

On the whole the literary results are better than the scientific, although here again the French exercises must be excepted, some of them being little less than a mass of blunders, implying either gross carelessness on the part of the scholars or almost complete ignorance of the idioms of the language. In English the results obtained were 6 per cent. better than last year; but even here there is great room for further improvement, as the average per cent. is only 55, the scholars showing little grasp of the author they are supposed to have studied. Nor do I look for better results in this subject until the scholars are required to commit to memory some of the choice passages of the author studied.

I regret that even the arithmetic and physical geography are greatly inferior to those of last year, especially the physical geography of the senior class, which would scarcely have obtained any marks at all save for the papers sent up by three scholars, good in this as in almost every other subject. Indeed, I should be doing wrong if I did not mention one instance of good arithmetic done by one of these three, a scholarship-holder, F. W. Furkert by name, who has obtained cent. per cent. of marks in the subject.

A fault of a more general character also calls for comment. The papers presented to me by the scholars are some of the most slovenly in penmanship and spelling I have ever had to assess, some of them, indeed, being only legible at all by dint of the closest and most repeated scrutiny. It is not to be tolerated that high-school boys should be allowed to fall into such habits, which are simply the outcome of a false principle, that of preferring speed to excellence both in mechanical and mental work. If the work of these scholars were properly supervised day by day, and all slovenly work returned for correction, the Inspector would never see such papers as these on examination-day. And I will only add in conclusion, in the interests of the scholars themselves, that such slovenly penmanship must be fatal to the prospects of any boys destined for commercial pursuits.

In concluding my report I wish to emphasize this remark: that, whilst speaking in terms of censure of the work presented to me by the Rector's class at this examination, I must not be understood as necessarily blaming the Rector, on whose shoulders rest, from the very position he holds, the two scarcely compatible duties of general superintendence and class-teaching. Nor must I be understood as condemning the whole of the work presented by this class, the senior Euclid being quite satisfactory, as well as both senior and junior Latin.

Finally, in one subject professed by the class, that of book-keeping, I have not attempted any examination, as it is not a subject which lends itself readily to a short examination. Also, the number of scholars on the roll of the class for the present quarter is fifteen, of whom one was absent and one excepted.

I have, &c.,

JOHN GAMMELL, B.A., Inspector.

NORTH CANTERBURY.

SIR,—

Christchurch, 30th March, 1893.

I have the honour to present a report of the proceedings of the Education Board of the District of North Canterbury for the year ending 31st December, 1892.

THE BOARD.—The three members who retired at the end of March, 1892, were Mr. Joyce, Mr. Saunders, and Mr. Parker Westenra, of whom Mr. P. Westenra did not stand for re-election. At an election held on the 10th March, Mr. Richard Westenra, Mr. Saunders, and Mr. Joyce were returned. Early in May an extraordinary vacancy occurred through the resignation of Mr. T. S. Weston. Mr. Weston had been one of the most active members of the Board, had served on nearly all the important Committees, and for the year previous to his retirement was Chairman. The Board passed a resolution expressing its regret at his resignation, and its appreciation of the valuable services he had rendered to the cause of education in this district. On the 2nd June Mr. Thomas William Adams was elected to fill the vacancy. At a meeting held on the 31st March, Mr. Anson was elected Chairman for the ensuing year; Mr. Peryman, Mr. Westenra, Mr. Wright, and Mr. Joyce were elected members of the Buildings Committee; and Mr. Montgomery, Mr. Saunders, Mr. Meredith, and Mr. Joyce of the Appointments Committee. From the 14th July to the 20th October, during the absence of four members who were called away to Wellington by their parliamentary duties, the Board met every fortnight, and, in addition to its ordinary business, performed the work usually undertaken by the Appointments Committee; but, upon the return of the four members at the close of the session, the three-weekly meetings of the Board and the weekly meetings of the Appointments Committee were resumed. During the year the Board held twenty ordinary and seven special meetings. The Buildings Committee met twenty times, and the Appointments Committee thirty-one times.

BUILDINGS.—During the year 1892 new schools were built at Ealing, Eiffelton, and Riverside (these three had been authorised in the previous year), at Rokeby, and at Upper Ashburton Forks. Additions were made to the buildings at Christchurch West, Darfield, Doyleston, Eyreton West, Gough's Bay (aided), Rakaiia, Rangiora, Southbridge, and Woodside; and additions to the sites at Amberley and Ferry Road. Considerable repairs or improvements were made at Greenstreet, Burwood, Chertsey, Courtenay, Ferry Road, Flaxton, German Bay, Hinds, Malvern, Okain's Bay, Port Levy, Prebbleton, Richmond, Weedon, Yaldhurst, and the Normal School. The total expenditure on buildings was £7,616 10s. 6d. The Board has been in a position of much embarrassment through the insufficiency of the funds at its disposal for building purposes. The amount allotted (£4,590) proved quite insufficient; and, after exhausting all means that could be made available, the Board was still obliged to leave unsupplied the urgent wants of some of the suburban districts, referred to in its last report, as well as new schools or additions and teachers' houses required in the country. The Board earnestly hopes that in the ensuing year the Government will see their way to make such provision for school-buildings as will enable it to do justice to the requirements of the district.