

Inspection is fast becoming a very heavy tax upon our time and energies. This is due partly to the gradual increase in the number of schools, but chiefly to the out-of-the-way position of the majority of those lately established. Thus, there are now several schools in the district, all with roll-numbers of under twenty, some with roll-numbers of under ten pupils, which are so situated that it is difficult to reach and inspect them in one day; while a second day is consumed in merely riding back to some starting-point for a similar excursion on the third day. Last autumn, to inspect a school of six pupils necessitated a ride of five hours, and fording a river over twenty times; while in another case, to get from a school of sixteen pupils to a starting-point for the morrow's school, an Inspector was riding from 2 o'clock to 10 p.m., and some of the road was more suitable for a goat than a horse. We confess that, when we were much pressed for time, and when the weather was bad, we felt inclined to let some of the aided schools go without inspection. However, not only did we not yield to the temptation—for all schools open during the inspection season, whether small or large, were duly inspected—but, of the three schools to which we managed to pay a second inspection visit during the first six months of the year, two had under twenty pupils on their rolls. Certainly, the length of time required for these trips seemed to us, before starting, out of all proportion to the numbers of pupils inspected; but on our return we invariably felt glad that we had made the trips, for, though everything in connection with the buildings and the furniture was, as a rule, heart-breaking, the help that we were able to give the lonely, struggling teachers was a pleasure and sufficient compensation. And here we may say that the teachers of these schools deserve all the sympathy and encouragement that can be given to them. Cut off from all intercourse with their fellow-teachers, they labour from Monday to Friday for a poor wage, frequently in a wretched room, and sometimes with poor appliances; and, when Saturday comes, there is no friend with whom to exchange a thought, and no amusement of any sort.

EXAMINATION OF SCHOOLS.—The following table summarises the examination results for each standard, and for all standards, in the district. Another table, which gives every information with regard to individual schools, has not been printed on account of its great size, but it may be seen at the Board's office:—

Number of Schools examined in each Standard.	Classes.	Presented.	Present.	Failed.	Passed.	Average Age of those that passed.
						Yrs. mos.
...	Above Standard VI.	55
69	Standard VI. ...	301	290	93	197	14 2
83	" V. ...	630	578	216	362	13 8
95	" IV. ...	1,057	983	286	697	12 9
101	" III. ...	1,483	1,387	365	1,022	11 10
99	" II. ...	1,495	1,433	161	1,272	10 5
102	" I. ...	1,415	1,339	144	1,195	9 4
...	Preparatory ...	3,067
Examined in one Standard or more—106.	Totals ...	9,503	6,010	1,265	4,745	Mean—12 years.

All the schools open for twelve months, viz., 106—that is ten more than in 1894—were duly examined in standards. This number includes Upper Pohangina and Pemberton, which were closed before the end of the year. The twelve schools not examined were opened as follows: Waipuru, Paiaka, Riverton, and Poukiore during the first quarter of the year; Rangiwahia and West Waitapu during the second quarter; Tiritea during the third quarter; and Waitohi, Kawatau, Mangahoe, Parapara, and Awahou during the fourth quarter. Those opened during the first quarter will be examined next March.

On the days appointed for the examination in standards there were 9,503 pupils (4,947 boys and 4,556 girls) on the rolls of the schools examined. Of these, 6,381, or 67·1 per cent., were presented in the six standards, 3,067 were in the preparatory classes, and 55 had already passed Standard VI. We find this year increases of 505 on the number on the rolls, and 530 on the number presented in standards. Every standard shows a substantial increase, and for the first time in the history of the district the number of pupils in Standard IV. has reached one thousand (1,057).

Of the 6,381 pupils presented in the six standards, 6,010, or 94·2 per cent., attended and were examined; 371 were absent; 1,265 failed; and 4,745 passed the requirements and were promoted. Of the pupils absent, several had already passed a standard during the year, but, owing to change of residence, they found themselves at a second school during the course of the standard examinations; while not a few of those that failed were children in a similar position, but who elected to try to pass the second examination, though they had received only a few months' tuition since they had already passed one standard.

Percentages of passes are not now calculated for individual schools, but it is well to see how the district as a whole has fared in this respect. The proportion of passes to pupils examined for passes was as 78·9 to 100; that is, of the 6,010 pupils examined, 21·1 per cent. failed to qualify for a higher standard. Now, such a result must, on the whole, be considered satisfactory when it is remembered that all pupils must be presented in a higher standard than that already passed—no matter how irregular their attendance, no matter how physically and mentally weak they may be, and no matter how recently they may have passed their last standards. As for ourselves, when we remember such drawbacks as these to high percentages, and when we think of the large number of small bush schools opened in the past few years, we are of opinion that there is little to complain