLINE.—The first requisites of good discipline are efficient order and control, and these are found existing in the great majority of the schools. There are a few, however, in which the government is weak, and, as a consequence, the pupils are noisy, idle, disrespectful, and backward with their work. The following notes, taken on inspection days, will give some idea of the condition of such schools: (1.) "The boys especially do not manifest a good spirit. They are disrespectful, are given to talking and idling away their time, and become sullen when reproved." (2.) "The teacher allows talking. His pupils are given to tittering and giggling. Tone unsatisfactory." (3.) "The control is

most inefficient. The pupils are allowed liberty of talk and movement to an extraordinary degree. The school is fast becoming a Babel in consequence." Such indulgent treatment of children is mistaken kindness, for which they will give their teacher the reverse of thanks when increasing years and sense enable them to value it at its true worth. The government in a few instances, instead of being lax, is too stringent, and, though not so easy of detection, manifests itself by the general diffidence and timidity of the pupils, who seem to have the life pressed out of them, and are afraid to express themselves with freedom. Both kinds of government are objectionable. The natural vivacity of children must be prevented from becoming an annoyance, but ought not to be extinguished completely. It is only where efficient control is maintained that the higher results of satisfactory discipline, such as respect for authority, devotion to study, and a hearty desire for improvement, can exist and manifest themselves.

READING.—The standard regulations require that the reading-books shall be read "intelligently" in Standards I. and II., and "fluently and intelligently" in the others. There might be room for some difference of opinion among teachers and Inspectors as to what the expression, "to be read intelligently," exactly means, were it not explained in the annotated edition of these regulations. It is clear that it does not mean mere ability to explain the words and phrases in the passages read, for that comes under the term "definition," but must mean that a pupil shall so read as to show to the listener by his very tone and manner that he understands what he reads. Intelligent reading should possess at least the following characteristics—viz., distinct enunciation, suitable grouping of words into the clauses of a sentence, emphasis, and natural expression. The schools in which the reading is found to possess these marks are not numerous. In many it is fluent—too fluent—and fairly accurate; but the other characteristics are often wanting. Were the passes in reading made to depend more upon its being intelligent, and less upon its being merely fluent and accurate, the percentages in this subject would not be so high as they are. That kind of reading so frequently heard, in which the voice is made to have the falling inflexion at every pause, no matter what the pause may be, is particularly objectionable, and is scarcely an improvement on the monotonous style which formerly prevailed. Connected with reading in the syllabus is "definition," meaning the explanation of words and phrases. Formerly definition was tested by oral questioning on the scope and meaning of the lesson read. More time was consumed in this exercise than could be well given to it, and nothing was recorded as to the results of it except a general statement in the school report. To save time, and to insure the giving of greater attention in the every day work of the school, to explanation of and examination on the subject-matter of the lessons, it was deemed advisable to withhold a pass in reading unless the pupil could satisfactorily explain in writing the meaning of two out of four words and phrases. Nothing new was introduced, except what was considered a more effective way of testing certain work and of securing certain ends. Those schools in which the all-important work was attended to of training the minds and increasing the intelligence of the pupils by carefully and skilfully teaching them to understand what they read, suffered little or nothing by the change, the loss mainly falling where it was deserved.

SPELLING.—Spelling is, next to writing, the best taught subject of the school course. Its general accuracy is to be attributed in a great measure to carefully supervised exercises in transcription and dictation, to the use made of the blackboard in pointing out and rectifying mistakes, and to the frequent revision of the difficult and unusual words met with in the daily lessons.

WRITING.—Writing shows the highest percentage of passes of all the subjects of examination. It has certainly improved very much of late years. In most of the schools the very youngest classes produce excellent writing on slates, and continue as they advance to produce writing similar in character on paper. Occasionally the writing in the exercise-books does not correspond with that in the copybooks, but is much inferior. Little benefit will result if the one is allowed to neutralize the other. Too lengthy exercises are responsible for most of the scribbling in the exercise-books. There are several schools in which the young children are allowed to write in any way, without sufficient direction and supervision; but their number is annually becoming less.

ARITHMETIC.—The results gained in this subject were considerably lower than in the other subjects of the programme, the shortcoming being most perceptible in Standards III., IV., and V. Standard III. sums were printed with their appropriate signs on cards, and a number of failures were owing either to ignorance of what the signs meant or inattention to them. In several cases failures arose from the fact that the pupils had been drilled in doing sums set in a particular form, and consequently did not interpret correctly the signs and expressions when arranged differently, but proceeded to work the sums according to the routine they had been accustomed to. The low percentage of passes in Standard IV. is owing to the high step that has to be taken in passing from Standard III. to Standard IV., and to the fact that this step is a transitional one from mechanical work to that requiring considerable concentration of thought and ability to reason. The number of passes is never likely to be high in this standard unless considerable preparation can be made for it before the pupils pass from Standard III. The stricter account taken of mental arithmetic during the past year reduced the number of passes in all the standards; but the loss in this respect is likely to be more than counterbalanced by the gain sure to accrue to arithmetic generally in the future, from exercising to a greater degree than formerly the ingenuity and intelligence of the pupils in solving mental problems. If mental arithmetic receives not a large share of attention the slate arithmetic is sure to be defective, and the former ought always to precede the latter.

GRAMMAR.—Parsing was generally very fairly done, except in Standard III., where the pupils frequently failed to distinguish accurately the few parts of speech required of them, and in Standards IV. and V., where the relations existing between words in a sentence were not known so fully as they might have been. Analysis of sentences, both simple and complex, was done with considerable skill. Composition showed very fair improvement, although sometimes letters and essays were handed in without punctuation of any kind.

GEOGRAPHY.—This subject shows satisfactory results; yet I do not think that sufficient care is taken, especially in the younger classes, to illustrate it by examples near at hand, by rough sketches on the blackboard, or by reference to a map. The answers given often betrayed a slavish adherence

to the words of the text-book, and a want of understanding. When questions were put in words different from those the pupils were used to, failure to answer generally followed. No opportunity should be omitted of explaining and illustrating the subject by familiar examples within the children's reach.

History.—Hearing a history lesson lately given in one of our schools, which consisted in the class reading from the text-book in use, the master then asking questions about what had been read, it appeared to me that something more was required to render the lesson complete. The questions were good, and even necessary to the right understanding of the lesson, but at the same time they were the means of breaking it up into detached fragments, which required to be again joined together. The pupils should be asked to give orally, in their own words, and in a connected form, the substance of the lesson gone over, or a part of it. Such an exercise would, I am sure, prove to be a profitable one. It would not only add considerable interest and effect to the history lesson itself, but would afford practice in oral composition and in the art of speaking, which might be of immense service to the pupils in after life. This exercise of oral reproduction is well worth a trial, and should not be confined to history merely, but should be made use of in connection with reading and other lessons.

Singing.—Singing receives more or less attention in a considerable number of schools. In most it consists in giving, in fair time and tune, a number of school songs. In some of the larger schools excellent part-singing is to be heard, but the instances in which the theory as well as the practice of music is taught are few. I should like to find more frequently ability to sing scales, and intervals from the modulator, and simple pieces at sight. I was much pleased by what I saw of teaching in this direction in a school in the northern district, where an assistant had charge of the music classes. She had an extensive knowledge of the subject herself, and could teach it with excellent effect to the pupils of the school, whom she had divided into suitable graduated classes for the purpose. She had also succeeded in training the pupil-teachers to act as valuable assistants.

Nervousness.—This failing in children is made to cover a multitude of sins. More or less of it perhaps is inseparable from any examination, but I believe it affects children to a much less extent than it gets credit for. When they are in a fit state of preparation for examination (and they are conscious when this is the case) such a feeling interferes very little with their work. If it exists at all, the greater share of it is attributable to the nature of their every day training and instruction. When children have been so taught and trained as to have confidence in themselves and in their teacher, they will not regard with much dread the visits of Inspectors. It is only when these have been held up as *bêtes noires* for a certain purpose that they will inspire fear. Proofs are not wanting to show that the same children who failed to do their work one year in consequence of what was called nervousness, but which deserved another name, succeeded admirably the next, the only difference in their circumstances being a change of teacher.

In conclusion, I have to report that the schools examined by me were generally in a satisfactory state of order and instruction, and were creditable to the ability and diligence of the teachers. In too many of them, especially those in agricultural districts, irregularity of attendance interfered seriously with the efficiency, and rendered satisfactory progress an impossibility. Notwithstanding the conscientious discharge of their duties, often under trying circumstances, I venture to say that not a few teachers, by perseveringly thinking out and searching out and putting in practice the best methods, and by giving attention to the preparation of lessons, so as to discover the most effective and economical plan of presenting them to their pupils, could produce results even more beneficial and satisfactory than are now attained.

I have, &c.,

The Secretary, Education Board. William Taylor, Inspector.

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3. Mr. Goyen's Report.

Sir,— Dunedin, 11th February, 1883.

I have the honour to forward my general report for the portion of the year 1882, during which I was engaged in this education district. I entered upon my duties on the 3rd of July. Between that date and the end of the year my time was spent in making forty-two visits without notice; in examining fifty-seven schools, and a part of the higher work of the four district high schools; and in discharging the many other duties connected with the work of inspection.

The material condition of the schools visited by me is for the most part good. The buildings are generally substantial, roomy, and well ventilated; but many of them were found not to be swept and scrubbed with sufficient frequency. The out-offices, too, were often found in a very unsatisfactory condition. It is, however, due to most of the Committees to say that as soon as their attention was directed to these matters steps were taken to remedy them. The schools are generally well furnished (but the furniture is not always kept clean), and well supplied with maps and other apparatus; but those appliances are not in all schools so well taken care of as they would be were they the teachers' own property. In a large number of schools the children's reading-books were in a very dirty and dilapidated state; and very scant heed had been given to No. 7 of the Board's Instructions to Teachers. A study of the tables given in Mr. Petrie's report will show, so far as this can be shown by statistics, with what degree of success the Board's schools have been conducted during the year. Table I. shows the percentage of children that passed the standards in accordance with Regulation 8. To this result I am not disposed to attach nearly so much importance as the general public appear to attach to it. The statement given in the table simply means that out of every 100 children examined 73 succeeded in giving satisfactory answers in all the subjects in which they were examined, or in all except one; but takes no account whatever of the large number that answered satisfactorily in two or fewer subjects out of four in the First Standard, in three or fewer subjects out of five in the Second Standard, and in five or fewer subjects out of seven in the Third and higher standards. The regulation directs the Inspector to regard serious failure in any two subjects as a failure for the standards; hence a school may, and often does, do a large proportion of the work satisfactorily, and yet, so far as passing the standards is concerned, achieve a very poor result indeed. A much juster estimate of the

state of our schools may be gained by a study of Tables II. and III., in one of which is shown the average quality of the answering in each subject, and in the other the quality of the answering in each subject by each standard. Viewed in the light of those tables the schools are seen to be meeting the requirements of a difficult syllabus with a very considerable degree of success; in no subject do they signally fail, and in several they do well; and those results are, I believe, gained with but little of the high pressure one hears so much about. In my own inspections, at any rate, I have seen nothing to warrant this cry of high pressure and overwork, and, if such exist in any part of the district unknown to me, it is, I have no doubt, due to injudicious management, and not to any inherent defect in the system of education. Of course every child has to do a fair amount of earnest work, but every one is the better for that. Those of the Board's teachers with whom I have come into contact are for the most part zealous in the discharge of their duties, and much respected by the people amongst whom they live. Many of them conduct their schools with intelligence and success, and almost all manifest a desire to profit by suggestions. So far as most of the schools inspected and examined by me are concerned, I believe that I may say that the colony is getting a very fair return for the expenses incurred in connection with their maintenance.

READING.—The reading is generally correct, reasonably fluent, not infrequently indistinct, and, except in a few schools, deficient in style and expression. The most serious defect in connection with this subject is the general ignorance of the import of the language and the facts of the reading-books; and this remark applies quite as fully to the poetry specially prepared for the examination as to the prose read during the year. This defect is, I think, in the main due to two causes—want of time to the teacher, and absence of preparation by pupils. Where, as in most cases, the teacher has to teach more than one standard, he cannot, without neglecting other subjects, devote sufficient time to reading to work out and impress upon his pupils' minds the meaning of the language and the relation of the facts and ideas of the lessons; and, as there is no time set apart for the study of these by the pupils themselves, the children get through their books a time or two without acquiring much but the power readily to reproduce the sounds of words and a more or less distinct notion of the meaning of very common words and expressions. Of course this result is unsatisfactory, but it is by no means peculiar to the Board's schools. The reports of inspectors show that it is common to the elementary schools of almost all English-speaking communities; and it is bound to persist in a greater or less degree until we amend our methods, and cease attempting to do for our pupils what, with a little training, they can much better for themselves.

To insure more attention to the study of language, we have made the pass in reading conditional upon a fairly accurate explanation of one out of two, or two out of four, words selected from the lessons read during the year. To this condition most of the failures in this subject were due; and I fear that, unless a portion of time (say thirty minutes) is set apart daily for the study of language by the children themselves, the result gained in reading will never be of a very satisfactory character. In my opinion the pupils of the Fourth and higher standards should be trained to use a dictionary, and be required to work out in the forenoon the meanings of the unknown words that occur in the lesson to be read in the afternoon. Not only would this plan economize the teachers' time and energy, setting them free to carry on the work of the junior standards, but it would introduce into elementary schools a mental exercise that has been too long largely excluded from them—the exercise of selecting from several meanings of a word the meaning that makes sense when taken with the meaning of the other words of the passage under consideration. The selecting and the combining the meanings of previously unknown words constitute the chief value, as a mental discipline, of learning a foreign language, and ought certainly to find a place in the study of English in the higher classes of elementary schools, the more so that in the majority of those schools the teacher is absolutely precluded, by the multiplicity of classes and of subjects, from working into the minds of his pupils the import of the language of their reading-books. But, when all has been done by the pupils that is possible to be done by them, there still remains a large and important share for the teacher to do—a share deserving much more attention than it usually gets. I refer to the teacher's preparation of the lesson to be read. Every classified teacher is, I presume, familiar with the meaning of the language of the reading-books, but there are few men indeed that can deal effectively with the facts, the allusions, and the ideas of a lesson, without considerable preparation. No school exercise is more difficult, and probably none is worse performed, than this. Where a man has to watch and supervise five or six classes, the conditions are very unfavourable to concentration of thought, and hence it not uncommonly happens that a question is changed several times before the teacher is satisfied that the proper one has been asked. Why should time and energy be wasted in this way, when, by suitable preparation, the proper form of the question might be determined upon beforehand? The defect here noticed is a very serious as well as a very common one, and no effort should be spared to remedy it. Were teachers to interleave their own reading-books, and, after studying the lesson, to write down opposite each paragraph the questions that would bring out its salient features, much would be done towards providing a suitable remedy. With respect to the form those questions should assume, I would refer to Joyce "On Reading," and Tate "On Questioning;" and with respect to the kind of answers that should be received I would like to quote the following passage from Mr. Fitch's excellent "Lectures on Teaching." Mr. Fitch has just been condemning that vicious though very common style of questioning in which the whole of what has to be said is said by the teacher, and the scholar is simply called on to answer Yes or No; and continues,—

> And, in a less degree, I would have you distrust all answers which consist of single words. You explain by a diagram or otherwise to little children what the line is that passes through the centre, and you say that it is called the diameter. Some teachers would follow up this explanation by saying, "What do you call this line?" "A diameter." "What is it?" "A diameter." Now, the mere echo of the word may readily be given you in this way if you repeat the question a dozen times, and given by children who do not know what it means. The word diameter is part of a sentence: "The line which passes through the centre of a circle or sphere is called a diameter." And, unless the children have appropriated this whole sentence, they have learned nothing. . . . . Let us remember that every answer we get to an ordinary question is the fragment of a sentence; but it is only the sentence, and not the single word, which conveys any meaning; and that the questioner who understands his art turns his question round until he gets from his scholars successively the other parts of the sentence, and finally the whole. *Indeed, one of the best tests of a good question is the relation between the number of words employed by the teacher and the pupil respectively. If the teacher does all the talking,*

*and the pupil only responds with single words, the questioning is bad. The great object should be with the minimum of your own words to draw out the maximum of words and thought from him.** . . . . Ask yourself, when your scholars close their books and you question them on the reading-lesson, how the series of answers would look if taken down by an unseen reporter, and printed out in full—would they be orderly? Would they be readable? Would they cover the whole ground, and make a complete summary of what has been learned? Unless your questions would stand this test, you have yet something to learn of the teacher's craft.

And much more to the same purpose is contained in the lecture from which the foregoing is extracted. The whole lecture is well worth the serious consideration of every teacher that realizes the weight of his responsibilities, and that desires to advance with the advancing knowledge of the age. I have dwelt at some length on the question of language, because, owing to press of subjects and of classes upon the teacher, the study of it in the primary schools is attended with considerable difficulty, because it is, in my view, the most important subject of the whole school course, and because I firmly believe that much of the poor answering in other subjects—especially in grammar and arithmetic—is due to the very slender knowledge possessed by the examinees of the meaning of the language in which the questions are expressed.

Spelling and Writing.—Most of the schools are very strong in spelling. In writing the average percentage gained is 91. Nine out of every 100 children examined therefore failed to pass. This is too large a proportion of failures in so mechanical a subject as writing. With care, nearly 100 per cent. should be gained, for we pass every copy that is clean, and accurate as to points of junction, distance, and relative length of letters. More thoroughgoing blackboard criticism is needed in the junior standards. In several schools the writing was excellent, and the neatness of the exercise-books beyond all praise. The junior classes were frequently found writing with bits of pencil about as long as a man's thumb-nail. Of course the usual penalty is bound to be exacted when these children begin to work with the pen.

Arithmetic.—The results gained in this subject are a poor return for the large amount of time devoted to it, and show either that the syllabus is too difficult, or that the teaching is faulty. My observation leads me to adopt the latter alternative. In the lower standards failures were often due to inadequate knowledge of the addition and multiplication tables—tables which, when understood, should be thoroughly committed to memory; and in the upper to want of power to gather up the full meaning of the language in which the sums were expressed, and to inadequate knowledge of the principles of arithmetic, and their practical application. More abundant use of the blackboard, and much more thoroughness in impressing explanations of principles and processes upon the minds of the pupils, are greatly needed. With the explanations given there is seldom any fault to be found; but I do think that in many cases very insufficient care is taken to impress them on the children's minds. Analysis of numbers is very little practised in the junior standards, and arithmetical composition not at all that I know of in the senior. Both these exercises are invaluable in the study of this subject.

Grammar.—Good answering in grammar depends very largely upon familiarity with the meaning of words. To tell the function of a word a child must know its meaning, and a similar remark applies to the function of the phrase and the sentence. The meaning is generally poorly known, and hence the character of the answering is often not so satisfactory as one could wish. With more attention to the study of language we may expect greatly increased proficiency in grammar. Sufficient use is not, I think, made of analysis in the teaching of composition. Children seldom make mistakes in the placing of simple attributes and extensions; but when these consist of phrases and sentences there is but little skill shown in the disposition of them. It is in dealing with phrases and sentences that analysis might be made a powerful instrument in the teaching of composition. The composition is invariably better in the schools in which Mr. Park's little manual is used than in others. This is an excellent introductory book, and, if it were supplemented in the higher classes by Abbott's little manual, "How to Write Clearly," there cannot be the least doubt that the quality of this exercise would greatly improve.

Geography.—The work of the higher standards is much better known than that of the lower. In the Second Standard, for example, where the work is very easy, of every 100 children examined, 21 failed. In this standard definitions were almost invariably well given, whilst the questions on the map were for the most part very poorly answered. This points to insufficient training in map reading.

History.—Every practical teacher knows that the philosophy of history cannot be taught in the elementary school. There is no time for it. The most that should be attempted, certainly the most that can be done without trenching upon time that ought to be occupied by the study of other and more important subjects, is to get into the children's minds, in the most intelligent way practicable, a good skeleton of the subject—a firm outline to be filled in at more mature age. The results given in the tables show that in the Board's schools this is being done with a considerable degree of success.

Sewing.—The quality of the sewing ranged from fair to very good; but very few schools presented all the kinds of work specified in the syllabus.

Singing and Drawing.—The regulations relating to these subjects are more honoured in the the breach than in the observance. A few schools gained good results in singing, but in the majority of them the subject was not taken up.

Object Lessons and Elementary Science.—Most of the schools were found to have done more or less work in one or both of these subjects; but my questions did not often succeed in eliciting intelligent answers. Nearly all the lessons I have seen given were far too verbal, and tended very little to develop the observing and reasoning faculties. They might very properly be termed "information lessons," but their educative value was, I fear, very trifling.

Records.—In many schools the records were not fully written up and kept in accordance with the instructions issued with each register. With one or two exceptions, I found the daily register marked with regularity, and with as much accuracy as is possible without verifying the marking by counting the number of pupils present at roll call; but the quarterly summations were sometimes

* The italics are mine.

incomplete, and in several cases not made up at all. The admission register was often found in a backward state, and discrepancies between the date of birth entered in it and the age entered in the other registers were very common. These discrepancies generally tended to raise the average age of the standards. The weekly summary register, though involving a deal of labour, does not appear to serve any very useful purpose, and I believe all the teachers would be glad to see it replaced by one from which they could readily compile their rather troublesome quarterly returns.

Discipline and Behaviour.—In most of the schools visited by me the discipline was found to be mild and effective. The class movements were executed with fair celerity, and generally with an absence of undue noise. The children were, for the most part, prompt in their obedience to orders, respectful in their bearing towards their teachers, and self-reliant during the examinations.

I have, &c.,

The Secretary, Education Board. P. Goyen, Inspector.

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

Sir,— Dunedin, 9th February, 1883.

I have the honour to submit the following report on the district high schools for the year 1882:—

The following tabulated statements show the extra branches taught at each of the district high schools, the number of pupils taught, the number examined, and the quantity of work read under each subject.

Oamaru District High School.—Examined 30th and 31st October, 1882.

Subject.	Class.	Number taught.	Number examined.	Work done.
Latin ...	I.	1	1	Grammar; Principia Latina, Part II. to the end of Book III. of the Roman History; Æneid, Book I.
	II.	3	2	Principia Latina, Part I. to the end of the regular verbs, and 20 pages of Part II.
	III.	8	8	To the end of *sum*, Principia Latina, Part I.
French ...	I.	6	3	Voltaire's Charles XII.; Victor Hugo's Les Travailleurs de la Mer, Books I., II., and III.; De Jardin's French Class-Book; and translation into French of passages selected from the Sixth Royal Reader.
	II.	7	6	De Jardin's Class-Book, to Exercise 121; the regular verbs; the whole of the translation of French into English.
	III.	17	14	Beginners.
English ...	I.	20	15	A portion of Richard II.
Geometry ...	I.	3	3	Euclid, Books I., II., III., and IV., with exercises on Book I.
	II.	6	4	Euclid, Book I.
Algebra ...	I.	1	1	Todhunter's for Beginners, 30 exercises.
	II.	4	3	Todhunter's for Beginners, 21 exercises.
	III.	6	6	Beginners.
Trigonometry ...	I.	3	3	Hamblin Smith's, a few chapters (30 pages).

Port Chalmers District High School.—Examined 1st and 2nd November, 1882.

Latin ...	I.	2	2	Principia Latina, Part I., and Part II. to the end of Book I. of the History; Cæsar's Invasion of Britain, as in De Bello Gallico, Books IV. and V.
	II.	5	4	Principia Latina, Part I., 72 pages, and the irregular verbs.
	III.	10	9	As above, 36 pages.
French ...	I.	8	7	De Jardin's Class-Book, 120 exercises. The verb, as in pp. 57–82, and translation of pp. 181–205.
English ...	I.	7	6	The Merchant of Venice (Royal School Series).
Geometry ...	I.	2	2	Euclid, Books I., II., III., IV., and VI., with exercises on Book I.
	II.	2	2	Euclid, Books I., II., and III. props. 1–15.
	III.	12	12	Euclid, 26 props. of Book I.
Algebra ...	I.	2	2	Todhunter's for Beginners, 194 pages.
	II.	2	2	Todhunter's for Beginners, 143 pages.

Tokomairiro District High School.—Examined 7th and 8th November, 1882.

Subject.	Class.	Number taught.	Number examined.	Work done.
Latin ...	I.	4	4	Virgil's Æneid, Book II.; Cæsar, Book II.; and Grammar.
	II	8	8	Principia Latina, Part I., 87 pages; Part II., Book IV. of the History to Chapter 36.
French ...	I.	3	3	De Jardin's Class-Book to page 60, and Reader to Gaspard Hauser.
	II.	2	2	De Jardin's Class-Book, regular and irregular verbs, and Reader as above.
	III.	11	11	De Jardin's Class-Book, 27 pages.
English ...	I.	17	17	Richard II. (Royal School Series); and Dr. William Smith's Grammar and Analysis.
Geometry ...	I.	6	6	Euclid, Books I., II., III., and IV., with exercises on Book I.
	II.	5	5	Euclid, Books I. and II.
	III.	5	5	Euclid, Book I.
Algebra ...	I.	5	5	Todhunter's for Beginners.
	II.	6	6	To end of quadratics.
	III.	6	6	To end of simple equations.
Trigonometry ...	I.	5	5	Hamblin Smith's, except the last chapter.
	II.	6	6	Hamblin Smith's, Chapters I. to X., and solution of triangles.

Lawrence District High School.—Examined 9th and 10th November, 1882.

Latin ...	I.	3	3	Cæsar, Books I. and II., with grammar.
	II.	9	8	Principia Latina, Part II., the fables and anecdotes and Part I. to the end of the irregular verbs.
	III.	11	11	Principia Latina, Part I., to the end of the pronouns.
French ...	I.	5	5	De Jardin's Class-Book.
	II.	1	1	De Jardin's, 213 exercises.
	III.	4	3	Ahn's, Book I.
English ...	I.	9	9	Richard II. (Royal School Series).
	II.	17	17	The Merchant of Venice (Royal School Series).
Geometry ...	I.	2	2	Euclid, Books I., II., III., and IV., with exercises on Book I.
	II.	8	7	Euclid, Books I. and II.
	III.	8	8	Euclid, Book I.
Algebra ...	I.	8	8	To the end of quadratics.
	II.	8	8	To the end of fractions.
	III.	12	12	The simple rules.

At the Oamaru District High School the Latin classes made a creditable appearance. The translation into English was well done, and the parsing and syntax were fairly answered, but none of the classes were well grounded in the inflections. The French Classes I. and II. read with fair fluency, translated with great facility and accuracy, and showed a good acquaintance with the grammar. Class III. had begun the subject very recently; but a brief examination of the work read showed that they had been intelligently taught. In English the class answered with fair intelligence, but few of the papers were good all round. The explanation of difficult words and passages was better done than any other part of the work set. In geometry a few of the pupils answered well, but most did moderately. In algebra most of the pupils showed a fair grasp of the subject. The questions given to the beginners were well answered by all. In trigonometry two of the three examined showed a very good knowledge of the chapters read.

At the Port Chalmers District High School the Latin classes gave proof of careful and thorough teaching. The progress made by the highest class was very satisfactory. In French all the pupils but one gained more than 75 per cent. of the marks. They read with considerable fluency, translated with readiness and accuracy, and showed a creditable knowledge of the accidence. In English the examination revealed a thorough and appreciative study of the work read. All the classes in geometry passed a good examination, very few of the pupils gaining less than 80 per cent. of the marks; and the method of demonstration adopted was very clear. In algebra both classes made a fair appearance. None gained 75 per cent. of the marks, but only one fell below 50.

The extra work at the Tokomairiro District High School was, as in former years, of an advanced and generally excellent character. The Latin classes passed, on the whole, a very good examination, the only point in which they were weak being the inflections of the verb. The work in French was well known in both classes. In English the analysis and the incidents of the story were well known; the other questions were moderately answered. In geometry most of the pupils passed an excellent examination. In algebra good results were gained in nearly every case. Most of the pupils in trigonometry showed a good grasp of the subject, and passed a highly satisfactory examination.

At the Lawrence District High School the Latin classes showed very careful and successful teaching. The translations and the grammatical questions were equally well answered. In French all the classes had been taught in a very thorough manner. Very high marks were gained, only one pupil gaining less than 80 per cent. In English both classes showed a very satisfactory acquaintance with the work read. Difficult words and passages were fairly explained, and the incidents of the story were well known. In geometry the first class answered well, both in the written and in the *vivâ voce* examination, and most of the pupils in the lower classes answered very creditably. The work read by the different classes in algebra was thoroughly known.

In all the district high schools, French and the mathematical subjects were examined by Mr. Goyen, and Latin and English by myself. I have, &c.,

The Secretary, Otago Education Board. DONALD PETRIE, M.A., Inspector.

SOUTHLAND.

SIR,— Education Office, Invercargill, 13th March, 1883.

I have the honour to submit to the Board my first general report. It refers to the last five months of the year 1882. As the Board is aware, I entered on my work in August; the examinations of the schools were then already overdue, and I at once set myself to overtake as much of that work as time permitted. The latter half of November and the month of December I devoted to the scholarship and pupil-teacher examinations, and, by permission of the Board, to the examination of the Southland high schools. The short time at my disposal did not admit of my examining all the schools before Christmas. I examined twenty-six of them, but, as these included all the larger schools save one, the number of children examined was 3,155, or about three-fifths of the whole number on the school rolls of the district.

The following table summarizes the results of my examinations; it shows the number of children entered for examination in each standard, the number who were successful, and the number of successful pupils in every hundred entered:—

TABLE I.

	Number of Pupils entered for Examination in Standard.	Number of Pupils who passed.	Percentage.
Standard I.	534	450	84·2
Standard II.	580	422	72·7
Standard III.	543	332	61·1
Standard IV.	237	127	53·5
Standard V.	97	38	39·1
Standard VI.	22	12	54·5
	2,013	1,831	68·6

It will thus be seen that 68·6 per cent. of those entered for examination in standards were successful in passing. If, however, the whole number of children attending these schools, including infants, be taken into account, the percentage of those who passed in standards is 43·7, as appears from Table II. below:—

TABLE II.

Number entered in standards	2,013	
Infants and others below Standard I.	1,142	
		3,155
Number who passed in standards		1,381
Percentage who passed in standards		43·7

One of the first thoughts impressed on my mind on visiting your schools is well brought out in the preceding table (Table II.). It is the very large proportion of children who are too young or too ignorant to be presented even for Standard I. The number is 1,142 out of 3,155, or about 36 per cent. I look upon this large infant class as a very important factor in our schools, and I have been careful, following in this the laudable practice of my predecessor, always to submit the infants to a general examination when examining the elder children. In the large schools, situated in the centres of population, I find that due provision is made for the training and education of these infants, and the best attention that special and skilful teachers can bestow upon them is developing their intelligence by methods adapted to their age; but in many of the up-country schools these classes, which make no show in the examination register, and require toil monotonous and wearisome from its elementary character, are sadly neglected. It is worthy of note, however, that the experience of this school district demonstrates that in the long run there is no surer method of achieving success in school work, and the high percentage of passes in standards which proves the success, than by devoting much time and labour to the teaching and training these junior scholars. Of course the simultaneous method of instruction should be largely resorted to for the purpose.

I regret to be obliged to confess that the opinion I have formed of the state of education in the district is not a high one. The machinery exists, but not the full and accurate knowledge which should be the product of this machinery. This opinion, which has gradually formed itself in my mind in my visits to the schools for the purpose of examination, is confirmed by Table I. of this report,

in which it appears that only 53 per cent. of those presented for Standard IV. succeeded in passing, and in the case of Standard V. only 39 per cent. The particulars and causes of this state of things I will briefly refer to, having first given in tabular form the percentage of passes in the various subjects of instruction:—

TABLE III.

Subject.	Number of Scholars presented in the Subject.	Number passed.	Percentage.
Reading	2,013	1,719	85·4
Spelling and dictation	2,013	1,516	75·3
Writing	2,013	1,859	92·3
Arithmetic	2,013	1,253	62·2
Grammar	899	685	76·2
Geography	1,479	1,090	73·7
History	899	559	62·2

READING.—There is great room for improvement in the mechanical part of this exercise. As shown in the above table more than 14 per cent. of the children are unable to recognize the words of their reading-book. This does not mean that the remaining 86 per cent. read well, for in only a few schools does really good reading prevail. Many teachers do not seem to be aware that reading is a fine art, which may be carried to a high degree of excellence. The chief faults are, first, indistinctness of enunciation, or, to put it more plainly, the words are mumbled or read in too low a tone; and, secondly, the improper use of the falling inflexion before a comma. The initial *h*, too, is cruelly neglected in many quarters.

SPELLING AND DICTATION.—Most of our school exercises are intended to develop the reasoning faculties of the child, but English orthography in its present chaotic condition sets reason and common sense at defiance. It is one of the few unhappy incidents of English child-life that much useful time must be spent in painfully acquiring proficiency in an accomplishment intrinsically worthless. Nor is the loss of time the only mischief the child suffers: he learns at the same time the pernicious lesson that custom and not reason is lord in the world in which he is to spend his days. Doubtless something may be done to render a spelling lesson more intelligible and interesting by showing the history of the word to be spelt, if the teacher knows anything of foreign languages. In a few of the schools I examined, bad spelling, especially in the upper standards, seriously diminished the number of scholars who passed their standards, but Table III. shows that three out of four boys can spell fairly.

PENMANSHIP.—If the handwriting of the scholars be judged by what they do in their copybooks, a favourable verdict must be given. Generally, the letters are well formed, and the style is bold and legible. In most schools the badly formed letters are carefully marked by the teacher. On the other hand, the copybooks, in some instances, are not uniform throughout the class, which must make class-teaching impossible in this subject; and, if the handwriting of the examination papers is taken as specimen work, it must be acknowledged that the effort is often a very rude one.

ARITHMETIC.—This is the most important part of our school work, both for its direct utility and for the mental discipline it affords. I think, too, its importance is recognized by teachers, for, though the percentage of passes may seem small (62 per cent.), this must be set down partly to the fact that perfect accuracy is required in the results. In the junior classes, however, there is often an ignorance of numeration and notation, which seriously interferes with a child's progress, and candidates for Standard IV. not unfrequently fail, either through not knowing their tables of weights and measures, or not knowing how to apply them. The scholars of the senior class would succeed much better if they were thoroughly well drilled in the meaning of the terms employed, such as "decimal," "rate per cent.," &c.

GRAMMAR.—I think this subject is intelligently taught by the majority of teachers, though I am bound to confess that in Standard III. it is far from being successfully taught. The chief source of failure in the higher standards is the ignorance of grammatical terms. Greater attention also requires to be paid to the sentence relation (case) of the noun; indeed, the sentence should be the standard of reference in all our grammatical teaching. Of the composition exercises I am disposed to speak favourably. I find the children express themselves readily and well whenever the topic set is one in which they feel a personal interest. This implies that composition is a frequent exercise in the school work.

GEOGRAPHY.—The results in geography as they appear in the answers of the scholars must be regarded as, on the whole, satisfactory, but teachers need not exalt the text-book into a fetich and fall down and worship it.

HISTORY.—Except in a few schools, history is grossly neglected in Standard III., nor is justice often done to it in the other standards. The methods adopted are bad, and in some cases teachers are themselves ignorant of the subject. In Standard III. it can only be taught by a judicious mixture of oral teaching and questioning; and the same method, supplemented by the use of a text-book, is desirable for the higher classes. There is no inherent difficulty in the subject, but some teachers look upon it as useless, and, believing that it will be soon excised from the curriculum, act as if it were already gone. Yet I need hardly say that the Regulations in Council leave no room for private judgment in the matter, and I, for one, think it will be an evil day for the colony when the subject is removed from the syllabus. History is the only subject in our school course which affords scope for the study of human nature, and for learning lessons relating to character and conduct. We cannot afford to neglect it.

Object lessons and Elementary Science.—Only in a very few schools are object lessons omitted, but I fear they are a good deal neglected in many more. I look upon these lessons as a very important part of school work, and capable of being made a very interesting part, even to infants. But then of course the subjects must be such as come within the mental ken of the child. In many schools elementary physiology or elementary chemistry is taught to the higher standards, and I have been a good deal pleased with the answers given to my questions in these subjects. I believe that in several schools the work done is sound, that a few facts and principles are thoroughly grasped, and that young minds are waking up to the world of marvels amid which they live, and of which they form a part.

Hindrances to Success.—These are several. One very prominent one in the smaller country schools, where there is only one or at most two persons to do the whole work of the school, is the want of proper organization. Only in a few cases do teachers seem to understand that the only way to conduct schools efficiently under such conditions, and to give every child some share of oral instruction, is to reduce the number of their classes by combining as many of them as possible. It is painful to see the amount of subdivision in some of these smaller schools, with, of course, the same result as that of the man who beats the air. "Ruthlessly cut down the number of your classes," is what I would say to all these. But the gravest trouble with which our school system has to contend is the irregular attendance of the children, a circumstance that neutralizes every effort to produce good educational results; and the man who is going to make our machinery efficient must set himself to grapple with this evil somehow or other. I own that at present I am not clear in my mind as to the proper remedy for it, but I have been a good deal struck with the apathy of teachers on the subject, and the contentedness with which they tolerate the evil, and I should like to know whether teachers are as patient under it in countries where the system of payment by results obtains. In some educational districts in New Zealand teachers are supplied with printed forms which they send out to the parents whenever a child is absent, the parent being requested to state on the back of the notice whether the child was absent by permission or not. Might not something of the sort be done here?

Scholarships and Pupil-teacher Examinations.—For the sake of completeness I append to this report my reports on the scholarship and pupil-teacher examinations, which I have already submitted to the Board.

I have, &c.,

The Secretary, Education Board. John Gammell, B.A., Inspector.

SOUTH CANTERBURY.

Sir,—

I have the honour to submit my general report on the work of inspection for the year 1882.

At the close of the year there were thirty-nine schools in operation. Four of these—viz., Aloury, Redcliffe, Seaview, and Waimataitai—were opened during the latter part of the year, and were not prepared for a standard examination, while the Hunter School was closed on account of sickness at the time of my annual visit of inspection. The remaining thirty-four schools were examined, and the results are given in this report. In a few cases, where the results of the first examination were unsatisfactory, a second examination was held during the year. I have also made a large number of visits of simple inspection in accordance with the Government regulations, and visits for special purposes under instructions from the Board; but on account of the limited time at my disposal these visits of inspection have not been so systematically arranged as I could have wished.

The general results of the standard examinations are given in the following table:—*

The number of scholars attending the schools of the district at the end of the year was 3,853, but, of these, 196—those attending the new schools—are not accounted for in this statement. Those on the roll of the several schools examined are accounted for as under: Roll number at date of examination, 3,657; average attendance at date of examination, 2,728; number present at examination, 3,016; number presented for examination in standards, 1,941; number doing preparatory work below Standard I., 1,075; number passed standards as presented, 1,460; number failed in standards as presented, 481; percentage of passes to the number examined, 75·21; percentage of passes to roll number, 39·92.

The work done in the several standards may be summarized as follows:—

——	Average Age.	Number presented.	Number passed.	Percentage.
	Yrs. mos.			
Standard VI.	14 2	43	19	44·18
Standard V.	12 11	173	100	57·80
Standard IV.	11 8	326	181	55·51
Standard III.	10 7	472	364	77·11
Standard II.	9 8	447	378	84·56
Standard I.	8 5	480	418	87·08
	...	1,941	1,460	75·21

* Not printed.

As a comparison of the year's work with that of former years, I give the "classification after examination" for the past four years:—

—	1879.		1880.		1881.		1882.	
	Number.	Per cent.	Number.	Per cent.	Number.	Per cent.	Number.	Per cent.
Passed Standard VI. ...	8	·3	12	·4	40	1·4	20	0·66
Passed Standard V. ...	57	2·6	101	3·5	73	2·5	124	4·12
Passed Standard IV. ...	138	6·2	168	5·9	235	8·2	254	8·42
Passed Standard III. ...	221	10·0	390	13·8	455	16·0	509	16·87
Passed Standard II. ...	468	21·3	546	19·3	529	18·5	486	16·11
Passed Standard I. ...	394	17·9	521	18·4	420	14·7	487	16·11
Below Standard I. ...	907	41·3	1,095	38·6	1,107	38·7	1,136	37·66
	2,193	...	2,833	...	2,859	...	3,016	...

The following gives the percentage of passes to those presented for the last four years: In 1879, 1,159 out of 1,397, or 84·3 per cent.; in 1880, 1,538 out of 1,790, or 85·9 per cent.; in 1881, 1,346 out of 1,833, or 73·4 per cent.; in 1882, 1,460 out of 1,941, or 75·21 per cent. These numbers show that in percentage of passes the years 1879 and 1880 gave far better results than the past two years; but this is principally accounted for by the fact that, when the standards were introduced, teachers were allowed considerable latitude in classifying their scholars for examination, and as a rule the classification was sufficiently low to insure a pass. Now that repeated examinations have thoroughly gauged the scholar's ability, a pass can be secured only by work done during the year, and I am convinced, from the past year's experience, that little improvement on 75 per cent. of passes can be anticipated in the future; nor can this result be considered unsatisfactory. It is obvious that where the average attendance is only 76 per cent. of the roll number, or, in other words, where on the average 24 per cent. of the scholars are always absent from school, a large number cannot cover the year's work prescribed by the syllabus. It would probably not be too much to allow two-thirds of the failures as due to irregular attendance, leaving 10 per cent. of the scholars failing from defective instruction and other causes. In comparing our results with those of other districts, it is but just to observe that every child present on the day of inspection must be presented for examination in a standard above that last passed. A recent Government publication indicates that where a child—from illness, irregular attendance, or defective mental power—has been unable to overtake the work of the syllabus, he may be withheld from examination in his proper standard, and re-examined in the one already passed. Such an arrangement, though intended no doubt to relieve teachers of the results of failures for which they cannot be responsible, can be fairly brought into operation only when simple rules are followed by Inspectors and teachers as to the minimum attendance required, &c.; and, until explicit regulations on the matter are issued by the Education Department, I shall continue to require the presentation of all scholars in accordance with the Order in Council dated the 24th September, 1878, where it is directed that "No scholar shall be examined in a standard which he has already passed." At the same time Committees and teachers should remember that under existing arrangements 75 per cent. of passes shows satisfactory work. In this connection it should further be noted that, from the interest taken in the examinations by teachers and by the scholars themselves, the number presented for inspection is far above the average attendance, and as a natural consequence an undue proportion of irregular attendants comes under examination. The average attendance at the dates of examination was 2,728, while the number present at inspection was 3,016. It necessarily follows from these remarks that irregular attendance continues to be the great hindrance to progress in our schools, and any improvement in this respect would show a corresponding improvement in the percentage of passes. In the smaller district schools the attendance undoubtedly depends mainly on the teacher, for where his ability, personal influence, and popularity are acknowledged there is seldom any necessity to resort to other means of securing regular attendance; but in the larger town schools, where, on account of the mixed staff, the personal influence of the teacher is less directly felt, uniformly good attendance cannot at present be secured without coercion, and it is incumbent on Committees to see that the compulsory clauses of the Act are systematically enforced. In the single instance where this has been done—that of Waimate—the improved attendance is most marked.

The value of the instruction given in the various schools, and the results of the work in the several standards, may be gathered from the tables given above. The results, as a whole, show a slight improvement on those of last year. Fewer scholars have passed Standard VI., but this is more than compensated for by the increase in Standards V. and IV., and the other standards remain about the same. I regret that I cannot report any perceptible decrease in the large proportion of scholars—37·66 per cent.—who fail to reach the requirements of Standard I. Irregular attendance and inefficient instruction are jointly answerable for this state of things. Head-teachers reiterate the excuse that the heavy requirements of the upper standards render it impossible for them to devote a fair proportion of their time to the lower classes. Where the attendance enables assistance to be given, the infant classes are usually placed under the management of a pupil-teacher or a very poorly paid assistant, who, in the majority of cases, is left without assistance or efficient supervision. Head-teachers apparently fail to appreciate the importance of effective teaching in the elementary stages, and consequently find the greatest difficulty in obtaining intelligent work from the advanced classes. In the larger schools the less competent teachers are, as a rule, relegated to the infant departments, and at almost every inspection it is found necessary to insist upon a revision of the staff.

On referring to the table giving the passes in each standard, it will be seen that the passes registered in the lower standards are comparatively high—87 and 84 per cent.—and that the proportion of passes

gradually decreases until it is but 44 per cent. in Standard VI. This is no more than might be looked for. Though intelligent instruction in the lower standards is of the highest importance, mechanical work is for a time successful, and a good percentage of passes may be secured by a teacher of inferior ability if he is fairly zealous in his work; but as the higher standards are taken the ability of the teacher to deal with the intellectual side of primary education is fully exercised. Mechanical reading and arithmetic, and the repetition of geographical names, will not secure a pass. The nature of the examination demands a constantly increasing development of the scholar's intelligence. He must be able to analyse the passages read, and to apply his power of analysis to grammar and composition. The principles of arithmetic must be so thoroughly understood that they can be applied to the solution of simple problems, and his mental training is tested in a large number of the questions in geography and history. Under these conditions it is not surprising that the work of the higher standards in our smaller schools in many cases fails to stand the test of the rigid examination imposed by the syllabus; but I am pleased to be able to report that the quality of the work in the higher standards throughout the district is steadily improving. Many teachers are producing most creditable results in the face of the serious hindrances to effective work which are so general. Our town schools, possessing great advantages in the matter of classification and arrangement of staff, might fairly be expected to produce more than average results. It has however been necessary, in reporting on individual schools, to direct attention to several cases where the energy and ability displayed do not appear to be commensurate with the advantages possessed.

I have in previous reports spoken at length on the several subjects of instruction; butthe requirements of the syllabus are now so thoroughly understood that, as a rule, the work, so far as it is taken, is well done; failures arising principally from inability to cover the whole work of a standard. There are, however, two subjects which are very generally defective—reading and composition. These two subjects are so intimately connected that probably inefficiency in one effectually hinders progress in the other. Teachers are too liable to rest satisfied with ordinary fluency in reading, and to neglect the laborious oral teaching necessary to insure an intelligent appreciation of the force of the passage read, and of the intrinsic meaning of the principal words used. One unaccustomed to examining would be surprised at the total absence of intelligence that may accompany great fluency, acquired by constant iteration. The prime cause of this defect, as I have previously pointed out, is the use of a single set of reading-books. The need for special attention to this subject is at once apparent when a new book is substituted for the one which a class has been trained to use. Composition, though one of the most essential, is probably the worst taught subject in the syllabus. This probably arises from the difficulty of obtaining immediate results and of gauging the scholars' ability by any definite standard. But, whatever the cause, the fact remains that the subject is seldom efficiently taught, even in our larger schools, and most of the failures in grammar are attributable to inability to meet the requirements in composition. There can be little doubt, however, but that, with more attention to intelligent reading and the use of words, accompanied by oral instruction in logical analysis, the difficulties of the subject would mainly disappear.

I cannot speak very highly of the instruction given in the extra subjects—elementary science, drawing, and singing. The Saturday Teachers' Lectures in these subjects, given two years ago, did much towards establishing them as regular subjects of instruction, but, with the exception of singing, which is fairly taught, they have gradually given place to the more essential subjects. Sewing is, with few exceptions, efficiently taught.

The discipline in most of the schools is mild, but effective. I seldom notice cases of harshness, but in not a few instances it is necessary to recommend greater firmness in the general management.

I have, &c.,

The Chairman, Board of Education. HENRY W. HAMMOND, Inspector.

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