

the interests of the children and of education we urge this matter strongly, and do not think that we ask too much of those who are elected to attend to the educational interests of their districts. Another objectionable feature in the attendance is that it is not sufficiently consecutive, and it too often happens that children leave school without having received any permanent good from the instruction and training received there. The punctuality of attendance in nearly two-thirds of the school is from fair to good.

The Board and district are to be congratulated on the improving class of teachers who are now in our schools. Numbers have taken advantage of the college training available here, and others by private study have qualified themselves for higher certificates, and in very few instances has the school work suffered to any appreciable extent from their application to their own studies. The training they have undergone has given a breadth of view to their minds which will react beneficially on the teaching of those placed under them. As in former years, thoroughly satisfactory work still continues to be done by teachers who hold only Class E certificates. While thus referring to the great bulk of our teachers, we have to point out that there were, during the past year, thirty-six persons who held no certificates in the employment of the Board. Several of these appear to have made but little effort to qualify themselves, and seem to think that their mere appointment gives them a prescriptive right to their present positions.

The organization of the town and larger country schools continues much the same as previously reported. In schools under the charge of one teacher, and in those where there are two, the master taking all classes above Standard I., the great difficulty to be overcome is that of keeping all the classes fully and profitably employed without the assistance of monitors. This difficulty may to a great extent be surmounted by the judicious combination of classes for instruction in such subjects as reading, spelling, writing, geography, and history. The two latter subjects in schools of the kind just mentioned are generally very unsatisfactory, so much so, indeed, that we would strongly recommend that they be treated as class subjects, and the children tested in them orally.

Table No. II. shows the number presented in each standard, the number passed, the average age at which the scholars pass, 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.	146	113	14·2	77	38
Standard V	499	382	13·6	76	82
Standard IV	1,119	776	12·6	69	108
Standard III.	1,982	1,460	11·7	74	124
Standard II.	2,136	1,808	10·0	84	131
Standard I.	2,038	1,931	9·6	95	133
Totals	7,920	6,470	..	82	

A comparison of this table with that given in our last annual report will show that there is a very considerable increase in the number of scholars presented for examination in the three higher standards, as well as a much higher percentage of success. There is, however, no material alteration in the number of schools at which Standards IV, V, and VI. were represented. Throughout the schools in Akaroa and Ashburton Counties, leaving out Lyttelton, only eleven scholars were presented in the Sixth Standard, and of this small number only six were successful. There are far too many schools in these counties making but a poor return for the money spent in their maintenance. The failures in Standard IV are still very numerous, and particularly so as the number of children marked "non-presented" was greater in this than in any other standard. The quantity and quality of the work in Standard III. were on the whole fairly creditable, and in a large number of schools the results proved that those who succeeded in passing had been carefully and intelligently prepared. Standards II. and I. still continue to show signs of improvement. In a few schools children were presented in Standard I. at an absurdly low average age.

Taking into consideration the large and increasing number of children now withheld from examination, we think that the time has come when some well-defined arrangement should be made respecting the presentation of pupils in standards higher than those previously passed. This matter was forcibly brought before us during the recent examinations of the large schools, and we consider that neither the letter nor the spirit of the regulations permits that license which teachers have allowed themselves.

The note, on which teachers rely for withholding children from higher standards, is as follows "It is assumed that all the children that are to be presented in the same standard at next examination are being taught in the same class. As soon as it becomes apparent that a child is for any reason unable to keep pace with the class that is to be presented in the standard next above that which he has passed, he should be placed in the next lower class. At the examination, the reason for his being so placed should be stated as, that he has been ill, or irregular in his attendance, or that it has been found that he was not as well grounded in the work of the standard last passed as he appeared to be, or that his mental power is below the average. Such a child