

blackboards should be ready (with work set down where necessary), slates should be clean, pens and pencils should be given out, &c.

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 Class.	Classes.	Presented.	Examined in Standards.	Failed.	Passed.	Average Age of those that passed.
						Yrs. mos.
40	Above Standard VI.	80
80	Standard VI. ...	358	347	125	222	14 5
89	" V. ...	699	671	241	430	13 7
108	" IV. ...	1,175	1,104	390	714	12 10
108	" III. ...	1,528	1,449	360	1,089	11 8
110	" II. ...	1,402	1,339	140	1,199	10 6
112	" I. ...	1,388	1,329	110	1,219	9 3
112	Preparatory ...	3,156
	Totals ...	9,786	6,239	1,366	4,873	Mean—12 years.

All the schools open for the full twelve months—viz., 114, or eight more than in 1895—were duly examined in standards, with the exception of Parapara, which can be taken only in the beginning of the year, and so will be examined next March. Kapuni was closed for a considerable time on account of an epidemic just as the examination was due; and Mangahoe also was closed through the road being washed away, and, furthermore, it had been open for only some eight months when the schools in its neighbourhood were being examined. We hope to examine Kapuni in May, and Mangahoe next March.

On the days appointed for the examination in standards there were 9,786 pupils (5,050 boys and 4,736 girls) on the school-rolls. Of these, 6,550 were presented in the six standards, 3,156 were in the preparatory classes, and 80 had already passed Standard VI.—that is, were in the class above Standard VI., or what is generally known as Standard VII. In passing, we may say here that teachers are given to stating that their pupils have passed Standard VII., whereas there is not even a syllabus for that class. We find this year increases of 283 on the number on the rolls, and 169 on the number presented in standards. These increases are much below those of late years. The number of pupils presented in standards (omitting those in the class above Standard VI.) expressed as a percentage on the number on the rolls is 66·9, and this is 0·2 lower than in 1895. We confess that we should like to see this percentage increase rather than diminish, for, under existing circumstances, it hardly seems creditable that nearly one-third of the pupils enrolled should not be deemed fit for presentation in a standard. Of the 3,156 children in the preparatory classes, 659 were over eight years of age. Of these 659, 441 had been under two years at school, 54 were Maoris, and "Irregular attendance" and "Dulness" accounted for the balance on the excuse-sheet. We would again point out that parents make a great mistake when they consider that it is of no consequence whether or not they send the "infants" regularly to school. Standard classes cannot well be good unless a sound foundation is laid in the primer classes. In the standard classes Standards VI., V., IV., and III. show increases in the numbers presented, and Standards II. and I. decreases of 93 and 27 respectively.

Of the 6,550 pupils presented in the six standards, 6,239, or 95·2 per cent., attended and were examined; 311 were absent; 1,366 failed; and 4,873 passed the requirements and were promoted. In several school districts on this coast the population is constantly shifting, so that many of the absentees were accounted for by the fact that they had already passed a standard during the year at some other school. Some of the failures are accounted for in the same way. Castlecliff is a good example of this shifting population.

Although percentages of passes are not now calculated for individual schools, it will be interesting to see how in this respect the district as a whole comes out, and how the various standards compare with one another. Of the 6,239 pupils examined in the six standards, 78·1 per cent. succeeded in passing. The percentages in the various standards are as follows: Standard I., 91·7; Standard II., 89·5; Standard III., 76·5; Standard IV., 64·6; Standard V., 64·0; Standard VI., 63·9. It will be noticed that there is a gradual decrease from Standard I. to Standard VI. Comparing these results with those for 1895, we find that Standards IV. and VI. show decreases of 6·3 per cent. and 4 per cent. respectively, while all the other standards show improvement.

Instruction.—Little new can be written under this heading with regard to the treatment of the various subjects. We think that fair average progress is being made at the majority of schools where circumstances are favourable, and we are glad to be able to state that many of the small schools are producing quite as good work as those with several teachers. The young teachers who have recently completed their pupil-teacher course and obtained their Government certificates, and who are now in sole charge of schools, are doing particularly well; and this, besides being especially gratifying from any point of view, speaks well for our pupil-teacher system.

There is no doubt that reading has considerably improved during the past few years, and that the percentage of passes on the number examined is fairly high. But, under present circumstances, what does a pass in reading mean? It means merely this: that pupils can read with fair accuracy