1884.
NEW ZEALAND.

EDUCATION:

REPORTS OF INSPECTORS OF SCHOOLS.

[In Continuation of E.-1B, 1883.]

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

[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, 1884.

I have the honour to submit, in accordance with the provisions of the Education Act, the report for the year ended 31st December, 1883. The following table shows the number of primary schools in the education district, and the attendance of pupils:—

Quarter ending	Number of Schools.	Roll-Number.			Average Attendance.		
		M.	F	Total.	M.	F.	Total.
March 31	204	8,468	8,023	16,491	6,656	6,164	12,820
June 30	210	8,637	8,209	16,846	6,742	6,283	13,025
September 30	213	8,671	8,290	16,961	6,781	6,341	13,122
December 31	217	8,785	8,335	17,120	6,941	6,407	13,348

It will be seen that the number of pupils attending the schools is steadily increasing.

Twelve scholarships were advertised for competition in December Six of these scholarships were won by girls, who do not receive so large a money allowance as boys. This enabled the Board to award four other scholarships, making sixteen in all. The Board have decided to hold the examination for scholarships in August, instead of December, of 1884. This will enable the winners to enter the secondary schools at the beginning of their first term, instead of their second as hitherto. The teachers' examination will most likely take place in December, and it is of advantage that the two examinations should not be held at the same time. The following table shows the result of the standard examinations for the past year:—

—	Examined.	Passed.	Failed.	Percentage of Passes.	Average Age at Time of Passing.
					Years.
Standard I.	2,513	1,851	662	73·6	9·2
Standard II. ..	2,266	1,543	723	68	10
Standard III. ..	1,796	967	829	53·8	11·98
Standard IV	1,026	620	406	60·4	12·8
Standard V	542	351	191	64·7	14
Standard VI. ..	184	117	67	63·5	15
Totals	8,327	5,449	2,878	65·4	

The Board's regulation that all pupils who had reached the age of eight years, and had made 250 attendances or more from the date of the previous examination, should be presented for examination, came into force in January, 1883. This regulation has, of course, to some extent affected the percentage of passes.

The percentage of passes is affected here by the number of small country schools, for which it is almost impossible to find efficient teachers. This drawback is becoming gradually mitigated by the increase in the supply of young trained teachers, who can make a beginning in these schools. The converting of many of these schools into half-time schools, which will afford a better salary to the teacher, will also have a beneficial effect. The examinations are carefully made, and the results decided without any consideration as to their effects on the percentage of passes.

I consider that the discipline and efficiency of the schools have improved to a satisfactory extent during the year. There are still some subjects not taught, as a rule, in a satisfactory manner The teaching of grammar, as distinguished from composition, is not so satisfactory as I could wish. No doubt composition is much the more important branch of this subject, we have always laid great stress on it here, with a very gratifying result. It by no means follows, however, because composition should have the first place, that grammar should have no place at all yet a good many teachers appear to assume this. I fear that in some schools sufficient pains are not taken to make the pupils understand thoroughly the meaning of what they read. There are few more pernicious habits than that of speaking words and sentences to which little or no meaning is attached. That this habit should work evil to the intellect is evident, but that is not all it produces a habit of slurring which follows the person who has acquired it into everything he or she seeks to do, be it fieldwork or housework, the putting-up of a fence or the dusting of a room. Pains are very generally taken to make pupils understand that they come to school not merely to acquire knowledge, though that is a good deal, but to be trained in habits which will stick to them through life whatever may be their calling, such as habits of accuracy, thoroughness, investigation, and honest work.

My report for last year being out of print, I now insert a few suggestions it contained as to the teaching of certain subjects, which have, I think, been found useful to some teachers:—

"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 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 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 letter written upon it, with great care, as a guide in transcription. Black-board 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-crown. If he has not the coins he can imitate them on the black-board, or indicate them by means of the ball-frame. The mystery of the aliquot parts of a pound and 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 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 estimable 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."

Young teachers, and indeed some who are not young, require to have it impressed on them that order is kept, not by the voice, nor by the stick, but by the eye. Of course it must be by the vigilant seeing eye, not by that which glares with no speculation in it. In order to carry out this view, the teacher should be careful not to turn his back to his pupils when he can possibly avoid doing so. If slates are to be examined, the teacher standing in front of his class, should cause the slates from the three first desks in each row to be handed up to him. He should then go right to the end of each interval between the desks, and facing his pupils from that end, should examine the slates of the pupils within his reach on either side. He can also avail himself of the intervals outside the class on both sides. It is heartrending to see a teacher standing beside and a little behind a pupil in the first or second row with his back to the greater part of his class, who rarely fail to avail themselves in an appropriate manner of the opportunities thus afforded them. To understand what I have said it is necessary to know that we use dual desks, arranged so as to face one side-wall of the room. They are generally placed five or six deep, with an interval of eighteen inches between each row It is evident that, to carry out this system of vigilance, teachers must teach without using books, or, at all events, must use them as little as possible. If a teacher has his face buried in a book he cannot use due vigilance. This matter will be found dealt with under the heads of "Reading" and "Discipline" in the "Instructions for the Guidance of Teachers."

Very satisfactory progress has been made in drawing during the past year Mr Trevithick, drawing-master, resigned his appointment in October, 1883. In March, 1884, his successor, Mr. Robinson, was appointed. Mr Robinson teaches mechanical drawing as well as freehand. It must, I think, bring satisfaction to every one having at heart the future of the country to know how many facilities are now offered in Auckland for the study of art, "which leads to true refinement of character elevating private life, and ultimately exalting a people." The advancement made in singing during the past year has been considerable. I append the singing-master's report. Gymnastics have been practised much more generally and in a more efficient manner during the past year than hitherto. Indian clubs have been added to the apparatus previously in use. I become every day more and more impressed with the value of gymnastic exercises, especially for girls. I append the report of the Auckland instructor,

It is necessary to say a word or two with regard to the ventilation of schools. The object of the teacher should be to have the air in the schoolroom as pure as possible *without dangerous draughts* The teacher should every day note the state of the atmosphere, and arrange the opening of the doors and windows accordingly Sufficient use is not made of the opening of doors for the purposes of ventilation. Many teachers are given too much to the opening of the lower window-sashes during school hours. A most essential point is that when the pupils enter the schoolroom they shall enter a room in which the air is pure, not a room in which it was pure yesterday or last week. It is not easy to get rid of foul air , it takes many hours of open windows and doors to rid a school of it. I must say that nothing like the attention it deserves is given to this point, a point of the gravest importance.

A practice has been begun in some places which I feel bound to notice. Committees, and, indeed, sometimes outsiders, occasionally undertake to examine the schools. Now, the law lays down what examinations shall be held, and by whom. To hold examinations otherwise is to transgress the law Besides, it is evident that amateur examiners will often set up a different standard of excellence from that set up by the authorized examiners. Thus confusion is produced in the minds of the pupils and teacher, and singleness of aim is destroyed. I have no doubt, however, that the Committees and others referred to are actuated by good intentions.

A few years ago what I must call a morbid feeling prevailed as to the punishment of children in public schools. Teachers were subjected to a sort of reign of terror This tyranny, though by no means dead, has somewhat slumbered for some time back. It now shows signs of reawakening. It may be well I should repeat the words I felt obliged to use in my report for the year 1879. But, first, I would point out that instances of undue severity on the part of teachers are very rare, and are easily dealt with , but that the doctrine of the divine right of children to freedom from punishment is fraught with danger to the State. "In my last report I called the attention of the Board to the danger that existed of the growth of a turbulent law-defying element, from the encouragement given to insubordination by parents of pupils, and others who ought to be more alive to the danger of their conduct. This danger still exists. Often, when a teacher inflicts a well-deserved and not immoderate punishment, he is assailed by letters in the Press. He is perhaps summoned to Court, and numbers of people, including the police, busy themselves to procure his conviction. If he escapes a direct fine, he is most likely left to pay his own costs, amounting to some pounds. In fact, nothing can exceed the tenderness of all the world for the real culprit, who most likely did not get half his deserts, and their horrified indignation at the cruelty of a man who has not shrunk from doing an unpleasant duty Is it wonderful that teachers shrink from inflicting punishment? Is it surprising that what is called larrikinism grows apace, where so many act as if it was their special vocation to encourage it? I feel that I should be neglecting my duty if I did not speak what I know on this matter,—one of vital interest to the community"

I have, &c.,

R. J O'Sullivan, Inspector of Schools.

The Chairman, Education Board, Auckland.

Singing-master's Report for 1883.

Sir,— Auckland, 31st December, 1883.

I have the honour to submit my report on the singing in schools for 1883. There are now more teachers giving instruction in singing than at any previous time, and some of them show considerable skill in the work. In several of the schools the teaching is very satisfactory and real progress is made other schools are without teachers capable of giving a singing lesson, and consequently are backward especially is this the case where my visits are only once a fortnight. In two or three of the large schools systematic teaching is given in every standard, and I believe the result will be a great improvement in the singing of the higher standards as the young scholars come forward. Again, there are other schools where the children are all massed together with the result that the singing is not satisfactory still, this is unavoidable until there are more teachers with sufficient musical ability to give a singing lesson. I have taken every opportunity of overlooking teachers giving singing lessons. I find, in most cases, that good work is being done. My visits have necessarily been rare , but I consider this should be the principal work of the singing-master

The students at the Training College have received a lesson once a week, and good progress has been made ; many of them show decided musical ability, and I believe will become valuable teachers of vocal music. During the year six teachers have passed the requirements of the elementary certificate of the Tonic Sol-fa College, and two have passed the intermediate. The possession of the intermediate certificate is now recognized as the standard for exemption from the Saturday singing class, and this will induce many more to prepare for the examination. Frequently there has been a difficulty in procuring song-books , the stationers, having kept so small a stock, have continually run out, and this has been a great hindrance. I have, &c.,

Thos. Cranwell.

Report of the Instructor in Gymnastics.

Sir,— Auckland, January, 1884.

I have the honour to submit my report on the drill and gymnastics in the public schools, and also in the teachers' classes on Saturdays, for the year ended 31st December, 1883. During the past year there has been a greater interest than formerly taken in drill and gymnastics, both by pupils and teachers, and the result on the whole is very satisfactory In my last report I complained of the number of letters received from parents requesting that their children be excused from drill and calisthenics. During the past year such requests have been very few in number In some cases, when the children have been brought before me, I have advised them to try the exercises, to rest whenever they felt tired, and stop when they felt they had enough. This advice has been taken, and some of these are now amongst the best drilled in their classes,

The teachers at the Saturday classes have shown a large amount of interest in drill during the past year, and have evinced a great desire to become efficient. During the year I have attended thirty schools, fifteen of the same every week, and exercising thereat about five thousand pupils. The remaining fifteen, being country schools, have been visited once every five weeks, and at these I have exercised about fifteen hundred pupils, the exercises taught by me on my visits being carried out during the intervals by the teachers. Owing to the regular attendance of teachers at the Saturday classes, and the knowledge they have acquired during the year I am now able to get through more work during my visits to the schools than previously, as the teachers render me all the assistance in their power The Saturday classes for teachers included forty males, sixty-seven lady teachers, and ninety-nine pupil-teachers, in addition to thirty students belonging to the Training College, making in all a total of 236 receiving instruction in drill and calisthenics every Saturday morning.

Before concluding my report, I desire to bring under your notice the following three matters:—(1.) A great inconvenience arises from the want of a uniform system of desk drill throughout the schools. In reference to this, I am prepared to give instruction in such a system, and have already done so in several schools during the past year I am also willing to compile a manual on the subject, if instructed by the Board to do so. (2.) Some teachers allow the children to stand up or sit down in a careless and slovenly manner, thus causing a noise in slamming back their seats. They also allow the scholars to make a noise in removing and replacing their slates. (3.) Many teachers do not pay sufficient attention to the manner in which the pupils hold their heads while writing. I have observed the writing position of some of the pupils in many of the schools I visit, and have found it simply execrable. There is little use in giving instruction in drill and calisthenics if scholars are allowed during the writing lesson to almost rest the left cheek on the left forearm, to bury the chin in the chest, to raise the right shoulder, and to lower the left. Such a position occupied at every writing lesson during the week seriously affects the health and the appearance of the pupils.

I trust you will not consider I have exceeded my duty in mentioning these matters, but as I know the Board takes a great interest in the physical development of the children attending the public schools, and as I am responsible for the carriage and appearance of the scholars, I feel it simply my duty to bring before your notice any practices which have an injurious effect on the health of the pupils.

I have, &c.,

OWEN MAHON,

Instructor of Drill and Gymnastics, Auckland.

HAWKE'S BAY

SIR,— Napier, 31st January 1884.

When, little more than five years ago, I had the honour of submitting to you my first annual report upon the condition of education in Hawke's Bay I had occasion to point out the many educational wants of the district, and how necessary it was that something should be done without delay to remedy those defects in the system which were acting as hindrances to the progress and efficiency of the Board schools. At that time, the accommodation provided in the schools then in operation, both good and bad, was only sufficient for an attendance of a few hundred children, and the school appliances and apparatus were meagre and mostly unsuitable. Napier the principal town, had no school building, the teaching being carried on in three hired rooms, viz. a public hall, a church, and a building used as a Sunday-school and throughout the district the teachers, with two or three exceptions, were untrained and uncertificated for the work in which they were engaged. During the time which has since intervened twenty-nine school-houses, nine class-rooms, and eighteen teachers' residences have been erected in the district, suitable school sites have been either purchased or otherwise obtained for most of the schools and, with few exceptions, good and substantial apparatus has been provided for the use of teachers and pupils. Napier has now three large and commodious school-houses, capable of holding nearly 800 pupils, and many of the teachers holding appointments under the Board have obtained certificates of competency from the Education Department, whilst not a few of them have been specially trained for their profession as teachers.

SCHOOL ACCOMMODATION.—At the close of the school year ended the 31st December thirty-six schools, containing thirty-nine departments, were in active operation. These were staffed by ninety-six teachers, of whom thirty-nine hold either licenses to teach or certificates of competency from the Government. The accommodation provided in the thirty-nine departments, for the 5,000 children who ought to be attending school, is sufficient for an attendance of 3,461 children, whilst at the close of the year the attendance was 3,726, or an excess of attendance over accommodation of 265, and an excess of children in the district over accommodation of 1,274. In six of the districts —viz., Patutahi, Waerenga-a-hika, Mohaka, Ongaonga, Takapau, and Tarawera—school work is carried on in buildings which do not belong to the Board, and there are still twelve districts in each of which a teacher's residence is badly required. At Matawhero, near Gisborne, the building which was erected in 1879-80 is so overcrowded as to cause serious sickness among the pupils, and at Woodville, Hastings, and Clive the schools are too small for present needs. As will be seen in Table I. appended to the Board's report, showing the accommodation and attendance returns for each school, the majority of the schools where the attendance exceeds seventy-five are full, and at Mangatua, near Woodville, and Te Arai, in the Poverty Bay district, there are many children for whom accommodation ought to be provided. I regret to say that the want of needful school supply and the absence of teachers' residences have acted in the past, and still act, as great hindrances to the progress and growth of true educational efficiency in the district. It is true that the majority of the school districts are now fairly well provided for, but many of them have long been labouring under conditions which make success in school work next to impossible. It has been too long and

too common a practice in Hawke's Bay to carry on school work with what I can only characterize as educational make-shifts, but, after five years' experience of them, I have come to the conclusion that an effort should be made to dispense with them altogether A make-shift school often means a make-shift teacher and make-shift results, and I cannot rest satisfied until every child in my district has been placed on fairly competitive terms in the way of acquiring knowledge. To me there appears no valid reason why the smallest of the district schools should not enjoy the privilege of good school buildings, and all the accessories which go towards making a good school, equally with the largest schools but this cannot be done until the building requirements of the district have been fully supplied. If the education of children is to be undertaken at all, I submit that it should be with the object of training them to appreciate what is good and beautiful in all things, and all difficulties, therefore, in the way of their moral, mental, and physical progress should be minimized as much as possible. Certainly the truest economy in matters relating to the education of children is to be found in providing them with the best buildings, appliances, and teachers it is possible for money to purchase, for bad workmen with bad accommodation and appliances can only produce indifferent results at the best, and I urge upon the Board the desirability of completing the building requirements in each district, as, until this has been done, the education of many children attending the schools must be incomplete and unsatisfactory

Condition of Buildings.—Most of the school-houses and residences built during the past five years are in a sound condition, but, as pointed out by me a year ago, they are much in need of a coat of paint. Inside and outside the paint-brush is badly wanted, and it would be well if this work could be undertaken as well for the good influence which neat and pleasant buildings have upon the education and training of children as for the purpose of keeping the buildings in good repair

School Apparatus.—Among the teachers I find that sufficient care is not taken with the school apparatus, and appliances, and school property in general. Few of the schools have cause to complain of either the quantity or quality of the apparatus provided by the Board, but in some instances, owing to the want of ordinary vigilance on the part of teachers, valuable apparatus has been carelessly or wantonly destroyed. I fear it is becoming too much the fashion among teachers to look upon preparing a class in the stereotyped standard-work as a teacher's only duty, forgetting that everything which tends to improve the habits and the tastes of children, whether it be in seeing neat and tidy school grounds, clean and pleasant school-rooms, or well-kept school appliances, is a phase of training which every teacher might well foster among his pupils. In several of the schools I have found maps being used for window-blinds, the backs of reading-cards for time-tables, and, for the want of a nail or a screw at the proper time, easels and school gates have been broken and fences destroyed. I am pleased to say that these remarks do not apply to all schools or to all teachers. There are schools in my district where the teachers take a pride in beautifying the walls of their schoolrooms, and where the apparatus is as well cared for as if it belonged to themselves, and, if such care can be taken by some teachers, it seems to me that similar care in the preservation of school property should be demanded from all.

School Attendance.—It is gratifying to notice that a fair improvement has taken place during the past year in the regularity of children at school. The average attendance for the year was 2,754·5, which is 77·2 per cent. of the roll-number whilst in 1882 the average attendance was 74 per cent. of the roll-number, or a difference of 3·2 per cent. in favour of the past year Possibly the absence of epidemics amongst the children such as prevailed in 1881–82 may, in some measure, account for the improvement in the attendance, but I am inclined to the opinion that the real causes are to be found in the better organization and equipment of the schools, and to the growing interest shown by parents and Committees in the progress of education. In the best schools one seldom hears complaints about the irregularity of children, although comparatively few pupils obtain certificates of attendance under section 79 of the Education Act. I notice that, out of 5,148 children who attended school during the year, twenty-four gained certificates of the first class, and fifty-three of the second class. In twenty-four of the schools no certificates of attendance were gained, and in eight schools only were there pupils who obtained certificates of the first class.

Compulsory Attendance.—The compulsory clause, though nominally in force in all the larger districts, is really a dead letter In a single instance only has the aid of a Magistrate been invoked against neglectful parents, and the case was dismissed on the parents in question agreeing to comply with the Act. But, as shown above, I think there can be no doubt that irregularity at school is diminishing in the district, and it may be that, as schools improve in efficiency and attractiveness, compulsion will become unnecessary Children are fond of company, and they are fond of learning, and I have never yet met a child who disliked school simply from a dislike of learning or of company Given good school-houses and appliances, trained, sympathetic, and intelligent teachers, and good working Committees, and I am inclined to think that the attendance difficulty will have been in a great measure solved, although for years to come one must expect to find a small remnant of selfish and indifferent parents, persistently refusing to do their duty to their offspring unless enforced by the stronger power of the law

Standard Examinations.—Passing now to the work in connection with the standard examinations, there are several features of interest which deserve attention. On the days appointed for the examination of the schools, out of 3,513 children on the roll, 3,526 or nearly 93 per cent. were present. At Hampden, Makatoku, Patutahi, Port Ahuriri, Puketapu, and Tarawera, all the children on the school-roll were in attendance and at Waipawa there was a single absentee out of 122 children on the roll. Considering the unsettled state of the weather that prevailed and the bad condition of the roads and tracks in bush and outlying districts during the progress of my examinations, such an attendance as the above appears to me highly encouraging. I am somewhat at a loss, however, to understand why so many more children should endeavour to be present on examination-day than upon ordinary school-days. It has usually been supposed that inspection-

day is the day of terrors to young children; but such is clearly a mistake, as there were 15 per cent. more children at the examinations than attended school on any ordinary school-day during the year It may be that an extra effort is made by teachers and Committees to bring together as many of their pupils as possible on examination-day, but this only makes the contrast between the possible attendance results, as seen at my examinations, and the actual or every-day results so much the greater and it further points out what can be accomplished when proper influences are brought to bear upon parents and young children in the matter of school attendance.

CHILDREN PRESENTED.—The number of pupils who were presented for examination and the number who succeeded in passing the standard tests compare very favourably with those of former years. Altogether 2,085 pupils were presented for examination, 1,793 were examined, and 1,599, or 81 per cent. of the number examined, passed the requirements. In 1882 the numbers were—Presented, 1,827 examined, 1,550; passed, 1,314 showing a difference of 285 standard passes in favour of the past year

The following table shows the number presented, examined, and passed in each standard. The average age of the pupils is also given, and, for the purpose of comparison, I have added the average age of the pupils throughout New Zealand who passed the standards in 1882:—

Average Age, New Zealand.	—	Average Age, Hawke's Bay.	Number presented.			Number examined.			Number passed.			Percentage of Passes of examined in each Standard.	Percentage of Marks obtained in each Standard.
			M.	F.	Total.	M.	F.	Total.	M.	F.	Total.		
Y. M.		Y. M.											
8 6	Standard I.	9 2	373	332	705	353	318	671	298	264	562	83·7	72·7
9 9	Standard II.	10 3	299	233	532	280	231	511	225	196	421	82·4	76·0
11 0	Standard III.	11 3	226	183	409	213	172	385	159	140	299	77·6	69·2
12 3	Standard IV.	12 5	164	125	289	159	117	276	121	89	210	76·1	66·5
13 3	Standard V	13 3	63	49	112	57	37	94	44	28	72	76·6	66·4
14 2	Standard VI.	14 2	23	15	38	22	14	36	22	12	34	94·4	72·4
			1,148	937	2,085	1,084	889	1,973	869	729	1,598	81·0	71·0

AGES OF PUPILS.—It will be seen from the table here given that the average age of the pupils presented for examination and passed in the lower standards is somewhat higher than the average for the rest of New Zealand, but I do not think that the passing of children in Standards I. and II. at a very early age is of much assistance after all, nor do I think any educational advantage is to be gained by requiring young children under seven years of age to attend schools, unless special arrangements can be made for their training. It is the passing of Standards V and VI., where the work to be done is of an advanced character, which constitutes the true age and education test, and I find that those standards are passed in this district at thirteen years three months for Standard V., and fourteen years two months for Standard VI., or as low as the average for New Zealand. Some of the pupils pass at a much earlier age than this, as, for example, at Gisborne, Annie Hall, age eleven years six months, and Alfred Steele, age eleven years eight months, have both passed Standard VI. in a very creditable manner, and George Millar age nine years nine months, a pupil at the same school, has passed Standard V but such cases of early passing are altogether exceptional.

EXAMINATION RESULTS.—Of every 100 pupils examined in standards, 87 passed in reading, 89·1 in writing, and 70·4 in arithmetic. Standard VI. obtained the largest number of passes in proportion to the number of pupils examined, and Standard IV the least. I have not stated the percentage of passes in history, geography, dictation, and grammar, for the reason that these subjects are not common to all standards. Although the percentage of passes compared with the number examined is a little lower than last year, the improvement in the character of the work done, as compared with former years, is very marked. The criterion of progress is to be found by comparing the number of marks obtained with the number actually obtainable. A pass in any standard is recorded if a pupil obtains 60 per cent. of the marks obtainable in that standard, and I find that actually 71 per cent. of the total marks obtainable were gained by those pupils who passed my standard examinations last year, or a result for the whole between "very fair" and "good." The changes made in the mode of examining the upper standards has enabled me to carry out all my examinations with much greater detail than formerly, and I am able to say that very commendable progress has been made in not a few of the schools. Faults in organization and discipline are disappearing slowly yet surely before the wider experience of the more capable teachers, and almost without exception the class-registers of attendance were well and neatly kept. In some instances too little attention was paid to the keeping of the admission and summary registers, and I have found that the standard clearance cards, containing the standards passed by children admitted from other schools, have been mostly disregarded by teachers in the classification of new pupils. These defects in school registration will receive special attention from me during the current year.

QUALITY OF WORK.—At the synchronous examination of Standards V and VI., held on the 8th November, ninety-four pupils in Standard V., and thirty-six in Standard VI., presented themselves and took the necessary papers. In the highest standard only two failures were recorded, but in Standard V the failures numbered twenty-three, or nearly 24 per cent. of the whole number examined. The year's work, however, for a pupil in Standard V is much harder, relatively, than that required for one in Standard VI., because in the former much new ground has to be traversed, and the foundation is then really laid for a Standard VI. pass in the following year On the whole, both standards, but more especially the Sixth, have done some very creditable work, and in nothing is the progress of these standards better seen than in the excellent exercise-books and paper work of the pupils attending the Gisborne, Napier, Waipawa, Port Ahuriri, and Wairoa district schools. In the preparation of the lower standards some of the schools have done very well, and nowhere

better than in several of the country schools. It could hardly be expected that small schools situated in bush and outlying districts would be able to present pupils for examination in Standards V and VI. but this has been successfully accompished at Takapau, where the master, though uncertificated, does work which would be creditable to many a school of much higher pretensions. As high as the Fourth Standard, the examination results at Ashley-Clinton, Makatoku, Waipukurau, Puketapu, Takapau, Patangata, and Makaretu are quite equal to the average results obtained in the largest of the district schools. At Makaretu the standard reached is comparatively low, the settlement being made up mostly of Scandinavians, and the school has been opened little more than two years but the master in charge is doing some good work. I was much pleased, at my visit of inspection to this school, to find that all the pupils presented for examination were able to draw a plan of the settlement, marking in the position of every house, road, and important creek, and could likewise tell me what direction to take in order to reach any of the townships or places within twenty miles of the settlement. I should like to see this plan of teaching geography more generally adopted in the schools of this district, for the results would certainly be of more permanent value than I fear they too often are.

Teachers Deficient in Method.—Speaking generally the class results in reading and writing have improved during the year, and arithmetic is admirably taught in several schools. Geography and grammar are attempted with fair success in the larger schools, but history, except perhaps in Standard VI., appears to receive little earnest attention from teachers, and is shunned by most children in the country districts. But, in many instances, the results of the standard examination are much below what they would be if something like sequence were adopted by the teachers in the preparation and training of their pupils. It is not easy to understand why teachers, who, above all others, require to be methodical in their work, so seldom give evidence of their possessing this needful qualification. Few of those in charge of schools are really incapable of doing at least a fair quality of work, but too many of them fail to bring their schools to a high state of efficiency, simply because they persist in teaching the standard subjects in an erratic manner The spasmodic, unmethodical worker, who neglects one of the first principles in school-teaching, viz., iteration and sequence, and who gives a lesson on the rivers of Europe to-day and the towns of New Zealand to-morrow who talks of Alfred the Great in one lesson and of the Wars of the Roses in another, or who pretends to teach writing by giving his pupils a No. 1 copy-book, to be followed by a No. 4 or 6, cannot possibly expect his pupils to shine in any examination, nor can he himself claim to be called an educator or trainer of children. It should be remembered that the difference between a good and a bad school does not depend so much upon the attainments of teachers, or on their ability to give a fair lesson on a set subject, as upon their power of beginning the preparation of each standard subject *at the beginning*, and continuing steadily and without deviation through a regular sequence of lessons until the work has been mastered. And yet the irregular plan of teaching, as described above, is deemed to be the easier in preparing children for examination, and the consequence is that much of the standard work in the schools is prepared on a kind of examination-probability basis, regardless of all true educational principles, and to the great and lasting injury of both teachers and children. Amongst the large schools, Gisborne, Napier Port Ahuriri, Havelock, and Waipawa have maintained their positions during the year, but Clive, Taradale, and Ormond have fallen off somewhat in efficiency from what they were a short time ago. I have already referred to the quality of the work done in the best of the country schools. At Matawhero, Meanee, Kaikora, and Hampden, changes had taken place in the teaching staff just before the date fixed for the annual examination, and, although the results were comparatively low it is pleasing to observe that each school is now in charge of earnest and capable teachers.

Extra Subjects.—The extra subjects usually selected under Regulation 9 were singing, recitation, and drawing. At Napier, botany was chosen in addition to the foregoing, and the results of the examination in this subject were very fair Gisborne, Napier, and Ormond are the only schools where singing by note has been taught with real success, although the children at Frasertown, Hastings, Hampden, Norsewood, Meanee, and Woodville had been taught to sing very nicely by ear It is to be regretted that a subject like singing is so often neglected by teachers. Besides being a great aid to discipline, and a pleasant enjoyment and relaxation to children from their more serious studies, it seems to me that singing, if properly taught, acts as a great moral force in school, by cultivating the higher and better feelings of children and I think that an effort should be made to have the subject more generally taught in the schools than it is at present. Nine of the schools took recitation as an extra subject, and in most instances the children acquitted themselves much better than in former years. Several pupils at the Takapau, Napier, Woodville, and Makatoku schools recited the selection taken by them in an admirable manner Freehand and map drawing continues to be well taught at Gisborne, and model and geometrical drawing at Napier. Very fair specimens of map-drawing were also shown at Ormondville, Petane, Matawhero, Takapau, and Waipawa.

Sewing well taught.—Sewing continues to be taught with marked success in most of the Board schools. The annual general examination of the sewing specimens prepared by all the standard girls attending the schools throughout the district is doing great good in the way of promoting instruction in this subject. The reports issued by the three committees of lady examiners, giving the results of the examination which took place on the 9th and 10th November, show that a high standard of efficiency has been reached in several of the schools. The suggestions and recommendations of the lady examiners will be found appended.

School Libraries.—During the year satisfactory progress has been made in the formation of school libraries. In twelve of the districts—viz., Gisborne, Meanee, Napier, Norsewood, Ormondville, Patangata, Patutahi, Petane, Porangahau, Taradale, Takapau, and Wairoa—school libraries, containing altogether 2,242 books, have been established exclusively for the use of the children attending school. There are also five districts where pupils passing Standard IV receive free

tickets of membership for admission to the local libraries. It would seem teachers are beginning to realize that a library is a necessary part of every well-equipped school, and, now that such a good example has been set, I hope it will have the effect of spurring on other teachers and Committees to "go and do likewise,"

DISTRICT HIGH SCHOOLS NEEDED.—Before concluding my report, I wish to direct attention to what appears to me as a growing want in this district. I refer to the establishment of district high schools. At the present time the standard of education which may be given in the schools is limited to certain subjects, as defined in section 84 of the Education Act. School age is also defined in section 83 as "between five and fifteen years." In certain districts the six standards are passed by pupils at a much earlier age than fifteen years. For example, at Takapau the average age of the pupils who passed Standard VI. in the November examination was only twelve years eleven months, at Gisborne it was thirteen years four months, at Kaikora fourteen years five months, and at Waipawa Standard V was passed by pupils of the average age of twelve years six months. The average age of the pupils who passed Standard VI. at the Napier District School was somewhat higher, but this arose from exceptional causes. Now the question arises, What is to be done with the pupils who pass Standard VI. before the school-age limit has been reached? They are permitted by the Act to attend school, but, when there, they have reached the limit of education which the law allows. At Gisborne there is no other school to which ex-Standard VI. pupils might proceed, and at Napier there appears to be a want of co-ordination in the education given at the district schools and the high schools. I venture, therefore, to suggest the advisability of establishing in the county towns of Gisborne, Wairoa, Hastings, and Waipawa, and, perhaps, at Napier, district high schools under section 56 of the Education Act, so that parents who desire to do so may have their children taught French, Latin, higher mathematics, or natural science, at the district schools, on the payment of fees to be fixed by regulation as required by the Education Act. I feel sure that the establishment of district high schools in the places suggested would meet with the general approbation of School Committees, and they would certainly supply a want which is being increasingly felt in each of the districts mentioned.

I have, &c.,

The Chairman, Education Board. H. HILL, B.A., Inspector of Schools.

EXAMINATION OF SEWING.

SIR,— Napier, 14th December, 1883.

I have the honour to report that the annual exhibition of the sewing specimens done by the girls attending the district schools of Hawke's Bay was held at Napier on Thursday and Friday, the 8th and 9th November Twenty-three out of the thirty-seven schools in the district were represented, and the total number of specimens forwarded was 681, being an increase of five in the number of schools, and of 211 in the number of specimens, when compared with the numbers of last year. The table appended hereto shows the number of specimens from each school, and the total number of competitors in each standard.

The examiners were the same as last year, and were divided into three committees, as follows:—Committee A, Standards I. and VI., examiners, Mesdames Ormond, Russell, and Williams. Committee B, Standards III. and IV , examiners, Mesdames Harding and Sidey Committee C, Standards II. and V examiners, Mesdames Locke and Hill.

On the general character of the work, the examiners report—

STANDARDS I. AND VI.—A marked and satisfactory improvement is evident in the character of work from most of the schools. Several of the schools, however, have not done so well as last year, but, on the whole, commendable progress has been made.

STANDARDS III. AND IV.—The work forwarded for our inspection is very much better than last year's, both in neatness and general finish there is evident improvement. It is to be regretted that the work from several of the largest schools fell below "fair," being unfinished, and in some instances not according to the standard requirements.

STANDARDS II. AND V.—The work shown in these standards is a great improvement upon the sewing examined by us last year More attention should be given in Standard II. to the proper method of seaming, and running should not be introduced until it is needed for *tucks*. In the upper standard the seams should be SEWN OVER and then hemmed.

From the detailed remarks of the examiners it appears that most of the specimens were very clean, and the sewing from some of the schools reflected just credit upon the children and teachers. The following list shows, in the order of merit, the schools where the average marks for sewing ranged between "excellent" and "good:" Puketapu, Gisborne, Te Ongaonga, Port Ahuriri, Wairoa, Hampden, Mohaka, Frasertown, Clive, Makatoku, and Woodville.

I have again to express my thanks to the ladies who for the second time bestowed so much time and attention to the examination of so many and varied specimens of sewing, as also for the valuable hints and suggestions they have given with reference to the further improvement of the work.

I have, &c.,

The Chairman, Education Board. H. HILL.

Summary showing the Schools that sent in Specimens of Sewing and the Number of Specimens sent in each Standard.

School.	Standards.						Total.	Remarks of Examiner.
	I.	II.	III.	IV	V	VI.		
1. Clive	9	10	15	4	3		41	Work varies between fair and excellent.
2. Frasertown ..	5	2	3				10	Very fair indeed.
3. Gisborne	12	19	24	15	3	2	75	Much of the work excellent.
4. Hampden	4	5	1				10	Very good work.
5. Hastings	5	6	4	5	3		23	Varies between fair and good.
6. Kaikora	12	5	5	1	4		27	Mostly unfinished. Very fair as far as finished.
7 Makatoku		2	3	1			6	Good work, but rules not complied with.
8. Matawhero		7	6	8			21	A fair beginning has been made.
9. Meanee	14	12	5	1			32	Very fair
10. Mohaka	2	3	2	1			8	Very good work.
11. Napier ..	21	43	20	26	12	9	131	Much unfinished. Standard VI. good. Standard V below fair, others very fair Greatly fallen off.
12. Norsewood	47	5	4	1			57	Very fair, but specimens should not be coloured.
13. Patutahi	4	3		2			9	+ 3. Very good, but Standard I. not so good as last year
14. Port Ahuriri	11	5	10	6			32	Exceedingly creditable work.
15. Puketapu	1	5	3	2			11	Excellent work.
16. Taradale ..	10	13	10	8	4	1	46	+ 6. Unfinished, or below fair.
17 Tarawera		2	1				3	Very fair
18. Te Ongaonga	4	4	1				9	Very good work indeed.
19. Waipawa	7	4	4	3	2		20	Standards II. and V creditable, others hardly satisfactory
20. Waipukurau	9	1	3		1		14	Fallen off somewhat during the year.
21. Wairoa. ..	7	4	7	2	2		22	Exceedingly creditable work.
22. Woodville	6	12	2	3			23	Very fair work on the whole.
23. Waerenga-a-hika	4	2	4	1			11	Fair beginning made.
Total ..	194	174	138	89	34	12	641	+ infants, 40=grand total, 681.

Captain Russell's Sewing Prizes.

The examination of specimens of sewing for the annual prize competition instituted by Captain Russell took place at the old Provincial Council Chamber, Napier, on Thursday and Friday, the 9th and 10th November, 1883. The prizes are three in number, and are offered for open competition to all girls attending any of the schools under the Board. The first prize is a sewing machine, and is offered for the best specimen of patching the knees and re-seating a pair of old and well-worn trousers, the second prize—a work-box—is offered for the best-made night-shirt, and the third—a lady's-companion—is offered for the best specimen of darning shown on a pair of old and well-worn stockings or socks. Four competitors entered for the first prize, nine for the second, and four for the third, representing in all eight different schools. Last year only nine competitors entered for the three classes, and only two schools were represented, viz., Napier and Wallingford. The examiners were Mesdames Ormond, Russell, and Hill, who have awarded the prizes as follows: First prize (sewing machine) to Maud Farmer, aged thirteen, of the Gisborne District School; second prize (lady's work-box) to Mary Baker, aged fourteen, of the Gisborne District School third prize (lady's companion) to Lottie Naylor, aged twelve, of the Meanee District School. Elizabeth Rymer, of the Puketapu School, was only *one* mark behind Mary Baker for the second prize, and a special prize was awarded to her by Mrs. Ormond for the general excellence of her work. For the third prize Annie Hall obtained equal marks with Lottie Naylor, and a special prize was awarded to her by Mrs. Locke.

The examiners report "marked improvement in the character of most of the work forwarded when compared with the specimens sent in last year The patching of the trousers was excellent, and few faults were to be found either with the night-shirts or the specimens of darning. Only one specimen fell below the mark 'good, the majority being either very good or excellent."

The following table gives the names of the competitors for each prize, and the schools to which they severally belong:—

First Prize—A Sewing Machine. Requirement Patching the knees and re-seating a pair of old and well-worn trousers.

No.	Name.	Age.	School.	Marks obtained.	Marks obtainable.	Remarks.
1	Maud Farmer	13	Gisborne	90	100	Prize.
2	Ada Good	14	Gisborne	85	"	Commended.
3	Rachel LeQuesne ..	14	Napier	85	"	
4	Mary Alley ...	14	Clive	80	"	Good.

SECOND PRIZE—Lady's Work-box. Requirements Making a man's night-shirt and cutting out a child's pinafore.

Number.	Name.	Age.	School.	Cutting out.	Gathering.	Button-holing.	Stitching.	Seaming.	General Neatness.	Total.	Remarks.
			Marks obtainable	20	20	20	15	10	15	100	
1	Mary Baker	14	Gisborne .	20	20	20	15	10	15	100	Prize.
2	Maud Wilson	16	Gisborne	20	20	20	15	10	15	100	Too old. Debarred from competition.
3	Elizabeth Rymer	14	Puketapu	20	20	19	15	10	15	99	Special prize by Mrs. Ormond for excellence.
4	Ella Rymer	13	Puketapu	20	19	19	15	10	15	98	Highly commended.
5	Emily Greenwood	13	Hastings	19	19	19	14	10	14	95	Commended.
6	Felicia Dowling	14	Clive	17	20	18	14	10	13	92	Commended.
7	H.			20	18	15	12	10	14	89	Very good.
8	Agnes Caulton	13	Hastings	19	18	16	12	9	13	87	Very good.
9	Ellen Palmer	13	Waipukurau	20	15	16	13	9	13	86	

THIRD PRIZE—A Lady's-Companion. Requirement Darning a pair of old and well-worn stockings or socks.

Number.	Name.	Age.	School.	Marks Obtained.	Marks Obtainable.	Remarks.
1	Lottie Naylor	12	Meanee	95	100	Prize.
2	Annie Hall	12	Gisborne ..	95	"	Highly commended. Special prize awarded by Mrs. Locke.
3	Julia De Costa.	13	Gisborne	90	"	Commended.
4	Annie Hardy		Hampden	70	"	Commended.

HARRIETT ORMOND,
HARRIETTE J RUSSELL,
EMILY HILL,
} Examiners.

WELLINGTON

SIR,— Wellington, 20th February, 1884.

I have the honour to present my tenth annual report on the working condition of the primary schools in the Wellington District, being the report for the calendar year 1883.

INTRODUCTION.—At the close of the first decade of inspection of schools in this district, I have found it necessary to make a few changes in the work of examination. My reports have hitherto included schools examined before the end of March, but, without any further change in the times at which the several schools are examined, I think it will be best to make the examination year close with the calendar year I shall not therefore, on this occasion, report upon eleven country and five rural schools ordinarily examined in March, except so far as to include their results, obtained last March, in this year's returns.

Again, I should point out that, for years past, I have been gradually raising standard work, so as to make a programme which will fully meet State requirements. I think this programme is now fairly covered, but the extra tension produced by my last effort to bring up the work has caused a decrease in the percentage of results. The highest percentage made this year by any large school is fully 5 per cent. lower than the highest percentage made last year, although I have no reason to believe the work is in any respects inferior The difficulty this year has arisen by a demand of three sums worked correctly out of five, instead of three out of six, as in former years, by adding spelling to dictation in the Second Standard · by requiring composition in other forms, and word-knowledge with grammar in the Third Standard, and by an increase in the difficulty of the arithmetic in the Fifth Standard. Also, in order to make my new departure next year as satisfactory as possible, I have, during the past year altered the times for the examination of some schools, and this again has afforded these schools a shorter year in which to prepare for the late examination. Under these circumstances, I must ask the Board to look upon my report this year as an exceptional one, for in many cases, it would be manifestly unfair to compare results in one school with those in another

GENERAL RESULTS.—The number on the books this year is 7,050, as compared with 6,602 last year The increase of 448 is larger than usual of late years, and is partly attributable to many of the larger schools being examined at a more favourable time of the year With the increase of 448 on the books, there is only an increase of 104 over eight years of age, showing that the increase is mostly of the infant class. But this year 185 more children have been presented for standards. It is also satisfactory to notice that, notwithstanding the increase of 104 children of standard age, there are now only 638 who are unpresentable in standards, as compared with 719 last year These 638 children consist, for the most part, of those of good age who have attended so badly that no teacher could be expected to pass them. I hope to see the number unpresentable decrease year by

year In some schools, as the table in the appendix will show, there is much room for improvement in the number presented as compared with the number over eight years of age, but it is a matter for which parents and not teachers are responsible.

The passes show a falling-off of 6·6 per cent., the failures being principally in the Third, Fourth, and Fifth Standards. Most of this falling-off is fairly attributable to the increased difficulty met with in the examination work but, with better work in the middle classes of some of the larger schools, and with better general management and teaching in others, a higher percentage with a better quality of results is attainable and, now that the ideal of the standards is fairly reached, I confidently look forward to much improvement. To attain this, the teaching must be sound and well directed and no head-teacher can afford to put up with ineffective teaching even in one class of his school.

City Schools.—The City of Wellington schools now comprise six graded schools and four infant schools, attended by 2,478 children in the former, and 1,413 infants, making a total of 3,891. The percentage of results has fallen in the Thorndon, Te Aro, and Terrace schools. The Mount Cook schools, whose percentages were low last year, show much higher results this year And at the Newtown School, in which, for some years to come, there will probably be not many pupils remaining for higher-standard work, the good standing of last year is fully maintained. After making due allowance for the increased difficulty in the examination, the falling-off in the percentage of results in the Thorndon and Te Aro schools from the very high percentages made last year is mainly due to changes occasioned by the removal of class-teachers, and to the difficulties which the headmasters have had in sparing time to examine and strengthen the work of certain classes. In both schools the temporary substitutes supplied had little aptitude for teaching. The difficulty is now largely overcome, and, knowing the ability of the management, I can fairly hope for higher results next year Notwithstanding these drawbacks, there was very good lower-standard work and excellent Sixth Standard work in both schools. At Thorndon few if any of the questions asked the Sixth Standard in geography and history were not answered. In the Terrace School the Third Standard class was again weak, and also the arithmetic of the Fifth and Sixth Standards. The work of the two lower standards was very good, and that of the Fourth Standard was generally satisfactory In this school also there have been changes of teachers in the Fifth Standard class, and the present second master, who has been only a short time in charge, cannot be held responsible for results. The Terrace School is the only one in the city in which singing is not taught. The Mount Cook School showed improved work in many classes. The work was particularly commendable in the First, Second, Fourth, and Sixth Standards of the girls' school, and in the Sixth Standard of the boys' school. In all the city schools, the reading of most of the classes was expressive, and the paper work neatly done.

Of the infant schools I can still speak most favourably The new one opened in Courtenay Place is fairly started, and promises to do satisfactory work. The work of the larger infant schools, as preparatory to that of the graded schools, is invaluable, and is a great feature in the school system. I suggest a little more variety in the class-lessons, and I especially recommend the reading or telling of stories, questions afterwards being asked on the subject-matter Although 200 children have this year passed the First Standard in the infant schools, I hope it will not be the great aim of infant-school teachers to prepare for standard work. Infant schools should not neglect their main function, which is, by variety of exercises, drill and singing, and by lessons in form, colour, construction, and so forth, to cultivate habits of observation and develop intelligence. At present the infant schools are insufficiently supplied with the necessary "properties" for this work.

District Town Schools.—There are now ten important schools in this class, and for the most part the work done in them is fairly good. The Masterton School takes the lead, having produced the highest percentage, and, on the whole, a class of results inferior to none in the district. This school was distinguished by good reading in all classes, good writing in nearly all, with excellent writing in the Third Standard, and strong arithmetic throughout. The Taita School is second in order of merit. This school showed much intelligent knowledge, and made full passes in the higher standards, the grammar being particularly good, and two candidates clearing the Sixth Standard arithmetic paper Next in order of merit came the schools at Featherston, Clareville, Karori, Greytown, and Lower Hutt, all doing satisfactory work. In the Clareville School the strongest subjects were grammar and geography, all the written work was very neat and some exceedingly creditable work was done in the two higher standards, and especially by one or two of the best pupils. The work of the Karori School was again strong in most subjects, particularly in grammar higher arithmetic, and in history Except in Third Standard work, the Greytown School was much improved. The upper and lower classes at Featherston were generally strong in their work, and the school was well conducted. Considering that only nine months had elapsed since the last examination of the Lower Hutt School, the work in many sections was good, and, with changes in the staff, promises to be better The percentage results at Kaiwara were very high last year. The examination was held seven weeks earlier this year, and the number of passes was less but the work continues in many respects equally neat and good. The Carterton School—one of the very best taught schools in the district—has suffered much this year from untoward causes. The master has been very ill, there has been a long period of severe sickness in the neighbourhood, and the school year has been shortened. Under these circumstances it cannot be a matter of surprise that the results are low Although there was a great breakdown in the middle of the school, some excellent work was done in the First and Sixth Standards, especially in the latter, two boys clearing the arithmetic paper, and all work being exceedingly neat, full, and accurate. The Upper Hutt School showed considerable weakness. Moderate reading and grammar, poor arithmetic, and bad spelling were nearly common to all classes in which they were taught.

The tone, discipline, and general management of nearly all the district town schools are very satisfactory Most of those in the Wairarapa present a favourable contrast to several of the city schools in the neatness and appointments of the class-room. In the larger of those schools also, as well as in one or two city schools, well-drilled rifle corps are maintained.

Country Schools.—Except at Petone, the results in the country schools are not strong this year At Petone not only was the percentage of results high, but the work throughout showed much accurate and careful work. At Pahautanui and Porirua the classes were fairly satisfactory, and, in most subjects, improved. For years past good work has been done at Tawa, Judgeford, and Wadestown, but there was a considerable falling-off this year in the numbers passing standards. The Maungaroa School was rather weak last year, and is not much stronger this. Spelling and reading are far from strong, and arithmetic is weak in upper-standard work. The Makara School is improving, being better appointed, and the master working with more system after his residence in the normal school. Johnsonville School was in a depressed condition at the time of my visit, made when the present master had just taken charge but, under the new management, there is every hope of a better future for the school.

Rural Schools.—At the Horokiwi Valley School the teacher had not been long in charge, but the writing was already improved. The small school at Wallace is fairly satisfactory Wainuiomata School suffers from irregular attendance, and is characterized by good reading and poor arithmetic. Vogeltown is quite a new school, on the outskirts of Wellington, only lately opened at the time of my visit. The Korokoro School was closed for three months of the year In the two latter schools no passes were looked for, and, under such circumstances, a full percentage must result. Their working condition, however, was quite satisfactory It is pleasing to notice the work done in a new district like Whiteman's Valley Two years ago there was no school, and many children had grown up, in a bush district, without any education whatever There are now seventeen of the twenty-one children who read and write, and generally do the work of their standards well, and who come most regularly to school along wretched roads.

Character and Quality of the Work.—After again looking through my notes made on the day of examination, and the papers of the pupils, I find there are many matters, touching the character and quality of the work, to which attention should be directed. In standard passes there is a wide difference in value between the pass in which the pupil does fair work in all subjects and good work in some, and the bare pass in which there is absolute failure in one subject—possibly an important one such as grammar or arithmetic—and moderate work in others. So, also, two schools may obtain the same percentage of passes, and the work of one be much inferior in many respects, to that of the other I may say generally that in reading, writing, spelling, geography, and composition the minimum requirements of the standards are fairly reached and that the class-work of the schools in these subjects is satisfactory, although still capable of improvement and that good work is done, in some schools, by really good class-teachers, in all standards, and more especially in the Sixth Standard work of the larger schools. But, although the minimum of the work in many subjects is met, there is still great deficiency in some schools in the quality of the work, and in the treatment of subjects developing thought and intelligence.

Most children in our largest schools read fluently and correctly but they are not often well able to explain the difficulties of the narrative. The handwriting is generally legible and neat, but there is apparently no aim on the part of some teachers to produce accuracy of form and similarity of style. The writing is varied in character in the same class, and appears to have been picked up rather than learned. And yet I could point to large classes skilfully taught, in which every scholar more or less faithfully imitated the model in both form and style.

In grammar and arithmetic more remains to be done. Composition is improved, but the knowledge of words and of the use of words is very limited. Also I frequently find that children, who can write a passably fair composition exercise when on their guard, break down entirely in any other written work, so much so that in answering other questions they will begin answers without the use of capital letters, and disregard every rule which has guided them in their composition. The grammar exercises should be more varied, as it is quite common for children who have been working in a certain groove, to altogether miss the purport of a question. These candidates, when asked to give the meaning of words, or to make sentences containing them, parse the words given. Others, from want of practice in dealing with questions, from thoughtlessness, or want of training in habits of preciseness and correctness, copy down wrong for right, or do the whole of a question when only part is asked for Others, again, who must have been very badly taught, use capital letters and the apostrophe on every possible occasion, even for verbs. I am sorry to find in several schools that, while the subject-matter of the letter required in Standard IV is often well done, the form of the letter is not insisted on. Of Standard VI. pupils I think something more might be expected in the comprehension of narrative. For instance, few candidates could give any intelligent meaning to the sentence "An astrologer's old quill to a sheepskin gave the story" The teaching of arithmetic is defective in many classes of our schools. The processes are often fairly mastered, but the explanation given on the black-board is not full and explicit enough, and, as a rule, sufficient problems are not given. Also some teachers do not take the trouble to dictate sums, or write them in words, instead of setting figures on the black-board nor do they give sufficient variety of the same work to meet an examination well. The side work of the upper-standard papers shows how much room there is for improvement in method and arrangement of work. I am sorry to find that in Standard IV it is getting more common for pupils to neglect the form or construction of the bill required to be made out. In future this should be insisted on.

In the past year I have examined history and geography orally, partly because it is desirable that part of the examination should be oral, and partly for special reasons. Many more questions can be asked, and the examiner comes in contact with the ready intelligence of the class, and he can form, in connection with the written work, a truer idea of the value of the teaching. Also the

pronunciation of the names of places is a matter which should come under notice. I am sorry to find that the newest English books on these subjects are not yet in use. I allude more particularly to the geographical and historical reading-books referred to in my last report. These books present instruction to the young mind from a traveller's or story-teller's point of view, and clothe the dry bones of geography and history with attractive dress. In many schools I notice the use of hand-made outline maps on black calico, setting forth only a few features boldly and clearly This is a great improvement on the sole use of maps crowded with names and consequently confusing to the minds of learners. In one large school, in which geographical readers had been used in the Second Standard, the comprehension and knowledge of the geographical requirements of that standard were markedly good and much superior to the average work of schools. I have said that the minimum requirements of the standards in most of the subjects, except arithmetic and grammar, are generally fairly met. It is far from being so with the maximum requirements, for not more than two or three in a class of fifty are able to answer correctly all the work set in grammar or arithmetic. Indeed, excellence is a rare quality Again, few composition exercises are free from serious mistakes, and few children write dictation without errors of spelling. Of course, it can hardly be expected that they should do so, nor do I complain that it is so. But it will be a matter of congratulation if, year by year, more of this excellence is apparent. Some teachers certainly succeed admirably in attaining a high quality of results in one or more subjects and nothing so gladdens the eye of an examiner as to meet with that which is thoroughly educative work in one form at least.

With the view of being useful in the exercise of my duties, I have pointed out what appear to me some of the weak points in the working of the schools. I think, however, there is already so much good work done, that much improvement will appear from year to year if more attention is generally paid to what is technically known as "comprehension" in reading, to the giving of exercises on the use and meanings of words, to setting sums in greater variety with more problems and more fractional work in Standard V., to the teaching of spelling by examples of sets of words rather than by the frequent giving of dictation (examination work), and to the preparation in the next lower standard of some of the work of the more difficult standards. Thus, for instance, in Standard II. the class without any strain would lay a good foundation for Standard III. work, if taught to read stories from English history or if such stories were read to the class by the teacher and a few questions afterwards asked on the narrative. The simpler parts of speech could now be taught, and the construction of simple sentences, with very easy composition exercises on the most familiar things and, with the definitions required in geography the bolder features on the map of the world could be taken. Wherever I have seen the teachers attempt anything of this kind, it has proved very strengthening to the lower class, and an admirable preparation for the higher

The Annual Examination-Day.—Nine out of every ten children on the books attend for examination, the whole number being 6,226 out of 7,050. Most of the absentees are infants, except in a few schools in which the ordinary attendance is bad. I have no reason to be dissatisfied, as a whole, with the attendance of standard children, but, if I found more than two or three standard children absent in any one school, I should be inclined to suspect that they were by no means strong candidates. I am pleased to notice much improvement made in many schools in the preparedness for the work of examination, the pupils being spaced out in alphabetical order with numbers as scheduled, and all requirements being to hand in convenient form. I do not think many children fail to do their best on examination-day On the contrary, in most cases, the children appear to do better on that day than in ordinary class-work, because they are more on their mettle, and consequently more careful in their work. I notice, however, that, if the teacher is excited or over-anxious, the children catch the infection, and that, on the other hand, a cheerful and self-reliant teacher inspires cheerfulness and hopefulness in his pupils. Again, nervousness is by no means a bad sign in itself, unless it proceeds from fear. Naturally-nervous children are often the best candidates, and they seldom fail. The over-confident are much more likely to do so. One of the surest and at the same time one of the commonest indications of good honest work is the earnestness displayed by a class under examination. On the other hand, in weak classes the children, and often the teachers, reflect the under-teaching of a year in the indifference then displayed. There is yet another matter in connection with the actual work of examination, to which I should call attention It is the unreasonableness of expecting children to do on the examination-day anything whatever in which they have not been previously practised. And yet this is a very common error For instance, in some schools children are constantly working on slates, or at most in exercise-books. Periodical examinations are not held, and consequently the children are quite unprepared to use sheets of paper in proper form on examination-day. I recall scores of instances in which children have made ridiculous blunders, because they have not been drilled into method or into habits of observation and attention. I am pleased to state that, in nearly every school, the children present themselves neat and cleanly in person and the class-rooms are not unfrequently made pretty and cheerful by bouquets of flowers placed on the tables and mantelpieces. And, at the close of the day when results are declared, although there is naturally considerable anxiety, I notice generally much joy and but little grief.

Home-Lessons.—During the past two or three years I have advised teachers to make modifications in the quantity and character of the home-tasks. At the present time, I do not think many children are overworked in this matter Some teachers continue to set greater value than others on home-lessons, and, as to the simple question of home-work, I do not think the Board should offer any hindrance to teachers employing legitimate and, to them, helpful means of instruction. Teachers, however, are still advised to exercise moderation and discretion, and to give home-work under fair restrictions. Such lessons, in my opinion, should not occupy the dullest child more than one hour a day on four days of the week, the lessons should be given on subjects which have been previously well gone over in class, the children should thoroughly understand what is required to be

done, and a carefully written memorandum of it should be taken home by each child, and, lastly, the work should be clearly corrected, and the corrections understood by the pupil. Home-lessons may be composition exercises on familiar subjects, sums in back-work only, learning arithmetical tables, or rules of grammar which have been thoroughly explained in class, a small outline map showing half-a-dozen names of places, on which a lesson has been previously given, the preparation, by means of a given vocabulary of a short reading-lesson, or the learning of a verse or two of poetry Home-work should not be the copying of full maps from atlases, problems in arithmetic, learning by heart geography history, or grammar from text-books, or preparing any class-lesson other than reading.

Since writing the above suggestions, which are for the most a summary of what has been said from time to time in the several schools, I have read in the Home papers a letter, of the 14th of November last, from the British Education Department to the National Union of Elementary Teachers, in which similar views are thus expressed "In regard to home-lessons, my Lords see no reason to modify the view which has already been expressed. For delicate or very young children such lessons are plainly unsuitable, and the special circumstances of some schools render it inexpedient to require home tasks in any form. But in the upper classes of good schools, in which the teachers exert a right influence and take an interest in their work, the practice of giving short exercises to be performed at home is attended with no difficulty, and is open to no practical objection. The best teachers use such exercises rather to illustrate and to fix in the memory lessons which have already been explained in school than to break new ground, or to call for new mental effort. This purpose is served by lessons of a very simple and definite character—a sum, a verse of poetry, a list of names or dates, a letter, an outline map, a short parsing exercise, which may readily be prepared in half-an-hour, and which admits of very easy testing and correction on the following day When these conditions are fulfilled, the home task is found to have a very valuable effect, not only in helping the progress of the scholar, and in encouraging the habit of application, but also in awakening, on the part of the parents, an interest in the school work."

Needlework and Arithmetic for Girls.—Rather more work is at present required of girls than of boys, in that the girls give up a portion of their time to needlework, and it is desirable that this time should be rather increased than diminished. Then, again, the arithmetic required in each standard is more difficult mental work for girls than it is for boys, and there are physical reasons why the strain put upon girls should be less than that put upon boys. As arithmetic is a subject less necessary in after-life for girls than for boys, I think it will be advisable in future to set easier papers in that subject specially for girls. To do so will add to the labour of examination but it will be a boon to many girls and their teachers, who find it, under the circumstances, difficult to satisfy present examination requirements in arithmetic. I shall not, however, allow girls taught by a mistress to take the easier arithmetic paper unless the needlework taught is satisfactory I say this, because, at present, the sewing of two of the six city schools, and that of three of the ten district town schools, would not be considered satisfactory.

Normal School.—I have, this year given more time than formerly to the inspection of the Normal School, and conducted examinations—chiefly orally—on most of the subjects of study The examinations were held on Thursday and Friday the last days of August. Eighteen female students were present in class, two others were engaged in the practising school, and one male student was doing temporary work in a country school. The work taken on Thursday was oral examination in English grammar, analysis and word-knowledge, and examination on the black-board in involved fractions, discount, and mensuration. Speaking generally, the answers were numerous and intelligent, and showed a fair comprehension and extended knowledge of the work taken up. Clearly, the class, as a whole, was stronger than those of previous years. During the day the science master gave a useful lecture on heat, and the drawing master took a class of eighteen students in perspective drawing, giving clear instruction with diagrams. On Friday I again examined orally and rather closely on the geography of the east coast of England, on the political geography of France, and on one or two branches of physical geography I also gave a short paper on history, and examined the D students on the black-board in elementary algebra, and in Euclid, Book I., taking principally Propositions v and xxxii. Afterwards a model lesson was given by one of the students, and a few criticisms made thereon. I took note of the time-table and the work covered by the teaching of Mr. Howard, the Normal master, and of Mrs. Griffin, the Normal mistress, also I have lately read many of the lectures prepared for her classes by the latter. I am satisfied with the extent of the programme and the character of the instruction, and from an inspection of the exercise-books of the students in arithmetic, history, grammar, domestic economy, science, and physical geography, I should infer that the pupils had been diligent and careful in their work.

I was much pleased with the cheerful tone and gentle manners of the students. The Normal mistress was advised to have specimens of needlework prepared for presentation at the annual certificate examination, to supplement the work required to be done in the room, and I was lately informed by the examiner that some very creditable work was shown. During the past year I have seen at work three or four teachers who have been trained in the Wellington Normal School, two in charge of country schools, and one or two acting as assistants in large schools and I can testify that they are painstaking and methodical, their schools or rooms are well appointed, the time-tables are satisfactory, and, in some cases at least, they are careful to prepare the work of the day beforehand—an important point in a really successful teacher

I have, &c.,

The Chairman, Education Board. Robert Lee, Inspector.

MARLBOROUGH.

SIR,— Blenheim, 13th March, 1884.

I have the honour to submit to you my report upon the public schools in the District of Marlborough for the year 1883.

I have examined twenty-six schools, 1,276 children being present on examination-day 1,490 scholars were on the rolls of these schools, being an increase of 131 since my previous examination. With the view of meeting the largely-increasing demands on my time caused by the steady increase in the number of new schools, eleven of which—for the most part remote and difficult of access—have been opened since I undertook the inspection of this district, I have obtained the Board's permission to examine the bulk of the schools in February So far as I can judge no harm has resulted from the change, which, on the other hand, has enabled me to devote much more time to the task of examining than was formerly possible. The unusual length of the interval between the two last examinations—which will not occur again—has, after all, done little more than compensate for the wide-spread and contracted sickness of last year This is clearly shown by the records of attendance, which in many schools does not equal, and, taking the whole district, does not exceed, for the fifteen months the normal attendance for an ordinary school year To prevent, however any possible injury to schools likely to be affected by harvest work, I have, in all such cases, offered the alternative of an examination in September in future.

It is gratifying to be able to state that several of the defects of which I complained in my last report have, to a great extent, been remedied. The increased pains evidently bestowed upon the handwriting have borne good fruit, the number of schools in which the chidren write really well being now twice as great as it was a year ago. Neat and well-arranged paper-work is also more common than it was. The improvement in the formerly very faulty arithmetic of many of the schools is also marked and general, the failures in this respect having been largely reduced. It is probable that the lightening of the requirements in history and political geography may have somewhat contributed to this result. The letter-writing is still, however, far from being as good as it ought to be. It is exasperating, after all that has been said and written on this head, to find letters on the simplest subjects in which a minimum of relevant matter is overloaded with meaningless preambles and pointless endings. It is impossible not to see that such questionable pieces of ornamentation are altogether foreign to boy-nature, and that the young writers must have been very carefully trained in the pernicious art of "padding."

I recommend the teachers to give more attention to spelling. The failures this year were twice as numerous as they were at the previous examination.

The result of my examinations, in which several schools have attained, and still more have closely approached, the maximum percentage of passes obtainable, has certainly not taken me by surprise. From a thoroughly competent staff of teachers, such as is now in the service of the Board, and from a fairly intelligent body of scholars, no less ought to be expected. When the percentage of passes falls considerably short of the Marlborough record, as I observe has been occasionally the case in other districts, where, nevertheless, such a fact is spoken of without marked disapproval, some factor must surely enter into the question of which I have no knowledge. For it seems clear that, given fairly capable teachers and scholars—with a saving clause for children who have attended irregularly—if any large proportion of the latter fail to reach, year by year the minimum required by the standard regulations, such failure can be reasonably accounted for only in one of two ways either the papers set and the general style of examination must be too difficult for children of average ability, or the standards themselves must exact more than can be compassed by such children from year to year If interpreted very strictly, there is no doubt that, without departing from the letter of the regulations, the standards can be so applied as to crush all but a small minority of exceptional scholars. But the latitude of construction allowed—and even expressly recommended—in the pamphlet issued by the Education Department, leaves little excuse for overtasking the bulk of the candidates for the several standards. After several years' experience of the working of the present system, and after ample time has been afforded to both teachers and Inspectors for ascertaining with some approach to precision how much ought to be expected from children of a given age and standing, I should feel it a great reflection, either on the teachers of any district that I was employed to inspect, or on myself as the examiner, if the proportion of those who failed to pass much exceeded, at the outside, a fourth of the total number of candidates. I do not see how it is possible to escape the conclusion that if the outcome of my interpretation of the requirements of the standards is to be the rejection of a large proportion of the scholars with whom I have to deal, I must have made some mistake, and that I ought to set about rectifying it with the least possible delay If, on the other hand, I am quite sure that the fault rests with the teachers, I hold it to be my plain duty to state this in the clearest manner to the Board, at whatever cost. It is impossible to reconcile a general approval of a teaching staff with a long list of failures.

I confess that I am not altogether satisfied with the outcome of my appeal to teachers, in my last report, to try the experiment of largely reducing home-lessons. That the burdens against which I protested have been much lightened in many instances, with the happiest results, I have ample evidence. But it is not quite clear that the reform has been so general and so complete as might be desired. There is a suspicious ring about the stereotyped answer, "about an hour's steady work every evening," to my queries on this point. It is, indeed, questionable if the teacher exists who, with every desire to state the exact truth, can help unconsciously extenuating the tasks he exacts, and over-estimating the working powers of some, at least, of his scholars. The evidence of parents, who know exactly where the shoe pinches, would be more satisfactory This is a matter in which substantial help might be given by School Committees, if only they have the will, as undoubtedly they have the power, summarily to put a stop to excessive impositions. An Inspector can do little more than remonstrate.

It will be seen that extended experience, and such changes in the special requirements of our schools as each year is sure to bring about, have necessitated constant alterations in the detail and method of examination. New rules as to the compulsory presentation of scholars for standards, and the exclusion from the published records of all those whose failure can be accounted for by irregularity of attendance, have now been adopted, almost simultaneously, and with little or no concert, by the Inspector in every education district in the colony It is to be regretted that such modifications as must inevitably be made, from time to time, in every system that is not doomed to remain altogether stereotyped and hide-bound, cannot be effected, systematically and with a better sanction, by a conference of Inspectors. These might meet at some central spot every second year, bringing with them the results of a widely-extended and widely-varying experience of the practical working of the standards. If no more were accomplished than the bringing-about of a substantial accord on the present chief moot points, leaving a wide diversity of opinion and practice on less important matters, such a conference would be well worth, to the children of New Zealand, all the time and money it would cost.

Little help, I fear, is to be looked for from the counsels of teachers' associations and kindred institutions, if we may judge from some of the proposals that have, apparently, found favour with those bodies. The reduction to a minimum of the freedom of judgment and action of Inspectors, and the securing, under all circumstances, of an absolute uniformity in examinations, seem to be the favourite objects aimed at in most cases. And these are sought to be obtained by such notable devices as that the standard examination-papers for the whole colony shall be set and issued annually by the Education Department—a plan that would reproduce, in their worst form, some of the worst evils of a Continental bureaucracy. The unsought advice of those whose work is to be criticised, as to the best method of criticism, is, moreover, usually viewed with not unreasonable distrust by the outside public. In the meantime, in the absence of better guidance, I shall continue to avail myself, to the fullest extent, of the latitude allowed by the spirit of the regulations, and endeavour, by giving a marked trend to my examinations—by laying special stress on such subjects as I have reason to believe are neglected, and by passing lightly over such as are unduly prominent —to get such things thoroughly taught as will tend most to the future welfare of the scholars. In the very first rank of these must be put reading, writing, spelling, arithmetic, and letter-writing. Next may come grammar and physical geography, after these, political geography and history If time is left for science, drawing, and singing, so much the better but the plea that much attention has been devoted to the latter will not be held by me a sufficient excuse for any shortcomings on the first five essential subjects.

I am glad to find an opinion that I have for some time held as to the worthlessness, and even the harmfulness, of prize-giving in our public schools confirmed by the successful example of the borough schools, where no such incentives to study are offered. Yet I have never seen scholars who showed a keener zest for their work, or who took a livelier interest in the result of the examination, than is habitually shown there. But the interest is of an altogether better and more generous sort than that which is painfully prominent at most competitive examinations, where the success of the individual is the sole aim. At the borough schools, after a successful examination, the predominant feeling is evidently that of pride that every scholar has done his duty, and that first the class, and then the school, has acquitted itself well. Whatever, indeed, tends to lessen the ever-increasing strain of competitive examination—that bane of modern schoolboy life—I count for good. I can only regret that no better way of selecting winners of scholarships has yet been devised than the fiery ordeal of competition, in the long preparation for which much valuable time must be wasted, by diverting the energies of the most promising scholars from their ordinary work, and as the result of which, after all, the prize may not fall to the candidate who really deserves it best.

I append a brief statement of the condition of each school when last examined. *

I have, &c.,

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

NELSON

Sir,— 30th December, 1883.

I have the honour to lay before you my report of the Nelson public schools for 1883.

The number of schools in the district (seventy-three) is apparently no greater than it was last year; but actually five aided schools, Pukororo, Woodstock, Burnside, Upper Takaka, and Hampden, have been opened since 1882, the reorganization of several of the town schools, recommended in my report of 1880, having reduced the nominal list by four The number of scholars on the roll at the end of the December quarter was 4,543, being an increase of 451 during the year. The number present at examination was 3,774, the number on the roll at that time being 4,392, showing an increase of 290 as compared with last year It is disheartening to find that about one-seventh of the scholars again absented themselves from examinations made during an exceptionally fine season. It would be an interesting but costly experiment to ascertain, by the offer of a ticket to a tea-party or some equally potent inducement to every scholar in attendance on examination-day how many of the 618 absentees were unavoidably detained. I have too good reason for suspecting that the notorious feebleness of parental control in this district, which renders the task of enforcing school discipline so hard, is at the bottom of three-fourths of these absences. So long as attendance is left to the option of the scholar will the muster-roll on the examination-day show many blanks.

The strict rule—enforced for the first time this year—which provides that all scholars who have passed the First Standard shall be presented for a higher standard year by year, irrespectively of their attendance or attainments, has swelled the record of those presented for examination by 358 names. At least 200 more were examined and failed to pass, but, as these had attended for less

* Not reprinted.

than 130 days since the previous examination, their names do not appear on the list of examinees. The effects of this wider cast of the net have not been exactly what was anticipated, the percentage of passes, 83, being much higher than it has ever been before, although there has certainly been no relaxation of the stringency of the tests applied, which indeed, as I have ascertained from a constant interchange of my examination papers with those of some of my fellow Inspectors, are at least equal in point of difficulty to those used in other education districts. Judged, therefore, solely by the standard test, which, in the estimation of the general public, is gradually elbowing out of sight all others, the Nelson schools have this year acquitted themselves remarkably well.

The serious question next occurs, Are the children at our public schools on the whole better taught, and are they more intelligent, than they were a few years ago under a widely different system, or is the apparent improvement merely due to increased deftness on the part of our teachers in grappling with the technical difficulties and requirements of the standards, and in skilfully imparting the precise minimum of instruction that will justify an Inspector in giving a bare "pass"? Unfortunately an examiner who, year after year, is being gradually accustomed to look upon the standards and regulations ever before his eyes as his sole guides in estimating the quality of the work submitted to him, however he may gain in expertness of method, and in the faculty of judging almost intuitively whether any given paper is deserving of "a pass," must, in the long-run, lose something of the capacity for discriminating between *education* and *cram*. However resolutely he may set out by forming in his own mind an ideal of intelligent as distinguished from routine work, the ever-growing pressure of examinations will leave him but little leisure for forming broad judgments, and the habit of constantly working in the same narow groove will, sooner or later, "subdue him to what he works in." I have no hesitation, however, in affirming that in some by no means unimportant respects our schools are generally and steadily improving. The arithmetic of the large majority of schools here may fairly be termed good, that of not a few, excellent. The methods of working questions are shorter and more scientific than they were, and the ability to grapple with a problem requiring some exercise of thought is becoming more common even among the younger children.

The greater pains bestowed upon reading have also borne good fruit. Good taste and expression are of later growth, and can be found only among a few exceptional children. But the majority of our scholars at least read distinctly, and as though they understand what they are reading.

There is little to find fault with in the teaching of technical grammar, which is not now allowed to usurp more than its fair share of time and attention while most of the other scholars can write plainly and sensibly on any familiar subject, and have, as a rule, abandoned the style of the "Polite Letter-writer," formerly much in vogue and carefully inculcated, I grieve to say, by some of their teachers.

The less essential subjects of geography and history get at least as much attention as they deserve, the geography of New Zealand being especially well taught.

A much more important matter, handwriting, is not so well attended to. It is impossible to look at the neat, well-formed penmanship of every scholar in a few of our schools without being driven to the conclusion that only negligence or incapacity on the part of the teacher can fully account for the shapeless scrawls that some are not ashamed to produce by dozens at every successive examination. I find it harder to account for much of the bad spelling that undoubtedly exists in some of our best schools. No pains appear to be spared, no method is left untried, and yet the outcome is unsatisfactory. It is noteworthy that in some schools, where no extraordinary pains seem to be taken, the spelling is uniformly good. It would almost seem as if, in certain schools, there was a tradition of good or bad spelling, equally hard to be broken through in either case.

The full course of instruction prescribed in the regulations, which, in addition to seven—and in the case of girls eight—standard subjects, embraces drawing, science, and vocal music, is carried out in comparatively few of our schools, those being usually in towns, where the number of scholars is large enough to admit of a teacher being put in charge of only one, or at most two, classes. But in the small country schools—which abound in this district—where a single teacher has to do everything, and where the attendance is too commonly very irregular, all apparent superfluities must be rigidly excluded from the school course. The full programme evidently presupposes a full staff of teachers and a regular attendance. A yearly attendance of 130 school-days—and hundreds of our children fall short of this modest minimum—leaves scant room for "beakers and test-tubes," for "drawing models," and the mysteries of the "modulator" Knowing how strong is the temptation to neglect essentials for these more showy matters, I have never urged the teachers of small schools to extend a programme that does not go much, if at all, beyond the seven standard subjects. There is ample scope for the energies of even a very capable teacher within the limits of this apparently narrow course of instruction. It is gratifying to find that the reduction to almost a minimum of home-lessons, which I have never ceased to urge upon our teachers, has now become general, and that, if the results of this year's examination may be taken as a criterion, the progress of the scholars has not, at any rate, been retarded by the lightening of their burdens. The gain to the health of the children ought also to count for something.

Much has been done this year to prepare the children by periodical rehearsals for the annual examination, and the good effects of this are manifested in the superior readiness of the scholars, especially in paper work, and in the greater neatness of the papers sent in, which, in our best schools, are models of orderly arrangement.

The column in the record of passes, showing the proportion that the number of passes in each school bears to the number of scholars on the roll, is significant, and affords a much-needed check to the otherwise misleading column giving the mere percentage of passes. If, for obvious reasons, the preparatory schools and those which admit none but the standard scholars be excluded, it is,

indeed, a surer test of the work done at any school than the "pass" column. The proportion that the number of scholars who have passed bears to the number on the roll is very high in some of our schools this year It is only fair to select for special commendation on this ground Stoke, Tadmor, Haven Road, Ngakawhau, Toitoi Valley, River Terrace, and Charleston Girls', the lowest on this list having passed 57 per cent. of the number on the roll, which, of course, includes absentees from the examinations. In striking contrast to these we have Brighton, Ranzau, Foxhill, Neudorf, Brightwater, and Ngatimoti, in none of which does the percentage exceed, while in some it falls much below, 21.

I subjoin my usual estimate of the condition of each school when I last examined it.*

From the foregoing survey of the state of each of the Nelson schools, it will be gathered that, with, at most, half-a-dozen exceptions, the work is being carried on smoothly and efficiently, and that even in the less satisfactory schools the faults pointed out are in a fair way of being remedied. The instances are rare in which I find, at my next examination, that no honest attempt has been made to amend what was amiss.

I have, &c.,

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

NORTH CANTERBURY

Sir,— Christchurch, 31st March, 1884.

We have the honour to submit our general report for the year 1883.

With very few exceptions all schools in operation during the year were fully examined in standards. Those schools not so examined were either recently opened, or had, after being closed for considerable periods, been only a short time under the teachers in charge at the dates of our visits. Owing to the number of schools and the large attendances on the days of examination, a great proportion of our time had necessarily to be spent in the work of examining, valuing the papers handed in, and making out detailed reports for the information of the Board, Committees, and teachers, thus leaving very little time for visits of inspection. However, we were enabled to pay at least one casual visit to the large majority of schools, but, beyond looking through the registers and seeing that the instruction was being carried on in accordance with the regulations, we were unable to see much of the organization or methods of teaching.

The number of schools in the district at the end of the year was 143, an increase of eight over the previous year New schools were opened at Darfield, Lauriston, Lakeside, Winslow, South Malvern, Little Port Cooper, Rotherham, and Manuka Town, the three latter being small aided ones.

The total number of scholars on the registers at the dates of our examinations was 17,565, and the number present 15,019. Table No. I. shows the enrolments and attendances for the years 1881, 1882, and 1883:—

Table No. I.

	Enrolment.	Present at Examination.	Percentage.
1881	16,076	12,663	79
1882	16,781	13,848 ..	82
1883 ..	17,565	15,019 ..	85

It is satisfactory to find that, notwithstanding that the weather during the latter portion of the year—what we consider our busiest time—was very wet and stormy yet the attendance was very considerably in excess of the previous year, the percentage of roll-number present being 85.

There appears an increasing desire on the part of Committees and teachers to pay more attention to the improvement of the grounds attached to their schools. In the case of several, however we have to reiterate what we stated in our last report, namely, that very little care appears to be bestowed on either grounds, buildings, furniture, or apparatus. Considerable alterations have been made in the furniture now supplied to schools. It may be stated that almost all schools in the district are suitably furnished, and that there is an adequate supply of the usual teaching appliances.

We have still to complain of the irregular attendance of a large proportion of the pupils whose names appear on the register for the year, and to deplore the evil effects upon themselves and their more regular class-fellows. For not only do the absentees wrong themselves, but they act injuriously on the other more regular scholars, whose progress is necessarily retarded in order that these laggards may be brought forward to the level of the class. Again, while in some cases the master, by his supineness, is greatly to blame in this matter, in very many more the persistent irregular attendance of the children, kept at home for any and every cause, eats up the energy and enthusiasm of even the best masters. If Committees would only move in this matter, without fear of their neighbours and in the true interests of the children, our results would be very much better, the hearts of the teachers encouraged, and parents and pupils brought to appreciate the value of the great boon of free education placed within the reach of the majority of the inhabitants of this district. Not only is this irregular attendance bearing evil fruit now but in the future of the children the effect cannot be anything but bad. When kept at home, as is too often the case, for very trivial causes, they are taught to subordinate education with all its advantages to little and sordid matters, and thus, when they themselves come to take their place in the State, they will not give to education that interest necessary to enable the present system to be carried on with any measure of hearty zeal. This is not a result which those interested in education can look forward to with anything approaching to feelings of pleasure. We therefore urge upon Committees the duty not only of carefully looking over the quarterly returns before they are signed, but also of examining the registers in order to ascertain the number of attendances made by each child. In

* Not reprinted here.

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 succcesful. 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

should be examined with the lower class to which it has been found necessary to remove him, his name, however, being carefully distinguished in the examination schedule from the names of those that are formally presented, and his success not being counted as a formal pass."

During the past two years the concession contained in the above note has, in the great majority of our schools, been misinterpreted. The children marked "non-presented" on the examination schedules have been taught with those presented, and their unfitness has apparently been discovered only a few days before the examination. We contend that, if children are considered capable of working in a standard throughout the year, they ought to be tested in that standard at the annual examination. When a teacher finds that a child, through illness, mental incapacity, irregular attendance, or other cause, is unable to keep pace with a higher class, he has the option of placing that child in a lower This is, in our opinion, both a wise and just discretionary power to give head-teachers. With regard to the vexed question of what constitutes a "fair attendance," we would suggest that teachers be held responsible for all scholars who have made two-thirds of the possible attendances, making due allowance, of course, for all children who suffer from any mental defect.

The methods of instruction, judging not only by the higher percentages gained, but by the improved quality of work, are improving. A few general remarks will now be made on the different subjects taught in our schools.

READING.—We are pleased to be able to state that there is a noticeable improvement in reading and recitation in several schools. The faults so prominent last year were much amended. Very considerable attention has been paid to secure distinctness of utterance, due emphasis, and a knowledge of the meanings of the passages read and recited. In many instances the reading of the lower standards would have done credit to children much more advanced. In some schools, however, the teaching of this subject is marked more or less by the defects pointed out last year

SPELLING AND DICTATION.—The spelling on the whole was good. Comparatively few failures had to be recorded. In the lower standards and preparatory classes there does not seem to be any fixed method of teaching this subject, the value of the letters not being pointed out and fully mastered by the pupils. While the difficult words were correctly spelled, we noticed that in the paper work of even the higher standards there was a far too large percentage of mistakes in easy words of every-day occurrence. The dictation lessons will require to be much more carefully revised.

WRITING.—This subject in a few of our schools is exceedingly well taught, but in the majority it is not to be commended. Our attention has been drawn to the number of different copybooks in use, very few schools in a town or neighbourhood using the same set, so that when children leave one school to attend another they have to unlearn or relearn. Were this amended, and *writing lessons* given at least weekly, we should have greatly improved copybooks. Again, in some of our schools a large amount of work is required to be written out at home in exercise-books, and this being too often done in a slovenly and careless manner neutralizes the effect of the instruction given in this subject.

ARITHMETIC.—The results in arithmetic may be regarded as more satisfactory than those of any previous year Better and shorter methods of work are being adopted in the upper standards, the reasoning faculties of the children are being brought into more vigorous play In Standard IV there is less improvement generally, though in a few schools the questions set were well answered, thus evidently showing that careless and mechanical teaching was answerable in a great measure for the bad work in the remainder In the other standards the quality and accuracy of the work are to be commended. In only a few schools is mental arithmetic carefully and systematically taught. It is not uncommon to find children who can work correctly difficult sums on paper unable to solve the simplest questions mentally

GRAMMAR.—In far too many schools the failures in this subject have been more numerous than in any other of the school course. Throughout all the standards in which grammar is required to be taught, the answering was too often mere guess-work. Judging by the exercise-books, too much time is devoted to mechanical parsing. Composition has not received that amount of attention to which it is justly entitled.

GEOGRAPHY In this subject the requirements of the syllabus were well fulfilled in a good proportion of the schools examined. There was a great improvement in the results obtained in Standards II. and III. Local geography is still in a great measure neglected: we have known children unable to name the nearest river to their school, or the county in which they lived. In the geography papers the names of places were as a rule badly spelled even in the higher standards. Except in the case of the smaller schools, history is fairly well taught.

EXTRA SUBJECTS.—In several schools, science is taught with a very fair amount of success. In the town schools it generally happens that some member of the staff is specially qualified to give instruction in this subject, and, when such is the case, the results are thoroughly good. In small country schools, when the teachers are working single-handed, it is well-nigh impossible to teach the most elementary portions of the subject, and the time given to it would be far more profitably employed in teaching the essentials. Object-lessons, as given by some teachers, are still quite useless. Very little information on the subjects treated was possessed by the children examined. The needlework, so far as we are able to judge, was, in the majority of cases, creditable, but we look on the examination of this subject by Inspectors as unsatisfactory If Committees were to appoint ladies in the districts to examine the work done, and also to see the girls at work some day before the examination, we believe good would be done. We noticed that parents too often took the work to be done into their own hands, regardless of the requirements of the standards, and it was a very common complaint with teachers that they found it impossible to make children bring proper sewing-materials. We have often seen some girls idling away their time during this lesson, or worse—interfering with the work of the other scholars. Special prizes are offered for proficiency in this branch of the school course in certain districts, and with admirable results.

The discipline adopted is generally mild and judicious. In only two instances during the year did we hear of undue severity on the part of the teachers. There is still, we regret to say, in some schools, a great want of self-reliance. Owing to the absence of a firm and uniform system of government, the children appear to be unable to fix their attention on the work required of them. It would save a great deal of trouble and confusion on the days of examination if teachers arranged their pupils in the same order as their names appear on the schedules.

There has been, in some quarters, a considerable outcry regarding home-lessons. We cannot see how school work can be carried on, in accordance with the present regulations, without home tasks. We quite recognize the evil of teachers giving too much work to be done at home. We have frequently seen exercise-books, where it was evident that the amount of writing required was far too great. It is here that the evil lies. Home-lessons—*i.e.*, the preparation of grammar, geography, and history—must of necessity be prepared out of school hours, and it may occasionally be advisable, in order to keep up the back work, that questions should be set to be answered at home. In our opinion, home-lessons should not be longer than would occupy a child of average ability from an hour to an hour and a half.

The new regulations respecting the employment and instruction of pupil-teachers, which came into force at the beginning of the present year, are fairly acceptable to the majority of those teachers interested. The principal ground of complaint is that school management has been retained in the second and third years, but we are convinced that if this had not been done very little attention would have been paid, in some schools, to the instruction and training of the pupil-teachers in the practical work of teaching. We fear that in some schools the work required of pupil-teachers is too much for their strength, and we are convinced that before very long something will have to be done to limit the time given by them to actual teaching.

The usual schedules are attached.

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

The Chairman, Education Board.

SOUTH CANTERBURY

Sir,— Timaru, 8th January, 1884.

I have the honour to present my report on the condition of primary education in the South Canterbury District for the year ending 31st December, 1883.

At the close of the year there were forty-one schools under the control of the Board. Of these, thirty-nine were in operation, having 3,862 names on the rolls and 3,015 pupils in average attendance. Two schools, Opihi and Orari North, were temporarily closed. The Sutherlands School was opened at the end of the September quarter, too late for a standard examination this year For want of time the Mount Gay School is not yet examined. The Seaview School was examined by Mr Hammond in July last. In the thirty-six schools whose examinations are included in this report, there were 3,772 pupils, with an average attendance of 2,940. Of these, 3,027 were present at the time of my examination: the absence of the 566 was accounted for chiefly through the prevalence of whooping-cough during the last four months. There were 2,041 pupils presented for the several standards, and 1,494 gained a higher classification, giving a percentage of passes for the whole district of 73·2, which is a slight decrease on that of last year. There are now 2,188 pupils classed in the standards, and 1,585 are unclassified, but, on the whole, these are doing good work in the infant classes. Forty-two per cent. of the pupils may appear a large proportion to be below the standards, but I think the teachers do well in withholding these children so long as they are below eight years of age. They will be better prepared for the regular standard work next year, and will be more likely to pass each succeeding standard year after year with ease and credit, through the greater development of intelligence acquired by the delay

The following table shows the average ages of the candidates in each standard, the numbers presented and passed, and the percentages gained :—

——	Average Age.		Number presented.	Number passed.	Percentage gained.
	Yrs.	mos.			
Standard VI. ..	13	0	84	68	80·9
Standard V	12	7	176	112	63·6
Standard IV ...	11	7	354	195	55
Standard III.	11	0	421	257	61
Standard II.	9	6	474	379	79·9
Standard I. ..	8	2	532	483	90·7
Whole district	10	3	2,041	1,494	73·19

The percentages gained by the scholars in Standards I., II., and VI. are very satisfactory , but there is great weakness in Standards III. and IV., and the effects of this have tended to bring down the results in Standard V The requirements of these standards seem to have been held far too lightly by the teachers, although, perhaps, they are the most important in the syllabus. After passing Standard IV the law does not compel attendance at school, and a comparatively small number of our pupils remain to complete the prescribed course. It is, therefore, only reasonable to expect that the pupils passing this standard should be fairly educated. They should be able to read fluently, to write a fair hand, to make out in proper form and accurately an account or invoice, and to show that they are conversant with the rudiments of grammar and geography The fact that

nearly one-half of the candidates for Standard IV failed at the late examination proves that the children have not had the work sufficiently drilled into them, or that the teachers, having formed too light an estimate of the requirements, have not placed sufficient work before them. From what I have seen I am inclined to attribute the weakness to the latter cause, and, fully impressed with the importance of the work at this point, when so many children leave their education unfinished, I trust that both Standards III. and IV will receive more attention in the future.

The following table shows the percentages made in each subject for the whole district.—

——	Reading.	Writing.	Spelling.	Arithmetic.	Grammar.	Geography.	History.
Standard VI.	97·6	100	97·6	61·9	76·2	90·4	85·7
Standard V ...	96	100	77·2	52·3	67·6	79	88·5
Standard IV.	90·4	99·7	76·4	54·5	66	60·4	73·2
Standard III.	89·8	96·2	85·5	76·2	71·2	61·2	53·4
Standard II. ...	83·5	95·2	83.3	82·7	..	69·6	..
Standard I.	88·2	94·5	86·1	82·5		.	..
Totals	89·3	96·6	83·7	72·6	69·2	68	68·7

READING.—On the whole, this subject is well attended to. The articulation is distinct, and the words are deliberately uttered, especially so in some of the large schools. In Timaru School the reading of the girls could hardly be surpassed. In a few schools, however, to which attention has been drawn in the individual reports, the pupils frequently drop the "h" and the final consonants, and read too rapidly If the teachers of these schools will distinguish between rapidity and fluency in reading, and check the two faults mentioned, the reading in itself would be satisfactory I believe a change in the class-books is desirable. The present books have been so long in use that the pupils, especially in the lower standards, are too well acquainted with the narratives, and in many instances are able to continue the lesson without reference to the book. Another fault is that a knowledge of the sense to be conveyed by the sentences is not sufficiently cultivated. Although the children can read off the lesson, and even continue the text without the book, they can give very little explanation of the words they have read or repeated, or give the subject-matter in their own language. Intelligent reading is as necessary as fluent reading, and more attention may well be paid to secure it.

WRITING.—This subject is satisfactory, but may be improved if it is made a lesson, instead of being a mere practice. The black-board should be freely used, and the pupils should be well acquainted with the names of the component parts of the letters, so that the teacher may readily draw attention to the faults in formation. The copybooks should be carefully preserved, and retained in the school until the inspection is over In many instances there were only one or two pages of the copybooks written up, with no finished books to fall back upon, which, of course, gave hardly sufficient work to judge from.

SPELLING.—This subject is also satisfactory in most of the schools while the words of the reading-book only are given, but with test-words taken from other sources it is faulty There is no doubt that the eye is the chief means by which spelling is taught, and that the pupils require to see the words before they can depend upon spelling them. The teacher should therefore bring the words used in ordinary conversation, but not found in the reading-book, before the pupils, by introducing a few well-selected test-words into each dictation exercise. Thus the eye may soon be accustomed not only to the words in common use, but also to the more difficult words of the language. A record of all errors made at each dictation lesson should be kept by the teacher, and the words should be dictated again and again until the pupils are thoroughly acquainted with them.

ARITHMETIC.—In Standards I., II., and III. arithmetic was very well presented, and the requirements of the syllabus were fully complied with. In Standards IV and V there was great weakness. In some schools the whole of the candidates in Standard IV. failed, and in addition to its incorrectness the work was done in a slovenly manner The syllabus is very clear in this standard, so it should be no great difficulty for teachers to prepare their pupils for a reasonable examination. I attribute the low percentage this standard has made in arithmetic to the low estimate the teachers have formed of the requirements. In Standard VI. the work was hardly satisfactory, but generally it was neatly presented. At this advanced stage the pupils should not be kept so closely to mere rules, but should be exercised often in miscellaneous work. Very little attention appears to be given to mental arithmetic.

GRAMMAR.—A large number of the passes made in grammar and composition were weak, and, taken altogether, the subjects are unsatisfactory Too much time appears to be devoted to learning from books, and too little to the drawing-out of information from the pupils. There is full scope here for inductive teaching. It should first be seen that the pupil has a correct idea of the functions of a word before he is allowed to parse it. In Standards III. and IV the children appear to classify the words almost at random. The word "that" in its conjunctive sense was generally parsed "a pronoun," and the word "nothing" was more frequently an adverb than any other classification. The use of a little book by Abbott, entitled "How to Tell," would tend, I think, to take away this weakness. The same want of discernment of function exists in the analysis of sentences in the upper standards, and, with few exceptions, very little method was displayed. The most intelligent work was done at Wai-iti and Pleasant Point. In very few schools were the compositions at all creditable, and yet, by the reproduction of almost every lesson, the pupils' powers of construction may be exercised several times a week, in addition to the regular instruction

in the subject itself. Almost all the history required for the Third Standard may be taught by giving the scholars simple historical sketches to reproduce, thus making them exercises in composition as well as history, but in very few instances were the children in this standard able to express themselves on any subject whatever If, instead of the general cram from text-books, the pupils are taught to work up their lessons from notes taken while the instruction is given, they will soon learn to express themselves freely on simple subjects.

Geography.—In Standards VI. and V geography was very creditably presented, especially so at the Wai-iti, Timaru, and Waimate schools, but in the other standards it was too weak. I have advised the teachers to depend more on outline maps drawn on the black-board before the class than on text-books. If they are unable to draw the maps readily, they can have them prepared beforehand on large sheets of paper. This is done at the Waimate School, and is worthy of imitation. With a little practice, however, the teacher will soon be able to place a very fair map on the board as the lesson is going on, and this *doing* of the work before the pupils is, I believe, the most impressive. As a rule the pupils know more of the geography of Europe than of New Zealand. Like charity, geography should begin at home, but not end there.

History.—This subject is creditably taught in all standards but the Third. In my remarks on composition I have shown how the weakness may be taken away.

Needlework.—In a great number of the schools sewing is in a very unsatisfactory state, in fact the syllabus has been entirely set aside, and any work whatever looked upon as sufficient. The excuse generally given was that the work is now done by the machine, or that the materials could not be obtained. The first is no reason why the demands of the State should be ignored the second is easily overcome. I have shown to the teachers specimens, the materials for which will not cost more than threepence, embracing nearly all the varieties of work required. Patching and darning were seldom presented. I do not think that any portion of the sewing syllabus should be neglected. It is as important for girls to be skilful in the use of the needle as to write, read, or cypher well. I hope the importance of needlework will in future be fully recognized throughout the district. One school, Gapes Valley, gave me great satisfaction, and the schools at Timaru, Geraldine Flat, Woodbury, Waituna Creek, and Pleasant Valley were very satisfactory as far as the quality of the work presented is concerned.

Singing and Drawing.—In some of the classes in Timaru (Main) School the singing was excellent, but there was a want of precision in the action songs of the lower classes. Drawing, too, was well presented, and many of the specimens were highly creditable, especially those from the boys in the upper standards. The action songs of the infant classes at Geraldine were very well rendered. Several other schools have done fairly, but in the majority of schools there is little worthy of note to report.

Science and Object-lessons.—These subjects are not treated effectively in most of our schools. Although a syllabus of the year's work was handed to me, very little information could be drawn from the pupils. In the struggle for high percentages many teachers seem to neglect the extra standard work. This will be the case until the whole State syllabus is enforced, or while School Committees are guided more by pass results than by the Inspector's general remarks on the state of the school. In my opinion it is more creditable to a teacher to make a fair percentage, with a good report on the special subjects, than to take a high percentage without one.

Pupil-teachers.—In addition to the standard examinations, I examined the pupil-teachers' papers in history, geography, dictation, grammar, and composition. Thirty-seven teachers had presented themselves, and I am pleased to state that thirty-two of them made over 50 per cent. in each subject. Of those below that percentage only one proved very weak. The candidates appear to be well read in the several subjects, but injudiciously give very lengthy answers, introducing a great deal of information not required by the question. This gives them much unnecessary work, and leads to the opinion that more dependence is placed on book matter than on intelligence. All extraneous matter detracts from the merit of the answer, and should also lessen the mark value.

Concluding Remarks.—The behaviour and discipline in most of the schools are excellent. Order may be greatly improved. If order and discipline go together, success is sure to follow. I have found teachers very anxious to improve their methods, but they want the model. This might be supplied if one of the small schools near Timaru were made into a model school. The buildings are well cared for, but the interior of the rooms should be made more tidy and cheerful. The Gapes Valley School sets a good example in this respect, and its influence is already seen on the pupils. For the detailed condition of each school I refer you to Appendix A to this report, and for examination questions to Appendix B.

I have, &c.,

The Chairman, Education Board. John Gurr, Inspector.

WESTLAND.

Sir,— 30th December, 1883.

I have the honour to submit my ninth annual report on the state of elementary education in the District of Westland.

1. The number of schools under the control of the Board during the past year has fallen from thirty-eight to thirty-six, owing to the closing of the two small schools at Callaghan's and Clonmore. All these have been visited once for the annual examination, and all but the five remote southern schools have also received at least one visit for general inspection during the past year. This year the examination commenced at Gillespie's Beach on the 29th August, and terminated, so far as the schools were concerned, on Monday, the 12th November, at Kynnersley The results were forwarded to the several Committees in nearly all cases before the commencement of the Christmas vacation. Some unavoidable delay in the completion of this work arose in consequence of my

taking charge of the Greymouth public school on a sudden emergency, on the 16th of November, at the request of the Board. This, necessarily almost suspended my other work during the time (about four weeks) that I was thus engaged. The school at Rangiriri was reopened on the day before it was examined, and had been so frequently closed, owing to changes of teachers and other causes, that it had not been examined since February 1880. This year, therefore, the examination was more for the purpose of reclassification than for ascertaining results.

2. It appears to have been expected in some quarters that the progress of education in this district would be to some extent influenced unfavourably by the unfortunate and deplorable dissensions that have occurred during the past year in connection with the Education Board, and by the impending subdivision of a district already, and confessedly, too small, as regards population, for satisfactory and economical administration. It is therefore the more gratifying to observe that, whatever ill effects may have been produced in other directions, the efficiency of the schools has been fully maintained, and that the interests of the scholars do not appear to have suffered to any appreciable extent. As a rule the teachers on either side of the Teremakau have evidently pursued "the noiseless tenor of their way" undismayed, or at all events uninfluenced, by the storms that have raged around them and consequently the results of the year's work, so far as it is possible to gauge them at the annual examination, show a marked improvement on those of the previous year, as will be seen in the following summary:—

—	Average Age on 1st July, 1883.	Examined.	Passed.	Percentage.	Percentage in 1882.
	Yrs. mos.				
Standard I.	8 5	353	337	95	76
Standard II. ..	9 10	334	293	88	65
Standard III.	11 3	289	233	81	60
Standard IV. ..	12 1	260	219	84	69
Standard V	12 8	147	126	86	76
Standard VI.	13 3	80	56	70	93
		1,463	1,264	86	69

3. On comparing the foregoing table with the corresponding figures for 1882, we find that, while there is an increase of 93 in the number of children examined, the number passed has increased by 318. The percentage of the roll-number examined in standards has also increased 1 per cent., and the percentage of passes 10 per cent. Taking the standards separately there is an increase in the passes of all below the Sixth, varying from 10 to 23 per cent., while the Sixth alone shows a marked falling-off. Eleven out of the twenty-four failures recorded in this standard are contributed by the two largest schools in the district—seven by Greymouth and four by Hokitika. Each of these schools has had special and peculiar disadvantages to contend against, to which I need not more particularly refer

4. I have again compiled an analysis of the examination schedules, in order to furnish Committees and teachers with information of an important character which they have no other means of obtaining. By comparing this (Table A) with the same table given last year, the following facts may be observed The roll-number has increased by 44. There is an increase of 80 in the number of names on the schedules, and the percentage of children below Standard I. has fallen to 35 per cent. The number of absentees on the day of examination was greater than last year by 13, and the number excluded on account of insufficient attendance (*i.e.*, less than 250 half-days) is 315, or 10 less than in 1882. This number, however, being 16 per cent. of those on the schedule, is still, in my opinion, too large a proportion of irregular scholars to be considered satisfactory I believe that, as a rule, the teachers do all in their power to check this irregularity, which is, moreover, directly opposed to their own material interests, but I fear that little improvement can be expected until Local Committees turn their special attention to this too generally neglected portion of their duties. The table here quoted will at any rate enable such of them as take an interest in this important matter to see how their own schools compare in this respect with others.

5. With regard to the absentees on the day of examination, although the number is slightly larger, it is more evenly distributed. Some schools, which last year showed a large percentage of absentees, have effected considerable improvement in this respect. At Kanieri, for instance, the number has been reduced from 13 to 2·8 per cent., and at Woodstock from 17 per cent. to 0. I observe that there are certain children—not many, however—who are regularly absent from every examination. The total number of children who have not been presented in a higher standard this year is 80, a decrease of 10.

6. Table B, as usual, shows with respect to each school the number of children examined and passed in each standard, with the average age at the 1st July, the average percentage of the possible marks obtained, and the general percentage of passes in all the standards. And here I must once more caution the general public against attaching undue importance to the figures given in this table. Other things being about equal, the highest percentage of marks and passes should indicate the most efficient schools, but, unfortunately for this hypothesis, other things very seldom are "about equal," and the most erroneous opinions as to the relative efficiency of schools may be apparently justified by the figures in the Inspector's report. Among the many things to be taken into account, before attempting to pronounce an opinion on so delicate a question, are the follow-

ing: the ages of the scholars, the regularity or irregularity of their attendance, the strength of the staff with relation to the number of scholars and the length of time that children have spent in the same class.

7. The last-named is perhaps the most important of all, and is rendered doubly so this year on account of the large number of children who failed last year. Now a very considerable portion of these were probably retained in the same classes, and consequently have had two years to accomplish the same work which others had to do in one. All the schools, therefore, which showed many failures last year, supposing them to have retained the "plucked" ones in the same classes (which as a rule is the case), will evidently have a great advantage over those whose scholars passed into a higher standard after last examination. For instance, at one school, out of twenty-three examined last year, only one passed. The twenty-two children who failed were retained in the same classes, and, as a consequence, this year the school appears with a general percentage of 97, whilst the percentages of marks in the several standards are amongst the highest in the district. At another small school, showing a general percentage of 90, every child who passed had been two years in the same class. It behoves Committees, therefore, before congratulating teachers upon the positions occupied by their schools on the table of results, to ascertain for themselves how far this apparent superiority is due to the above cause, and, to enable them to do so more effectually, I intend, if possible, shortly to furnish them with a statement of the number of children so retained in their respective schools. Next year I hope to make arrangements for having the marks of the unpromoted children recorded separately

8. In the last annual report of the Minister of Education there is a table (N, page xiii.) showing the numbers and proportions of passes in standards in the different education districts. This would be a most valuable and suggestive return if the inspection of schools were, as it ought to be, under the control of the department, and conducted upon something approaching to a uniform method. Being, however, the result of (possibly) twelve different interpretations of the standard requirements, but little value can be placed upon any inference drawn from a comparison of the figures it contains. Taken for what they may be worth, the following facts appear with respect to this district. The percentages of passes in the First, Second, and Third Standards were 6, 10, and 16 per cent. respectively *below* the average of the twelve districts; and there were nine, ten, and seven districts, respectively, showing a higher percentage of passes than Westland. In the Fourth, Fifth, and Sixth Standards the percentages of passes were 6, 15, and 22 per cent. respectively *above* the average of the twelve districts. In the Fourth only two districts showed a higher percentage of passes, and none in the Fifth and Sixth. The complaint, still occasionally whispered, as it were, in this district, concerning the difficulty of the papers set at the standard examinations, cannot have any substantial foundation, if we may judge from the comparison just instituted, nor do I think it would be to the interest of education to relax any further the stringency of the examinations. I should much prefer a smaller percentage of passes, obtained from a fairly strict examination, to a far higher percentage under easier conditions. When we consider how widely children differ with regard to intellectual capacity, the fact of any standard showing few or no failures is not necessarily a subject for congratulation. It may indicate that the questions set have been suited to the lowest, and not to the average, capacity of the examinees. Much has been said from time to time about the tendency of a severe examination to induce to "cram" instead of intelligent instruction and education, but it is questionable whether the wide range of the syllabus is not quite as responsible for this (if, indeed, it exists to any serious extent) as a strict interpretation of its requirements, and, moreover, we should remember that, although "cram" is a bad schoolmaster, he is at least better than "sham."

9. I had occasion to remark, in my last report, that nine out of the seventeen principal schools in the district had passed less than 70 per cent. of the number examined. This year only one of these falls below 70 per cent., and, assuming that anything less than 70 per cent. indicates an unsatisfactory school, there are in the whole district only four which would come under this description, having passed 57, 38, 33, and 50 per cent. respectively of the number examined. Our satisfaction with this improvement must, however, be tempered by the considerations referred to in the seventh paragraph.

10. Elementary Science.—The annexed table gives the results of the examination in elementary science. The text-book prescribed for the year was Foster's Physiology The fifth and sixth classes only were examined. The subject was undertaken at six schools, as against nine last year. It is much to be regretted that so important a school as Greymouth should have disappeared from this list. I recommend that Huxley's Introductory Primer be adopted as the science text-book for the coming year.

Schools.	Standard V		Standard VI.	
	Number examined.	Average Percentage of Marks.	Number examined.	Average Percentage of Marks.
Kumara	15	67	12	82
Hokitika ..	35	52	20	80
Kanieri	3	35	4	52
Cobden ..	6	37	3	49
Brunnerton	2	29	2	38
Goldsborough			1	6

11. Vocal music is taught at three of the four principal schools, and I am at a loss to understand why Greymouth should be the exception, particularly since there are amongst the members of the staff several who possess considerable musical talent. As far as I am able to judge, this subject was most successfully taught at Kumara. At Ross the singing was of the poorest description so much so that I regard the time devoted to it during the past year as practically wasted.

So few schools took up drawing last year that I did not think it desirable to go to the expense of having copies prepared for the examination. I examined the drawing-books at the schools where the subject is taught, viz., Kumara, Kanieri, Blue Spur, Ross, and Woodstock, and found some very creditable work amongst them, and I consider that the order in which the schools are named indicates pretty accurately their relative efficiency in this respect.

Military drill is taught to the boys of the Ross and Kumara schools. It had been discontinued for some time at Greymouth, but was resumed, at my request, shortly before the Christmas vacation.

In accordance with the regulations, all the girls at schools where sewing is taught were allowed to pass the standards with marks 10 per cent. below those required from the boys, after I had satisfied myself that the subject was fairly well and systematically taught, according to the programme. At Greymouth, however, where I found that sewing had not been taught during the first six months of the year, I allowed only 5 per cent., but this did not affect the number of passes.

12. The following are some matters in connection with the examination which I think it desirable to bring under the notice of the Committees and teachers. It is a common experience to find a child entered under one name on the school register, and consequently on the examination schedules, whilst habitually using another when heading the papers at the examination. This practice is almost entirely confined to the girls, but it gives rise to a considerable amount of trouble and loss of time. Leaving out the numerous diminutive and "pet" names, such as Tottie, Letty, Lena, Minnie, &c., which, however are sufficiently troublesome, it is not very uncommon to find a Christian name at the head of a set of papers, which has no place on the schedules. For instance, "Maud," after a patient but time-consuming search through the schedules of a large school, was discovered to be identical with "Emily" and one girl indulged in a totally different *surname* from that given to her in the schedule and on the school register The attendance registers are, as a rule, carefully and neatly kept, but the columns for "Time since Admission" and "Standard last passed" are generally left blank. I found one case where a child aged four years and four months had been entered on the roll, and included in the return of attendance, and the teacher informed me that he had been told by a member of the Board that he could admit children of that age. The admission register is scarcely ever kept completely posted up. This sometimes arises from an imperfect acquaintance with the printed instructions which accompany each copy but more frequently from the difficulty often experienced by teachers in getting the required information from the parents. When this is the case, the child should be excluded until the form supplied (in this district) for the purpose has been correctly filled up and returned.

13. The following observations on the treatment, in this district, of some of the subjects of the syllabus may not be considered out of place here. Reading and recitation are as a rule fairly well taught, and there is a tendency to improvement observable throughout the district. I invariably notice that, where the reading of the First and Second Standards is well attended to, that of the upper classes bears witness to the care that has been bestowed upon it in the earlier stages. The most prevalent faults are extreme rapidity, a monotonous drawl, a very unpleasant dropping of the voice at every comma, and in a few cases a slavish and exaggerated attention bestowed upon punctuation, to the detriment of all expression. Judging from late experience, I should say that in some few of the schools too much dependence is placed upon simultaneous reading, which, although in many ways a most valuable exercise, should not be adopted to the neglect of individual practice. In large classes a subdivision into groups of not more than ten should be occasionally resorted to, as individual defects could then be more readily detected than when from thirty to fifty children are reading together. The quality of the recitation is usually about on a par with that of the reading. In both the excellences and defects of the teacher are invariably reproduced, the latter often in an exaggerated form, by the scholars. If a teacher have no taste for poetry himself, the recitation of his scholars will be decidedly inferior. In one school the teacher of which habitually disregards the aspirate, both in speaking and reading the sound of the letter "h" is scarcely ever heard.

14. Writing.—This branch of instruction is more powerfully and directly affected by the teacher's example than any other It may safely be asserted that, notwithstanding the universal employment of copybooks with printed head-lines, the writing of the scholars takes its character to a very great extent from that of the teacher When the latter is invariably neat and careful in the writing he places before his scholars on the black-board or in their exercise-books, that of the children generally corresponds in character, whilst slovenly scribbling in either case will as surely be reproduced and intensified. The excuse generally urged for black-board scribbling is the desire to save time but the few minutes that are thus borrowed for the benefit of one subject, at the expense of another, must ultimately be repaid with compound interest if the ill effects of the practice are to be averted, and it should also be remembered that in the case of boys a good handwriting is frequently the only passport to success in after-life. The written examination-papers bear unerring indications of the amount of importance attached to this subject by the teachers. In every school there will of course be some children whose writing cannot be brought up to a satisfactory standard of excellence, and, with such exceptions, the handwriting of the paper work at the Hokitika, Kumara, Ross, Stafford, Paroa, Cobden, Donoghue, Upper Crossing, and Blue Spur, was, as it always has been with most of them, of excellent quality At two schools the writing of the Second Standard was very poor, owing, if I mistake not, to the class having been left to the care of a young pupil-teacher whilst engaged with this work—a mistake which will cause great trouble in the future.

15. Scarcely anything affords more convincing evidence of the merits or defects of a teacher's methods than the condition of the scholars' exercise-books, and I take every opportunity of examining them during my visits of inspection. Referring to the notes made during these visits, I find the following amongst others on this subject: "The exercise-books show a regular and systematic course of instruction throughout the year" "All the books in this school are remarkable for neatness of writing, and methodical arrangement of the work required in the respective standards." "Full of uncorrected errors." "Carefully corrected, but carelessly written." "No grammar exercises in the Fifth and Sixth Standard books, and uncorrected errors in the Fourth Standard books." "Remarkably clean and neat." When it is remembered that, with the exception of the copybook, the exercise-book is generally the parent's sole criterion of the efficiency of a school, the importance of its proper use, and careful and constant supervision and correction, can scarcely be over-estimated. Nor should the use of the exercise-book be limited, as it sometimes is, to one branch of instruction only, some using it as a repository for arithmetical problems, as was the custom fifty years ago, others reserving it for the transcription of poetry, &c. The exercise-book should present a reflex of the whole routine of the school work. In it every important subject should appear with a frequency proportional to its importance, and some arrangement should be made for the correction of the exercises of any who chance to be absent when the books of their class are examined—a matter which, at present, is too frequently neglected.

16. The subject which gives the worst results here, as elsewhere, is undoubtedly arithmetic. This, in the case of small schools, is, I believe, often due to an error of judgment on the part of the teachers, who sometimes take their scholars too far beyond the requirements of their standard in this subject, and do not continually recur to that part of it by their proficiency in which they are to be judged. It is not uncommon for a teacher to say of a scholar who is perhaps blundering over a simple division or multiplication sum, "He can do practice and proportion quite readily" Many mistakes are also made in copying down the figures from the printed papers, and I am inclined to think that the almost entire disuse of text-books, which has of late years come into vogue in the larger schools, is responsible for some proportion of these mistakes, the children not being accustomed to copy off printed questions as they would be if they were constantly in the habit of using such books as Collins's Standard Arithmetic, from which to take examples for practice either at home or in school. A large proportion of the failures in this subject are undoubtedly due entirely to carelessness. I frequently find scholars in the Third and Fourth Standards failing in all the easy straightforward questions and yet succeeding with the problems.

In connection with this subject, mental arithmetic claims a word of notice. I think that more attention should be given to it than it generally receives, and that the habitual use of mental calculations in connection with ordinary arithmetic should be encouraged, both on account of the saving of time that might thus be effected, and of its value as a form of mental discipline.

17 English composition is, on the whole, very fairly taught at most of the schools. There are, however, a few defects so common in this district that I think it is as well to mention them here. In the Third Standard, where the subject is first demanded, the principal faults are—an entire absence of punctuation, without even a capital letter to show where a new sentence commences, and the incorrect spelling of the simplest and easiest words in common use, a fault which I referred to in my last report. I think that many teachers in the district would find it advantageous to obtain and use a little book on this subject by J B. Park, published by Coulls and Culling, Dunedin, with an introduction by Mr Petrie, the Chief Inspector of the Otago District. The composition of the Fourth Standard generally takes the form of a letter, and is sometimes remarkably well written but I am haunted continually by one awful and stereotyped monstrosity in the shape of an opening clause "I write these few lines hoping to find you in good health, as it leaves me at present." When required to write a letter upon one of several given subjects, some scholars have an ingenious way of filling up their paper, first, by means of the introduction given above, followed by a declaration to the effect that, having no news of importance to communicate, they intend to furnish their correspondents with some information concerning—one of the subjects given. Then follow two or three lines on the subject chosen, and the writers discover that they have no time for more. At the last two examinations, the composition exercise in the Sixth Standard has been upon a subject chosen by myself from not less than six named by the teacher but, this year, I find that the papers sent in are in many cases almost verbatim copies of some portions of the reading-book, which, I presume from constant repetition, have become firmly impressed on the memories of the writers, and even when the subjects selected were not taken from the reading-books, the papers so closely resembled one another as to give the impression that the subject had been used so frequently for the same purpose as to entirely destroy its utility as a test of the scholars' powers of composition. I intend, therefore, in future to adopt a different plan.

18. There is a slight improvement in geography this year, but the mapping of the majority is still far from satisfactory There are some schools where this branch of the subject is very well taught, and, as might be expected, those at which freehand drawing is practised produce the neatest and best maps. In drawing maps of New Zealand, although each island is frequently very fairly drawn, the two together are scarcely ever represented in their proper relative positions the common error being the placing of one entirely to the north of the other The mapping at Hokitika, Kumara, and Kanieri is far superior to that at most of the other schools. At the last-named the parallels and meridians are shown with tolerable accuracy, and with the resulting advantage that, even when the maps are defective in other respects, the size, shape, and proportions are comparatively correct. Many of the maps of New Zealand in the Fourth Standard papers are so shapeless as to be quite unrecognizable, the North Island frequently appearing like a star-fish minus one ray A map of New Zealand for beginners is, in my opinion, much required, and might easily be prepared in the colony There are two alterations which, I think, are desirable in such a map first, the omission of about nine-tenths of the names that now almost cover it, and, secondly, the adop-

tion of the plan followed in Nelson's "Geography and Atlas," namely, that of substituting straight lines for the meridians and parallels, thus dividing the map into squares of (say) fifty miles. These lines should be numbered from two that should cross each other at Wellington, as the political capital of the colony The distance from any one place to another could then be approximately ascertained with comparative ease, and the younger children could form a much better idea of the size of the whole or of any part. I need scarcely say that such a map would not supersede the ordinary one for the use of the upper classes. I regret that the Board has not yet been able to adopt my suggestion as to the introduction of the "Royal Reader History," in the place of the text-book now in use, but would strongly recommend its adoption as soon as possible.

19. SCHOOL BUILDINGS.—All the school buildings in the district, with the exception of a few erected within the last two years, are more or less in need of repair, and the condition of some of them is truly lamentable. The Kumara and Greymouth schools especially are in a very discreditable condition. Unless some considerable amount of money is at once devoted to the repairing and painting of the buildings in this district, a very much heavier expense will be entailed upon the new Boards within a very short period.

While on the subject of school buildings, I must enter the strongest possible protest against their being converted, for however short a time, into publichouses, and this is, to all intents and purposes, done by several Committees in this district when they permit the sale of intoxicating drinks to be carried on at such meetings as balls and concerts held in the schoolrooms—buildings supposed to be specially devoted to the moral and intellectual improvement of the rising generation. It will be urged, in extenuation of this practice, that the funds so obtained are devoted to charitable purposes, but the charity which can be evoked only by appealing to one of the lowest forms of sensual indulgence is utterly unworthy of the name, and the value of its contributions is as nothing when compared with the paramount importance of preserving the school premises from any but the best, purest, and happiest associations, to say nothing of the lamentable evils resulting from the habit which such a practice is calculated to encourage and develop amongst the youth of the district. There can be no doubt that the powers given to School Committees by subsection (3) of clause 84 of the Act were never intended to be used for a purpose so distinctly opposed to its whole spirit and object.

The objections urged above are not to be regarded as merely imaginary or sentimental. We have had during the past year conclusive proof of their validity in the occurrence of a grievous scandal in connection with a teacher, that was brought about in consequence of one of these meetings. In a former report I brought this matter under the notice of the Board, and ventured a suggestion to the effect that the Minister's attention be drawn to the matter with a request that he will take such steps as he may think necessary to prevent such abuses in the future.

Great complaints are made by teachers with regard to the damage done to school property, and of much trouble and inconvenience occasioned, in consequence of the buildings being used for other than school purposes, such as concerts, theatrical entertainments, &c. Much of this might, I think, be avoided if Committees made it a rule to require a deposit of, say, £5 or £10 before granting the use of the building to any persons, on the understanding that any damage done to the school property should be paid for out of the amount so deposited.

20. The difficulties experienced by Committees in keeping the school buildings in a proper state of repair with the small funds made available for the purpose, is a general and just cause of complaint in this district. With regard to large schools, such as those at Greymouth and Hokitika, I have always been, and am still, of opinion that the employment of a permanent custodian would be the means of reducing materially the expense of executing small repairs, and that at a cost little in excess of what must be paid for the mere cleaning of the schools and lighting of fires in winter Of course I am supposing that the position is filled by a person of energetic, industrious, and sober habits, and physically capable of performing the work required, and that he is placed under the immediate control and direction of the headmaster With regard to the smaller schools, and especially those situated at any distance from the chief towns, I would suggest that each school should be provided with a good ladder, and if, in addition, a few useful tools, such a hammer, a gimlet, a screwdriver and a handful of useful nails and tacks, formed part of the equipment of each school, and the whole were placed under the charge of the teacher, he would be unworthy of his position if he could not, by interesting the older boys in the work, and even by assisting himself if necessary, do much to preserve the building and fences from premature dilapidation. How often would the timely driving of a nail, the tightening of a wire, or the turning of a screw have prevented a gap in the fence, the blowing-down of a chimney or the loss of a door-handle, &c.! Nor would there be anything in the least derogatory to the dignity of the teacher or of his profession in thus taking an active interest in the preservation of the property placed under his care. Such a course of action would of itself exert an educational influence of a very valuable nature, if it were only in counteracting to some small extent the mischievous and increasing tendency on the part of most colonists to expect that everything should be done for them by the local or general Government. Some few teachers in country districts have already shown their willingness to assist in maintaining the building, furniture, and grounds in good order, and no doubt all would do so if the few necessary implements were always at hand, and they were freed from the necessity either of borrowing from a neighbour or of providing them for themselves.

21. PUPIL-TEACHERS.—Twenty-two pupil-teachers were examined this year at the schools in which they are employed. Of these, nine were examined for admission to the first (highest) class, two for admission to the second, seven to the third, and four to the fourth, or lowest class. All of these passed, and four of the first, five of the third, and one of the fourth have passed with credit. Table C shows the marks gained by the different pupil-teachers in each subject of examination. I have made a slight alteration this year in the mode of representing the relative positions of the candidates, as shown by the number of marks obtained. Last year the marks for Latin, which is

an optional subject, were placed in a column by themselves, and the candidates were arranged according to the number of marks gained in the compulsory subjects only This was to some extent unfair to those who took up the extra subject, as the general public seldom take the trouble to do more than glance at the totals. I have this year included the marks for Latin in the totals, but of course they are not included in the number necessary to secure a pass. Had the same plan been followed this year that was adopted in 1882, the order of merit would have been somewhat different. In the first class the first four names would have stood in the following order 1, Voysey, 2, Reynolds, 3, Andrews; 4, Ecclesfield. In the third class the name now occupying the central position would have appeared last and in the fourth, there being no subject to set against the needlework of the female candidate, Henry Smith is a few marks ahead of the girl who now occupies the first place.

I have, &c.,

The Secretary for Education

JOHN SMITH, Inspector

OTAGO.

SIR,—

1. MR. PETRIE'S REPORT.

I beg to submit the following report for the year 1883.

During the year I paid one or more visits of inspection to sixty-five schools, and examined fifty-nine according to the regulations of the Education Department, besides taking part of the extra branches at the four district high schools. At sixteen of the largest schools I was assisted by one of the other Inspectors. Owing to an accident that prevented me from moving about for some weeks, I was unable to visit four schools in the neighbourhood of Dunedin, which had not been inspected at the usual time. All the schools in operation throughout the year were examined, and all except thirteen were visited for inspection. Of the thirteen not visited, eight were closed when the Inspector was in the district. Of the 11,320 pupils whose names were entered on the examination schedules, only 387 were absent, being less than 3½ per cent. The excellence of the attendance on examination-days is much to the credit of the teachers and the parents of the pupils, and clearly shows that in this education district a high value is attached to the standard certificates issued to those who succeed in passing. Of the 10,933 pupils examined, 72 per cent. passed in the standard for which they were entered. Last year's percentage was 73. The total number of pupils examined is considerably greater than in any previous year, and more than 4,000 in excess of the total for 1879.

As regards the percentage of passes in the several standards, there is a decline as compared with last year's results in Standards I., III., V and VI., and an increase in Standards II. and IV The details are shown in Table III., from which it will be seen that the decline has been chiefly in the reading, spelling, and arithmetic of Standard I., the geography of Standard II., the reading and history of Standard III., the spelling, arithmetic, grammar, and geography of Standard V., and the arithmetic and grammar of Standard VI. In connection with these results I must point out that the number of schools presenting pupils in the higher standards is thirty-two in excess of that of last year Looking at the year's results as a whole, I must confess to some disappointment with them. At the same time there is no occasion to take a despondent view of the situation, for so long as seventy-two out of every hundred examined pass in their standard the result cannot be thought other than satisfactory As in former years, all who have been more than six weeks in attendance were examined—those of course excepted who were below the level of Standard I. Of the 159 schools examined, eight gained a gross percentage of 90 or more, fifty-three gained one between 80 and 90, fifty-nine one between 70 and 80, twenty-six one between 60 and 70, nine one between 50 and 60, and four one of less than 50. A gross percentage of 80 or more must be considered a very good result, and it is satisfactory to find that 38 per cent. of the schools (including most of the largely attended ones) reached that figure, while 37 per cent. of them stood between 70 and 80. In thirteen the gross percentage was below 60, a result that cannot be considered satisfactory The gross percentage for all the schools in the district is 80, a number considerably higher than the percentage of passes in standards. The excess of the percentage of passes in subjects over that in standards shows that the failures in standards have not been of a serious character, and that many who have come short of a pass in their standard have yet made good progress in a majority of the subjects in which they receive instruction. On the whole very few made a bad appearance, most of those who failed to pass having shown a tolerably good knowledge of the work. The public and many teachers also attach too great a stigma to failure at the standard examination. In many cases the difference between success and failure turns on a mistake in a sum or in the spelling of a word. The standard for passing in each subject was the same as for last year, and the same sets of examination cards were employed.

For the purpose of exhibiting the relative efficiency of schools of different sizes I have made out the following tabular statement. In grouping the schools no account has been taken of the pupil-teachers belonging to the staff:—

	One Teacher.	Two Teachers.	Three or more Teachers.
Percentage of schools gaining a gross percentage of 80 or more	28	35	82
Percentage of schools gaining a gross percentage of 70 or more	67	81	93
Highest gross percentage in each group	93	93	92
Lowest gross percentage in each group	35	52	68

This table shows very clearly what I have pointed out from time to time, that the present course of instruction in the public schools of New Zealand can be adequately overtaken in the largest

schools only In schools with two teachers the results are decidedly inferior, and in those with one teacher much more so. Of course the smaller schools labour under other disadvantages besides the exacting nature of the programme—such, for example, as greater irregularity of attendance, greater disorganization from more frequent changes of teachers, and, on the whole, inferior skill in teaching. But all the other causes of the comparative inefficiency of the smaller schools are cast in the shade as well as intensified by the elaborate complexity of the programme of instruction.

With respect to the teaching and management of the schools which I have examined and visited, I can record considerable improvement during the year It would have been more satisfactory had the results of the year's work borne out this opinion more fully, but in spite of the slight decline I believe it is well founded. Most of the teachers have been striving to improve their methods, and a good few have succeeded in making their teaching more attractive, impressive, thorough, and intelligent. There is far less mere hearing of lessons than there used to be, more especially in large schools. More pains is taken to encourage and test intelligent preparation of English lessons. Corrections and explanations are also made more carefully and in a more lucid and impressive manner, though the black-board is by no means so generally used for this purpose as is desirable. Notwithstanding all this, not a few class-teachers and teachers of small schools fall short of the measure of success that might be expected from their zealous and painstaking work. To this failure several causes contribute. Perhaps the most important of these is the teacher's habit of doing too much for his pupils. He works hard, talks, explains, lectures, and thinks he is doing excellent work all the time. Much of this is necessary, but it is only part of the true teacher's work, and that the smaller part. 'It is not what the teacher does, but what the child does, that educates him, and is of permanent value. Abundant talking, and even earnest hard work, are no guarantee of sound teaching. Always test your work by what you get the children to do; measure your success by the amount and quality of what you get out of them. You must impart knowledge, and tell, and instruct, but, as Stow puts it, 'a lesson is never given till it is received,' we can never be sure that our instructions have been received until we cause the learners to reproduce them in varied ways and of themselves."—I would recommend to the thoughtful consideration of all teachers who fail of success these wise maxims of Mr J F Gladman.* If they could only lay hold of and act upon this principle, that it is the continued exercise of the pupils' powers and faculties under the teacher's guidance and direction that constitutes educative training, we should have something of the nature of a revolution in teaching. Another general cause of failure is want of thoroughness of work. This results in part from the practice of mistaking talking for teaching, in part from trusting to the memory more than to the understanding, and in part from a deficient sense of the need of a thorough working-in of the matter taught. In many schools the lessons set are much too long to be done with any thoroughness. This is especially true of the English lessons in the smaller schools. In others there is little thoroughness because there is insufficient comprehension of the matter here the rule, "Make work intelligent, and then thorough," is ignored. In the smaller schools the teacher's time is so cut up that it is not easy to secure the thoroughness that is needful to sound progress, especially where the attendance is irregular But if a good foundation is laid in the lower stages, if the lessons are kept of such length as can be properly taught, and if the control is satisfactory, the great majority of the smaller schools might show as thorough teaching as a small minority of them already do. A third important cause of failure is lax control, and the want of attention and interest that is characteristic of the badly-governed school. A few of the class-teachers in some of the larger schools, and a more considerable number of head-teachers in the smaller ones, are by reason of this weakness unable to do any satisfactory work. I could point to a few cases where the control is such as to put steady progress out of the question; while the pupils are getting demoralized by habits of inattention, trifling, copying, and contempt for authority It is matter of regret that teachers of this class cannot be removed more readily from their positions, and indeed sifted out of the service.

The teaching of reading continues to improve, and in a large number of schools the lessons are taught with increased intelligence and thoroughness. In nearly all the large schools the reading is satisfactory and often good. Except in Standard I., most of the failures in this subject were caused by defective comprehension of the words, phrases, and matter of the lessons. In the lower classes the reading is generally weak, a state of things that may usually be traced either to unsuitable methods or to superficiality of work. Spelling continues to be well taught, and there has been some improvement in writing, although the general slate-work and the exercises in books are too frequently untidy and even careless.

In the teaching of arithmetic there has not been so much progress as I had looked for. In Standard II. alone have the results improved, while in Standard V there has been a considerable falling-off. The results continue to be unsatisfactory in Standards III. and IV also. During the year the same degree of proficiency has been expected, and even the same test-cards have been used as during last year Standard IV is the only one of these standards in which low results might be expected. In Standard III. the test applied requires nothing more than mechanical accuracy; there is no appeal to the intellect. That in these circumstances no more than sixty-one out of every hundred should reach the required degree of accuracy is to me inexplicable. I believe, however, that very many failures in the arithmetic of Standard III. are due less to ignorance than to carelessness and over-confidence. As regards the wretched results in the arithmetic of Standard V., they are mainly due to bad teaching. Too little practice in black-board work is given in some cases; in many more the examples as worked out are not sufficiently explained and reasoned out by the pupils, the teachers habitually doing the lion's share of the work, while in others the principles underlying the rules and processes are not sufficiently illustrated or made clear and plain. In many schools also I fear that, notwithstanding precautions, copying and prompting

* Victoria Education Report for 1881.

prevail to a large extent during desk practice in sums. To a good many of the large schools these strictures do not apply, but the number in which the subject is well taught increases but very slowly I consider that the test applied in Standard V is considerably easier than that of Standard IV., and is in no way more severe than that used for Standard VI., where the results are 20 per cent. higher

Grammar and composition were in general very fairly done, and the work of Standard IV in these subjects was distinctly more accurate and methodical than in former years.

I have been very fairly satisfied with the knowledge of geography except in Standard II., where a careful oral examination showed that much of the teaching had been purely mechanical. The instruction was in some cases such as few would credit. Pupils who could repeat definitions of terms with perfect readiness, were quite unable to point out on a map an island, a cape, or almost any other of the features they could so easily define. In nearly a half of the schools examined by me the earliest lessons had been crammed and not taught. The pupils had gained no idea of the facts of the lessons and of their conventional representation on maps and plans, and the teachers appeared surprised that anything more should be expected of their pupils than an accurate repetition of the form of words they had committed to memory The discovery of this fact gave me a very painful shock, for I cherished the belief that very few teachers would knowingly subordinate the educative training of their scholars to the mere scoring of passes at an examination. I trust that our unwelcome experience has taught myself and my colleagues to study to adopt methods of examination that will encourage sound training, and expose and discourage cramming and mechanical work. Most if not all of the schools in which this defect was found have already adopted more rational methods, and I have no doubt that such a state of things will not often be met with in future.

History was on the whole fairly known, but in Standard III. a careful oral examination disclosed a state of instruction almost as unsatisfactory as in the geography of Standard II. There was consequently a large number of failures in this subject, the total results in the standard being 18 per cent. below those of last year, when the work was tested by answers written on slates. In a good few schools the nature and significance of the events taught were well apprehended, and, although it is difficult to secure intelligent teaching of history at this early stage, the successful work in a minority of the schools shows that with suitable treatment valuable results may be gained. It is to the numerous failures in the geography of Standard II. and the history of Standard III. that the decline in the total results for the year must be mainly attributed. I have every confidence that next year the work in these subjects will rise to a satisfactory level of proficiency

Object-lessons continue to be given with regularity and fair skill. More advanced object-lessons have in many cases taken the place of instruction in science.

Singing is well taught in most of the larger schools, though it spreads but slowly in the smaller ones, where, however, it is often difficult to find sufficient time for practice.

The discipline is excellent in a large number of schools, and unsatisfactory but in few. A weakness of control, that does not amount to positive bad discipline, is somewhat prevalent, not only in the smaller schools, but also in the classes of some one or more of the assistants in most of the large schools. In a few cases the government is so bad that removal of the teacher or assistant should be resorted to as soon as possible. The behaviour of the pupils is on the whole very good. Still, there are numerous village and rural schools where the pupils are deficient in politeness, simply from want of a little training, and not from any wish to offend good taste. In such cases the teachers could easily do much to improve the manners of their scholars. I should be glad to see them give a little steady attention to this important matter

The services rendered by the pupil-teachers deserve a word of recognition. Some of them do excellent work, and nearly all are earnest and painstaking. The efficiency of the teaching might be greatly increased if the head-teachers would take more pains to train them to good methods. They would find it labour well spent.

Throughout the year one or two representatives of the Committees were invited to be present at the examinations. I was much pleased with the interest they took in the work, and with the satisfaction they showed when the schools made a creditable appearance.

I have, &c.,

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

SIR,— 2. MR. TAYLOR'S REPORT.

I have the honour to submit my report for the year ended 31st December, 1883.

I visited for purposes of general inspection fifty-five schools, examined unaided thirty-eight schools, and took part, either with Mr Petrie or Mr Goyen, in the examination of the twenty-five largest schools. My work was not confined to any particular locality, but was spread over the greater part of the education district, and extended from the Waitaki to Catlin's, and from Dunedin to Lake Hawea. The only part not visited by me, either in the way of examination or inspection, was the Maniototo County. I do not consider it necessary to report this year again on the various subjects of the school course in detail, nor to make particular reference to the results of the examination. The tables given elsewhere, containing summaries of the results, are capable of affording extensive and accurate information on these points, and they show unmistakably that the work of the schools has been efficiently carried on, and testify to the skill and diligence of the teachers, with few exceptions. As good results are dependent in a very great measure upon good methods of teaching, I prefer on this occasion to refer shortly to a few defects in method that came under my notice during a course of inspection visits.

The teaching is not always so educative in its nature as it should be, and leaves the impression that, with some, the end justifies the means, if high percentages are obtained, the manner of gaining them is considered of small moment. But in education the means employed are all-important

if they are satisfactory, the results may very well be left to take care of themselves. It is possible to communicate a considerable amount of information which, though not understood and assimilated, may be stored up in the memory and reproduced in a way when required; but such teaching is not education, and is not likely to be successful in promoting the healthy growth and vigorous action of the mind of a child. Its effects would be, but for the mind's native vitality and self-curative powers, rather to choke and destroy it by plying it with materials ill prepared and ill suited to its nature and capacity In much of the teaching one sees, there is too little if any trading, so to speak, with the knowledge a child has already gained, so as to enable him to reach the unknown through the known. All along from his earliest days the child has been making numerous discoveries for himself, and has come into the possession of much self-acquired knowledge. The teacher that makes most demand on this previous knowledge in the elucidation and instillation of new truths will reap the highest rewards himself, and will confer the greatest and most lasting benefit on his pupils. He will secure the intelligent reception of new impressions, deepen and confirm those already made, and prepare the way for further advances. A teacher in the course of a reading-lesson met with the words "smooth," 'notched," and, finding his pupils unable to explain them, at once told them in words no simpler instead of illustrating and eliciting their meaning by referring to articles bearing these characteristics, and to those of an opposite nature. Another had to deal with "rill," "fadeless bloom," and "fragrance," but made no reference to the rill near the school and to the flowers with which the children were all familiar. During the past year the children in quite a number of schools failed in geography, because, although they could tell glibly enough what a cape, lake, or plain, &c., was, yet they failed completely to recognize such in the school surroundings, or to point out what stood for them on a map.

Judging from the character of some of the teaching, and from the casual remarks one hears, "cram" must be considered an important factor in meeting the requirements of the syllabus. The idea is erroneous. "Cram," as I understand it, is the attempt to force into children, by formula, rote, and rule, what they do not understand and cannot therefore assimilate. Such a process is sure to end more or less in failure, since the aim of the examinations is to defeat it, and to reward teaching that cultivates the intelligence and trains the mind. There is no disguising the fact that the children in our schools have plenty to do, but it is astonishing how much mental food they can beneficially dispose of when it is suitably presented to them. New Zealand children are not subjected to any great hardship in their school course, as they are not compelled to be presented for standard work at any fixed age, and need not begin it until the teacher is satisfied that they are quite fit to do so with a fair prospect of successfully passing up to a higher standard year by year I should not be disposed to advocate the exclusion, from the list of studies prescribed, of any subject except the history of Standard III. As for the geography of Standard II., it ought to be a pleasure and pastime for the children rather than a hard lesson. The real weakness is not in the inability of the children to undergo their share of the work, nor in the system itself to any great extent, but exists in the motive-power—in the means for administering it. The teaching staff is neither large enough nor efficient enough. In many country schools the work cannot be fully overtaken without more assistance, and in the town and larger schools much of it has to be relegated to untrained hands, just at that stage too where training and special skill are most needed. The number of experienced and qualified assistants requires to be increased. Of course it will be asked how the expenditure that would necessarily attend an increase in the number and efficiency of the teaching staff is to be met in face of the cry, now somewhat common, that the system is bound to break down under its own weight—that the State cannot bear its educational burdens. There are no solid grounds for despairing of a satisfactory answer, for the people that can afford to spend its millions on what, to say the least of it, is of doubtful utility, will surely not scruple to furnish its thousands for the support of such an all-important matter as education.

Failure in school work is often caused by neglecting to make the teaching sufficiently thorough and impressive. Of course all inefficient methods want these qualities, but, even where the methods are fairly satisfactory, the instruction is not driven home so as to produce permanent effect. In teaching reading, for instance, of twenty teachers who read with taste and expression themselves, probably three-fourths will fail to insist upon their pupils following their model. There is no real difficulty in the way A little determination, tact, and gentle pressure applied would produce the desired effect in even the youngest class. Reading is good in a number of schools, and might be so in all were sufficient effort put forth. In regard to spelling, the practice of writing upon the blackboard all words in which a mistake has been made is becoming more common, but still there are frequent examples of neglect to do this, and of a feeble correction of such words by the teacher himself, without directing the special attention of the whole class to them. In several schools all words in which a mistake has been made are carefully noted down in a book kept for the purpose, and frequent reference made to them during the course of the year. I need not say that the spelling in such schools is accurate. Tactics of a nature suited to the subject in hand require to be constantly used in order to produce a lasting impression.

Inability or neglect to keep pupils usefully and earnestly employed at desks, or even in class in direct contact with the teacher, is another fertile source of disappointment. Sometimes a teacher is so earnest and absorbed in the lesson he is giving that he becomes blind to the fact that his pupils are quite out of sympathy with him, and yield him but an apparent attention, or none at all. In fact, he does most of the work himself, and requires his pupils to do but a very small share of it, whereas the reverse course ought to be followed. When low results are the outcome of an examination, it is not uncommon for a teacher to remark that he cannot understand it, that he never worked harder, and certainly expected a better reward for all his labour and anxiety Satisfactory results will not be gained until he succeeds in securing the hearty co-operation of his pupils, no matter how he himself may labour

Exercise-books are occasionally produced for inspection in which a cursory glance is sufficient to detect a number of uncorrected mistakes, not on one page merely but on several; the usual excuse for the existence of such being that there was no time to make the necessary corrections. If no time is available for carefully examining the exercises and referring to the mistakes in the presence of the whole class, then it would be better not to give them, as otherwise they are not likely to be very profitable. There is a well-grounded suspicion that many of the home-exercises are not done by the pupils themselves, but by kind friends whose services have been brought into requisition. Short memory-lessons, for the most part, ought to suffice for home-work. Exercises in arithmetic, grammar, and such-like, except perhaps in the case of the very highest classes, should be done in school under the teacher's eye, and where there would be every probability of the pupils being cast upon their own resources. In most of the schools, however, the exercise-books are very neatly written and corrected with great care.

Although I have thus shortly referred to a few defects in method which exist in varying degree in a number of schools, it is not because I am insensible to many instances of good methods and intelligent teaching by which a large proportion of the teachers carry on their work, and without which they would be unable to produce the very favourable results the several summaries show, but because there arises a natural desire to have weak points strengthened and to have unsound methods superseded by those more conducive to healthy mental development. Of course, in such a many-sided matter as education, opinions will differ as to the best means of reaching towards perfection.

I have, &c.,

The Secretary, Education Board. W Taylor.

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3. Mr. Goyen's Report.

Sir,— Education Office, Dunedin, 21st March, 1883.

I have the honour to present my general report for the year 1883.

From January to June I was engaged in examining pupil-teachers' papers, compiling tables for reports, writing reports, and making eighty-eight visits of inspection, and from June to December in examining seventy-one schools—two with Mr Petrie, eighteen with Mr Taylor, and fifty-one single-handed—and a portion of the work of the four district high schools. Of those seventy-one schools, three gained over 90 per cent. of the possible passes, twenty-three over 80 per cent., twenty-nine over 70 per cent., ten over 60 per cent., four over 50 per cent., and two under 50 per cent. Stating the results gained more generally, I may say that twenty-six schools passed well, twenty-nine very fairly, and sixteen more or less poorly. In the first group there are several very ably conducted schools. The practical work of the pupil-teachers received a large share of attention during the year, and I regret to say that the results of my observations were in many cases of an unsatisfactory character In a few schools those teachers showed evidence of careful and skilful training in sound principles and methods of teaching, but in many they appeared to have received little or no training at all. It is true school methods were studied from text-books, but the most excellent text-book is a very poor substitute for the intelligent and persistent supervision and example of an able and earnest head-teacher

Organization.—The organization of a large school with an ample staff is not attended with any special difficulty, and in this class of school it is generally in most respects good; but the conditions are very different in small country schools, and great credit is due to many of the teachers of the latter for the skill with which they overcome the great practical difficulty of teaching, supervising, and providing suitable employment for, seven or eight classes. The chief defect connected with the working of small schools is the scant attention the classes below the level of Standard I. receive. Little variety of employment is provided for them, and, although much less able to work unassisted than the standard classes, they get vastly less assistance. They have a lesson of five or ten minutes' duration three or four times a day, their slates glanced at occasionally, and during the rest of the day follow the devices of their own hearts. Those classes generally constitute a large proportion of the school attendance, and, except in the large schools and perhaps a half of the small ones, are mostly engaged in wasting time. It is, I believe, an invariable rule that those teachers do best work who attend well to the foundations, the training of their juniors, and who aim at producing good independent workers in the senior standards. The pupils of such teachers work with zeal, and grapple patiently and successfully with difficulties that the overtutored senior is quite unable to cope with. The spirit of work is upon them, and I have seen their faces glow with satisfaction as each successive difficulty has been overcome. Such pupils it should be the aim of every teacher to produce: whether he succeeds or not will depend upon himself. It is certain, however, that to neglect his foundations is to invite defeat. I have seldom found a school without a time-table, but that document is not infrequently invisible until inquired for, when it is usually found in the teacher's desk. The instruction is that it should be placed in a conspicuous position on the wall.

Instruction.—The great body of teachers work hard and earnestly. It would be to the advantage of the schools, however, were they to do less themselves, and make their pupils take a larger share in the work of every lesson. In a large proportion of our schools fully nineteen-twentieths of the talking is done by the teachers. The children have hardly anything to do but attend, and this they do badly It is true they have the appearance of attending, but a question or two interposed at the end of the lesson show that what passes for attention is merely bewilderment or a blank stare. Such teaching proceeds on two assumptions, both of which are certainly false (1) That when children look you straight in the face they are attending to you, and (2) that the plasticity of the youthful mind is such that whatever is said straightway impresses itself and becomes a portion of the child's mental furniture. This substitution of talk for teaching is a fruitful source of failure at examinations, for, notwithstanding that the children were "told this and

that but a few days or weeks ago," they did not receive and assimilate it, and therefore, when called upon to reproduce it, naturally fail. Then follow heartburnings and disappointment at results so incommensurate with the immense amount of energy spent in producing them. One cannot but sympathize with an earnest man in his disappointments, and to all such I would say "Do not be sparing of your energy, but be sure to direct it wisely Consider every lesson well before giving it. Always have ready at hand an abundance of simple and apt illustrations. Never explain what you can lead your pupils to find out for themselves but, when forced to give a direct explanation, be sure you question well upon it. Remember that if the matter is worth explaining the explanation is worth fixing, and that the chief condition of this fixing process is repetition. Avoid much talking on your own part, but make your pupils talk as much as possible. Work out your points separately, and don't omit to fix them by repetition. Pause now and again, and cause your pupils to gather up the points mastered. Proceed in this way to the end of the lesson, and finally cause them to gather up all the points of the lesson. If they are unable to do this without your assistance, the lesson is a failure, and you had better go over the ground again."

When it is considered how largely imitative the art of reading is, and what admirable mimics children are, it seems surprising that the reading of our schools should be so deficient in natural modulation and expression as it very commonly is. The number of schools in which the art of reading is successfully taught is very small. The fact, however, that success is achieved in some schools is proof that the kind of reading we think it is reasonable to expect is not unachievable. The quality of the reading in the middle and senior standards depends in a great measure upon the character of the instruction imparted in the junior classes, and that is in a very large number of schools very unscientific. Hardly anything shows more strikingly the difficulty of overcoming the inertia of use-and-wont than the tenacity with which the majority of infant-school teachers cling to the old time-honoured method of teaching the alphabet and the earlier stages of reading. It is an old tale that the names of the letters afford no clue to the pronunciation, whereas the powers of the letters do nevertheless, the former are taught with great skill and thoroughness, whilst the latter hardly ever receive even a passing notice. The effect of this is that children have to be told almost every new word they encounter There is the same absence of natural principle in the teaching of sounds and their visual representatives. Children are not trained to associate certain combinations of letters, to assign the sound when the letters are given, or *vice versâ*. Let me illustrate what I mean by a single example. In the great bulk of English words in which the sound *ite* occurs, that sound is represented by *ite* or *ight*. Now, if those signs and their sounds are so fixed in the child's mind that when one is seen or heard the other is suggested, and the powers of the consonants are well known, the child will be able readily to read at sight—bite, cite, dite, kite, mite, nite, pite, spite, quite, rite, write, sprite, site, bight, dight, fight, light, flight, plight, slight, might, night, right, bright, fright, tight, and others, and, moreover, will experience but little difficulty in dealing with such words at upright, sprightly, brightness, mighty indite, incite, ignite, recite, &c. Taught in this way, children soon acquire ability to say at sight an immense number of words, and, which is of vastly greater value, such a thorough familiarity with the powers of letters and groups of letters that the only real difficulty they experience at the end of a year or two is that of correct accentuation. In the Royal Reader series of books all the difficult words are correctly accentuated at the beginning or end of every lesson, so that, if children are trained to interpret the accentuation marks, this difficulty readily vanishes. Irregularities must of course be dealt with separately, and on the look-and-say method. This foundation work belongs in the main to the teachers of the junior classes, upon whose shoulders must be laid a very large share of the responsibility for the poor reading of the higher classes, for it is manifestly impossible for the teacher of a senior class to do justice to the higher phases of the art of reading whose time is largely occupied in clearing away mechanical difficulties that ought to have been cleared away in the junior classes. It is surely a sad reflection on our methods that it should take a child of average ability seven or eight years to read his own language but tolerably The meanings of words were better known this year than last, but there was not much, if any, improvement in the explanation of expressions and questions on the matter of the lessons. The art of questioning on the language and matter of the reading-lesson, and the kind of answers that ought to be received from the pupils, are very poorly understood by a large number of teachers. Again I would urge them to study and apply Fitch's splendid lecture on questioning and answering.

Great credit is due both to teachers and pupils for the thoroughness with which the spelling of the reading-books is got up, and the neatness and care with which most of the written exercises are executed. Spelling and writing are the strong subjects of the Otago schools.

The mechanical operations of arithmetic are generally well taught, though the percentage gained by Standard III. does not seem to bear out this observation. The failures of this standard were, however, in the main traceable to one or more of three causes—defective notation, inability to interpret the common arithmetical signs, and carelessness in transcribing figures. Not much success is achieved in applying the mechanical operations to the solution of easy problems. There is nothing mysterious in the sums we give. They are common-sense questions, such as one is liable to encounter every day of one's life, and certainly not nearly so difficult as a large proportion of those done by the pupils during the course of the year In my judgment the children do (guess out) altogether too many sums, and are far too seldom engaged in studying the *rationale* of the work. I really do not see why girls and boys of the senior standards should not be made to show the full demonstration of every problem they work. Arithmetic is the Euclid of the primary school, and it is not too much to expect that advanced boys and girls should be trained to reason out their solutions in the same way in which a student of Euclid reasons out the several steps of a geometrical problem. If unable to do so they do not understand the sums, and the teacher is at once made aware that the principles underlying them need further elucidation. I regret to say that the unitary method, the only one that can be made really intelligible to children, is hardly anywhere adopted.

Barnard Smith and Colenso are the authors that find most favour, and I do not hesitate to say that their mechanical methods have done more to retard the adoption of natural methods than anything else that could be named.

In a considerable number of schools formal grammar is now taught inductively, and with excellent educative effect. There are, however, still to be found many teachers who cling to the old ways, and strangely invert the order of nature by making their pupils first learn the definition and then consider the thing defined! Composition is well taught in about a third of the schools examined by me, fairly in a third, and more or less poorly in the rest.

Though book-knowledge of geography is on the whole good, map-knowledge is generally defective. The text-book receives too much attention, and the map too little, the information worked up from the former is not localized by a study of the latter, and, of course, the mind refuses to retain it.

In the Fourth, Fifth, and Sixth Standards the history prescribed is for the most part well got up from a text-book but in the Third Standard, where the teaching is oral, and in the main unskilful, intelligent answering is very uncommon. I am strongly of opinion that history should be removed from the curriculum of the Third Standard. The time now spent in the study of it might be much more profitably employed in the study of English, and in the long-run history would not suffer, for by assigning the present Third Standard work to the Fourth Standard, and equally dividing the whole field of English history, from 1066 to our own time, between the Fifth and Sixth Standards, children would leave school with a knowledge of the subject quite as useful as that gained under the present allocation of the work. I am of opinion, too, that the geography of Standards III. and IV. might be considerably cut down with great advantage to the pupils.

In a few schools the singing is excellent, but in the majority it is either poor or not taught. I should be glad to see more time devoted to this exercise in all infant-rooms. I am glad to be able to speak more favourably this year than last of the quality of the sewing. Very little of the work presented fell below fair, and much of it was highly creditable.

Before concluding this report I would like to record my dissent from the opinion occasionally expressed and often implied that the *morale* of public schools is deteriorating. Most of those who entertain this opinion are deservedly held in high esteem, and I am unwilling to believe that their aspersions upon the behaviour of public-school children are made from interested motives, but I am bound to say that their conclusions are unwarranted by the facts. An inspector of schools has exceptional opportunities for forming a sound judgment upon this question. He comes into contact with thousands of children during every year's inspection, observes their deportment in the school, in the playground, and in the roads and streets, and my own deliberate opinion is that, instead of deteriorating, the *morale* of our schools is improving, and I have no doubt, that if the conduct of boys and girls of twenty and thirty years ago were as keenly scrutinized as that of boys and girls of the present day, it would be found that the children of the last generation were no better than those of the present, and that there is no ground for the gloomy forebodings made respecting the moral degeneracy of the latter I do not say that boys and girls invariably comport themselves as one could wish, but I deny both that they are deserving of the bad character ascribed to them, and that the tendency of our system of education is to lower the plane of moral excellence attained by the schools of our own youth. It does not need much keenness of observation to see that the weak spot in the management and training of our youth lies quite away from the schools altogether—in their own homes, where the laxity of parental control and supervision is such that nothing short of greatly improved methods of school management could have produced the excellent order, discipline, and tone by which most of our schools are characterized.

I have, &c.,

The Secretary, Education Board.

P Goyen, Inspector

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

Sir,—

I have the honour to submit the following report on the district high schools for the year 1883.

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

Oamaru High School.

Subject.	Class.	Number examined.	Work done.
English	I.	12	The Tempest (Shakespeare)
Latin	I.	1	Principia Latina, Part II., Books I. and II. of the History, and Æneid, Book I., 200 lines.
	II.	3	Principia Latina, Part I., and the Fables, Anecdotes, and Mythology of Part II.
French	I.	6	De Jardin's French Class-Book.
	II.	8	De Jardin's French Class-Book, 90 exercises and translation of a few of the short tales.
Geometry	I.	4	Euclid, Books I., II., and III.
Algebra ..	I.	4	To fractional equations (simple)

Port Chalmers District High School.

Subject.	Class.	Number examined.	Work done.
English	I.	3	Chaucer's Prologue to the Canterbury Tales, Milton's L'Allegro, Il Penseroso, and Lycidas.
	II.	11	The Merchant of Venice (Royal School Series).
Latin	I.	2	Æneid, Book II., 623 lines, and Cæsar's Gallic War, Book II.
	II.	4	Principia Latina, Part I., and the Fables in Part II.
French	I.	3	Molière's Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme, and De Jardin's Class-Book, 204 exercises.
	II.	3	De Jardin's Class-Book, 120 exercises, the verbs in pp. 57–82, and translation of pp. 181–200.
Geometry	I.	1	Euclid, Books I. II., III., IV., and VI., with simple exercises on Book I.
	II.	6	Euclid, Books I. and II.
Algebra	I.	1	To quadratic equations (inclusive)
	II.	6	To simple equations (inclusive)

Tokomairiro District High School,

English	I.	15	Merchant of Venice (Royal School Series), with Grammar and Analysis.
Latin	I.	1	Sallust's Catiline, and Horace's Odes, Books I. and II.
	II.	4	Principia Latina, Part II., Book V of the History, Cæsar's Gallic War, Book V., 30 chapters.
	III.	16	Principia Latina, 20 Fables in Part II., and the noun and regular verbs in Part I.
French	I.	8	De Jardin's Class-Book to page 60, and Reader to page 189.
	II.	12	De Jardin's Class-Book, 30 pp.
Geometry	I.	3	Euclid, Books I., II., III., and IV., with exercises on Book I.
	II.	13	Euclid, Book I.
Algebra	I.	2	To quadratic equations (inclusive).
	II.	13	To simple equations (inclusive).
Trigonometry	I.	12	Hamblin Smith, 12 chapters.

Lawrence District High School.

English	I.	14	Hamlet (Royal School Series).
Latin	I.	2	Principia Latina, Part II., Books IV. and V of the History; Æneid, Book I., and Grammar
	II.	3	Cæsar's Gallic War, Books I. and II. (copious selections), and Grammar
	III.	8	Principia Latina, Part II., the Fables, Anecdotes, and Mythology, with Grammar
French	I.	6	De Jardin's Class-Book, 213 pp.
	II.	9	De Jardin's Class-Book, 81 pp.
Geometry	I.	4	Euclid, Books I., II., III., and IV., with exercises on Book I.
	II.	6	Euclid, Books I. and II.
	III.	5	Euclid, Book I.
Algebra	I.	9	To end of quadratic equations.
	II.	5	To end of fractions.
cience	I.	11	Huxley's Physiography, 245 pp.

The amount of work done in each of the extra branches taught is about equal to that overtaken last year Much of it was of excellent quality. The number of pupils examined in one or more of the extra subjects in each of the schools is shown in the following statement Oamaru District High School, 17, Port Chalmers District High School, 13; Tokomairiro District High School, 24, Lawrence District High School, 18.

At the Oamaru District High School, about half the pupils showed a fair knowledge of the action and language of the play read. Much more ground was gone over than in any other of the district high schools, and the treatment was less exhaustive. In Latin the translation of the higher class was weak, and the questions in parsing, syntax, and accidence were on the whole badly answered. The lower class knew the translations well. In French the upper class translated with

accuracy and fair readiness, but there was considerable weakness in the knowledge of grammar and in the translation of English into French; in the lower class two showed good knowledge of the work done, but on the whole the class made a poor appearance. Only one of the pupils passed a satisfactory examination in geometry In algebra one gained half marks, and the rest knew nothing about what had been taught.

At the Port Chalmers District High School, the English classes gave proofs of very sound teaching. In Latin both classes had been trained to read the Latin text very correctly The translation and parsing were well done, and the upper class showed a good knowledge of the syntax and accidence. In French the work read was well known by nearly all the pupils, two gave excellent answers. In geometry the work was well known by two of the pupils, and fairly by two others. In algebra the classes passed a very fair examination.

At the Tokomairiro District High School, the English class gave proof of a careful and exhaustive study of the portion of literature read. In Latin the translation was for the most part very good, and the parsing, accidence, and syntax were very fairly known. In French the lower class answered well, and the upper one fairly The results in geometry were very good in all the classes. In algebra the teaching had been most successful, six passed an excellent examination, and nearly every one did fairly The majority of the pupils answered very fairly in trigonometry

At the Lawrence District High School, the English class showed a capital knowledge of the portion of literature read. In Latin the translation was on the whole well done, though, in this, Class II. was inferior to the others. Grammar had been thoroughly taught, and several did the translation into Latin very creditably. In French the classes had mastered what they had gone over Both passed an excellent examination. In geometry the written work was well done by all the classes, Class I. was not so successful in the *viva voce* test. The algebra classes had been admirably taught. As regards the science, I was well satisfied with the oral examination. Two of the written papers were excellent, and about half were fair.

Throughout these schools the French, geometry, and trigonometry were examined by Mr Inspector Goyen, and the other subjects by myself.

I have, &c.,

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

SOUTHLAND.

SIR,— Invercargill, 15th March, 1884.

I have the honour to submit to the Board my general report for the year ending December 31st, 1883.

The work of the year has consisted chiefly in the examination of the Board's schools, in the inspection of some of them, in preparing for and conducting the pupil-teacher and scholarship examinations, in the revision of the regulations and curriculum of study for pupil-teachers, and in visiting new districts with a view to the establishment of additional schools. With reference to this last item of my work, I may mention that I have been much impressed on these visits by the eagerness which the settlers uniformly manifest for the establishment of a school amongst them, a circumstance which would lead to the conviction that the worth of education is fully understood by the colonists of New Zealand, were it not counterbalanced by the apathy which parents so often show about sending their children to school after one has been established among them. As required by the Regulations in Council, I have prepared the table which follows, showing the number of scholars who have succeeded in passing their standard examination at the annual visit of the Inspector to the school (Table I.) :—

TABLE I.

	Number of Scholars presented for Examination in Standard.	Number of Scholars who passed.	Percentage.	Number of Schools presenting Scholars in the Standard.
Standard I.	773	638	82·5	65
Standard II.	887	598	67·4	65
Standard III. ..	814	364	44·7	63
Standard IV	432	140	32·4	50
Standard V	176	73	41·5	37
Standard VI.	31	14	45·2	11
Totals .. .	3,113	1,827	58·7	...

It will thus be seen that in the whole education district 3,113 scholars were presented for examination in one or other of the six standards, and that, of these, 1,827, or 58·7 per cent., were successful. It is necessary to bear in mind, when considering the significance of these figures, that this 3,113 includes all children entered by the teacher in the examination register of the school as due for examination, except such as from illness or other lawful impediment are unable to attend. All other absentees are reckoned as present and as failing in every subject, it being inferred that when a child is unnecessarily withheld from examination it is done from a belief in the inability of that child to pass its standard examination. If this precaution be not observed, it seems to me that the results arrived at, though more flattering, are of much less value.

Last year, in consequence of the late period at which I entered on my duties, only twenty-six schools were examined. In order, therefore, to compare the results of 1883 with those of the preceding year, it is necessary to give an additional table in which the statistics are restricted to the same twenty-six schools (Table II.) :—

TABLE II.

—	Number of Scholars presented for Examination in Standard.	Number of Scholars who passed.	Percentage.	Percentage in 1882.
Standard I.	410	369	90	84·2
Standard II.	571	420	73·6	72·7
Standard III.	539	259	48·1	61·1
Standard IV.	341	113	33·1	53·5
Standard V.	155	71	45·8	39·1
Standard VI.	27	13	48·1	54·5
Totals	2,043	1,245	60·9	68·6

In the twenty-six schools, therefore, the percentage of scholars who passed is 60·9, whilst last year it was 68·6, so that, as far as the schools are concerned, there appears to be a decline in efficiency to the extent of nearly 8 per cent. It is of course possible that my examination questions may have been slightly more difficult this year than last, or that I may have had in my mind a somewhat higher standard of excellence for the answers. I believe, however, that the true explanation of the lower percentage this year is to be found in the fact that in four of our largest schools (included in these twenty-six) important changes have this year been made in the staff, a new head-teacher having been appointed in each case. Such changes always affect a school unfavourably for a time, in consequence of the lack of interest which all, teachers and scholars alike, feel in their work whilst anticipating them. It is not surprising, therefore, that each of the four schools referred to has this year obtained a lower percentage of passes, or that, in consequence, as these four schools contain a large proportion of the total number of scholars examined, the gross result should be below that of last year

It is desirable to notice further that the retrogression is confined to Standards III., IV., and VI., whilst in the case of Standards I., II., and V. there has been progress, and in Standard I. very marked advance.

As I did last year, and as is usually done, I have completed my statistics by giving a further table (Table III.) showing the percentage of passes made by scholars in each of the standard subjects :—

TABLE III.

Subjects.	Number of Scholars presented.	Number passed.	Percentage.
Reading	3,113	2,683	86·3
Spelling	3,112	2,179	70·0
Writing	3,113	3,008	96·6
Arithmetic	3,113	1,581	50·8
Grammar	1,453	862	59·3
Geography	2,340	1,564	66·8
History	1,446	767	53·0

For the purpose of comparison, I give, as before, another table (Table IV) embracing only the twenty-six schools already referred to :—

TABLE IV.

Subjects.	Number of Scholars presented.	Number passed.	Percentage.	Percentage in 1882.
Reading	2,043	1,817	88·9	85·4
Spelling	2,043	1,462	71·6	75·3
Writing	2,043	2,008	98·3	92·3
Arithmetic	2,043	1,072	52·5	62·2
Grammar	1,062	642	60·5	76·2
Geography	1,633	1,157	70·8	73·7
History	1,059	648	61·2	62·2

As was to be expected from the results exhibited in Table II., this table also points to retrogression in most of the subjects of study, the mechanical arts of reading and writing alone showing progress ; but I need not refer again to the explanation of this, which I have already given. The decline is greatest in grammar and arithmetic, which latter subject is naturally the weakest of all. The difference between the results of the two years in the other subjects is not great.

In reading, my own observation agrees with the testimony of the above figures—that there has been some improvement, but still in too many schools the teacher does not seem aware of the fact that children, even in the lower classes, may be trained to clear and distinct enunciation, and find pleasure in the exercise, whilst the labour of teaching them becomes thereby much more effective and much less fatiguing. It should also be noticed in connection with this subject of reading that the failure of a scholar in history or grammar is often really due to his inability to read correctly and fluently—a discovery an Inspector is often doomed to make, who, pursuing his diagnosis further, will often find that the inability to read fluently is in its turn dependent on a further inability to spell. Of course in these remarks I am alluding only to the higher classes in the school.

Referring to arithmetic, I have been pleased to notice improvement in a small but important branch of it in the lower classes—I mean notation and numeration. This should contribute to a more intelligent knowledge of the science. At present in too many schools arithmetic means the mechanical arrangement of figures in a certain form called "a sum," but that these mysterious processes have any connection with problems occurring in real life is undreamt of by the puzzled scholar. I am inclined to think that the Inspector's frequent introduction of problems into the arithmetic work of examination-day has been one cause of fewer marks having been gained this year in the subject.

The high percentage gained in the subject of writing means no more than this that almost all the scholars write legibly In some few schools the subject receives special attention, and really beautiful specimens of the art of penmanship are produced.

In no subject, I think, is the want of system that cripples many of our schools so evident as in this of writing, and in none might the spirit of order and system that is so necessary to the successful working of a school receive better illustration. The day's copy should always be uniform throughout each class, and in some schools, I am glad to say, this is already the case, a page being left blank whenever a scholar has been absent a day. If this be objected to as leading to unnecessary expense in copybooks, the difficulty might easily be got over by using copybooks without headlines, the teacher writing the copy on the black-board before school commenced. It will not be out of place here to mention some other instances of the utter want of system which marks some of our schools, and connects them with an order of education one had hoped had long passed away In one school we have children, presented for the same standard, reading in different reading-books, in other places, perhaps also in the same, each child in the class presents a different piece of poetry for recitation, whilst the teacher has to appeal to the children to ascertain what poetry has been learnt. And closely connected with this subject is the neglect of little details, such as the pointing of slate-pencils, which are sometimes, even on examination-day, handed out to the class with ends so blunt the children might almost as well attempt to write with their fingers. In no particular is the teacher's interest in his work, or want of it, shown better than in such apparently trifling matters as this, whilst his attending to them, and requiring the children to attend to them, helps to improve the discipline of the school. The mention of this last subject suggests to me the desirability of making a remark or two on the difficulties which teachers have to encounter in conducting the work of their schools. Not the least of these is the want of sympathy and support from the parents of the scholars. If a teacher is to do any good in a school it is absolutely necessary he should have the supreme and undisputed control of all the scholars in it. Whether, however, he shall be maintained in this position depends very much on the co-operation of the parents of the children, and this is not always given. In particular, a parent will sometimes attempt to interfere with the teacher's classification of his pupils, and will want to determine the question of his child's promotion. If the teacher acts on his own judgment the child is removed from the school, or the teacher's life embittered. Some teachers are weak enough to yield to the illegitimate pressure put upon them, and promote a child against their own better judgment. In this way children who have failed at the Inspector's examination are next year presented, not for the standard in which they failed, but for the next higher standard, with the natural result that they fail again, and so continue from year to year, always out of their depth, doing no good to themselves, and bringing nothing but disgrace upon their schools. But this is not the worst. A teacher often shrinks from maintaining that strict discipline in his school that he knows to be essential to the success of his work, because he is aware that, if he corrects a child, his action will be resented by the parents of the offender. In this way, not only does the efficiency of the school suffer, but the moral character of the children also, always an object of solicitude to the true teacher under every system of education. Parents who are wisely anxious for the good of their children will always support the teacher's authority in all the emergencies of school life. In a large number of the schools of this district the discipline is far from being as strict as it should be. In some, I am glad to say, it is at once strict and gentle.

The question that has most frequently recurred to my mind whilst reviewing my school reports, in order to compile the preceding tables, is one that is, probably, often present to the mind of the New Zealand taxpayer, viz., What are the actual results secured by the elaborate educational machinery now in operation thoughout the colony? Are the girls and boys of New Zealand really receiving anything worthy the name of education, as the outcome of all the money and supervision expended upon them? We have got school buildings and school teachers have we got education? As far as the experience of this education district furnishes an answer to these questions, I think only a very qualified affirmative can be given. It may, I think, be freely admitted that we *have* schools in which the children are imbibing the elements of useful knowledge, and even some in which the thinking faculties of the children are being drawn out and cultivated; but it is impossible for any one, with the opportunities of knowing which an Inspector has, not to be aware that in a large number of our schools the results obtained are of the most meagre description, most elementary in character and imperfect in quality. Not a small portion of the Inspector's work is

the dreary task of recording an almost unbroken series of failures on the part of the scholars—failures which often seem to be anticipated by the teacher, and to cause him no compunction, distress, or regret. Of course it is in the smaller country schools that this state of things is most frequently met with. In these it frequently happens that only some three—or at most, four—standards are presented. I find that, of the sixty-five schools examined by me during the year, there are twelve that presented no higher standard than Standard III., and one in which Standard II. was the highest, whilst fifteen others went no higher than Standard IV How worthless is the education that stops short at Standard III. a reference to the syllabus will show Education, as defined by Standard III., means pretty much this ability to read the Third Royal Reader, or perhaps the Fourth to spell a little, provided the examiner restricts himself to the words of the reading-book, to write round-hand, to work sums in addition, subtraction, and division of money, multiplication being omitted as too difficult, in grammar, to recognize four parts of speech, and, in geography, to know a few mountain-chains and rivers—that, and very little more. But in thirteen of the schools of this district that is the utmost which is attempted, and only in eleven schools is the complete course of primary education, as represented by the six standards, in process of being imparted. And, further, as the total number of children presented for examination in the Sixth Standard this year was only thirty-one, we see how very meagre is the work which is being done in most of our schools. As a matter of fact, most of the thirty-one scholars here referred to were presented by the two or three large town schools, the remainder of the eleven schools presenting one each. These remarks will serve to show that the education at present imparted in most of our schools is of an extremely elementary character, but this, I venture to think, would not matter so much if it were only a sound and thorough education within the limits professed. Now, I wish again to state that, in my judgment, there are schools in this district in which the scholars are well taught, and satisfactory results are secured. But such schools are not, I fear, very numerous amongst us. On the contrary in a large number of our schools it seems to me that the children only half know what they profess to know, their knowledge is not intelligent knowledge, they cannot reproduce it, or apply it, or stand a test in it. Day after day is spent within the school walls, but so spent that when the time of examination arrives, and the Inspector makes his annual visit, their failure to answer is often so complete that his mental exclamation is, "These children know nothing, and can do nothing!" How true all this is, is indicated by Table I., which shows that a class of a hundred children, professing even such small attainments as those of Standard III., will only furnish forty-four successful scholars in other words, fifty-six of them will break down, and show themselves ignorant of the year's work, whilst, if a like number be presented for a standard only one degree higher, as many as sixty-eight will break down. If, now, it be remembered that this is the average result, and that, as there are some schools where the results are much better than this, so there must be schools where the failures are even more numerous, and some in which they are much more numerous, it will be plain how very low is the state of education in some of our schools, and how, in fact, it is almost a misnomer to call it education at all. I have thus ventured to speak out plainly on the condition of our schools as I find them, and I think I should hardly be fulfilling my duty if I did not add something on what I deem to be the chief cause of this low state of education amongst us. No doubt allowance must be made for the fact that some of these schools have only recently been established, and have not yet had time to mature their results, doubtless, also, still greater allowance must be made for the inability under which teachers labour in consequence of the very irregular manner in which many children attend school, but when all due allowance has been made for these drawbacks, I believe the chief cause of the little good that is actually being done is, in plain English, the inefficiency of many of the teachers, their want of industry and energy, their ignorance of the best methods of imparting what they know, but, above all, their want of scholarship, and that, if we are going really to educate the children of this colony, we must exercise greater care in the selection of our teachers, and endeavour to raise the tone of scholarship amongst them.

Teachers often complain of the difficulty of educating their children up to the requirements of the standards. That a considerable variety of work is demanded of teachers to enable their scholars fully to meet these requirements, I do not deny, but, in my judgment, there is little or no difficulty in the subjects themselves. The knowledge required of the children is of such an elementary character that any teacher who has a thorough knowledge of the subjects needs nothing but application to insure the success of his pupils. But it is just this thorough knowledge of the subjects that is so often lacking in the instructor To such a one, a very elementary question looms up as something extremely formidable and difficult. On the other hand, you may know the man who is thoroughly master of his subject, and has thoroughly digested it, by the light and easy way in which he handles his theme—he knows how to place it in the most striking light, or, rather, in a dozen different lights successively, so that the obscure becomes distinct, and the dry and repulsive interesting. A thought quickly finds entrance into the mind of the scholar when it is already fusing in the mind of the teacher. I venture to think that the extraordinary interest that attaches to the popular lectures of such famous scientific men as Huxley and Tyndall is due almost entirely to the experimental and personal acquaintance they have with the subject-matter of their teaching; and that if our country teachers knew the elements of arithmetic and grammar, for example, as these men know their physiology and physics, they would have no difficulty in kindling the intelligence of their scholars, or in imparting to them the requisite knowledge of facts. Or, to put the same thought in another way, a teacher, in order to teach effectively and bring his scholars on, must know a great deal more of his subject than the little that his scholars are required to know, and it is just the absence of this additional knowledge in the teacher that makes the pupil's lot so hard and his progress so slow How painful, for example, must be the mental efforts of a child compelled to dig out a smattering of English grammar from the pages of a text-book under a teacher whose own knowledge is limited to the contents of the book in question, and how different the state

of things where the teacher, able in his own mind to compare the idioms of two or more languages, easily unravels before his class the so-called mysteries of grammar To the teacher it is doubly true that knowledge is power. These remarks have been suggested to me partly by the complaints and excuses which teachers have sometimes urged to me to palliate the ill-success of their pupils on the day of examination—complaints which have often given me an unexpected insight into the real causes of failure,—and partly by an examination of the academical and professional standing of the sixty-five head-teachers in charge of the sixty-five schools at the time of my examination of them. From an analysis I have made of a list of these, I find that, of the whole number, thirty-eight only are to be found on the roll of certificated teachers, although two others may fairly be added to these, as only awaiting classification. If we allow, then, that forty teachers, or, say, 61 per cent., are certificated, there still remain twenty-five teachers, or, say, 39 per cent., uncertificated, but who, nevertheless, have the supreme control, and in almost all such cases the sole control, of a school intrusted to them; and I think the mere statement of these facts is sufficient to account for the little that is learnt by the scholars of so many of our schools. When it is remembered that the D examination is little, if any, more difficult than the matriculation examination of the University of New Zealand, which is only the final examination for grammar-school boys, and that the E examination is much below even this, it is easy to see how very small must be the scholarship of those who cannot pass even the latter of these examinations, and how far they must be from having that complete and thorough knowledge of their subjects which is plainly necessary to success in teaching. I should not, however, be doing justice to some if I omitted to say that, even in this education district, there are uncertificated teachers who are doing efficient work, nor is it true that in all cases certificated teachers are successful teachers. Knowledge of the art of teaching, of course, goes for much, and industry and energy for still more but yet the first essential to success in teaching is to know something, and to know it thoroughly This will often suggest the best method of imparting it, and even awaken the necessary enthusiasm to impart it effectively

I have now only to apologize for the undue length to which this report has extended.

I have, &c.,

The Secretary, Education Board. JOHN GAMMELL, B.A., Inspector

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2. MR. GAMMELL'S REPORT ON RIVERTON DISTRICT HIGH SCHOOL.

SIR,— Invercargill, 13th March, 1884.

I have the honour to submit to the Board my annual report on the Riverton School, considered as a district high school. The examination was held on the 8th November when nineteen scholars were examined in one or more of the following subjects, namely, Euclid, algebra, Latin, and French. The annexed table shows the exact nature and amount of the work presented:—

Subject.	Class.	Number of Pupils.	Work presented.
Euclid	I.	1	Euclid, Books I., II., and III.
	II.	3	Euclid, Book I.
	III.	3	Euclid, Book I. to prop. 24.
Algebra	I.	3	Todhunter's Algebra for Beginners, Ch. I.–XXI.
	II.	3	Todhunter's Algebra for Beginners, Ch. I.–XV.
	III.	3	Todhunter's Algebra for Beginners, Ch. I.–X.
Latin ..	I.	2	Cæsar, De Bello Gallico, Book III., Smith's Principia Latina, Part II., pp. 39–49.
	II.	5	Smith's Principia Latina, Part I., Ex. I.–XXVIII.
French ..	I.	3	Voltaire's Charles XII. Book III., Ahn's First and Second French Course.
	II.	8	Ahn's First French Course, Ahn's French Reader, pp. 1–27

Speaking generally, I was much pleased with the results of the examination in these subjects. Most of the papers were marked by accuracy and thoroughness.

In Euclid, Class I. showed a good knowledge of Books II. and III., and Class II. of Book I.; Class III. was successful with the propositions, but was very weak in the definitions.

In algebra, Class I. exhibited proficiency in algebraical fractions and in equations, but was not successful in problems, Class II. was not strong in its subjects; Class III., on the other hand, showed a thorough acquaintance with the elementary rules.

In Latin, Class I. construed Cæsar with reasonable correctness, but was weak in translation into Latin, or even in translation from Latin into English.

In French, Class I. showed proficiency in French grammar and in the translation of English into French, but the rendering of Charles XII. into English was careless and inaccurate, Class II. was nearly perfect in its rendering of English into French, but the translation into English was very inferior; it was also weak in French grammar, particularly in the inflections of the verb.

I have, &c.,

The Secretary, Education Board. JOHN GAMMELL, B.A., Inspector.

[Owing to changes of Inspectors, there are no reports from Taranaki and Wanganui.]

By Authority GEORGE DIDSBURY, Government Printer, Wellington.—1884.