

be taught in continuation classes for children who are on the point of leaving school. Such instruction is an essential part of everybody's education, and it will only be well given to large numbers under public systematic management.

We have, &c.,

The Chairman, Wellington Education Board.

ROBERT LEE,
T. R. FLEMING, } Inspectors.

SUMMARY OF RESULTS FOR THE WHOLE DISTRICT.

| Standard Classes. | Presented. | Examined in Standards. | Passed. | Average Age of those that passed. |
|---------------------------|------------|------------------------------|---------|---|
| | | | | Yrs. mos. |
| Above Standard VI. | 349 | ... | ... | ... |
| Standard VI. | 819 | 807 | 568 | 13 10 |
| " V. | 1,294 | 1,266 | 942 | 12 11 |
| " IV. | 1,730 | 1,675 | 1,338 | 12 0 |
| " III. | 1,918 | 1,856 | 1,533 | 11 0 |
| " II. | 1,748 | 1,717 | 1,581 | 9 11 |
| " I. | 1,694 | 1,656 | 1,597 | 8 9 |
| Preparatory | 4,086 | ... | ... | ... |
| Totals | 13,638 | 8,977 | 7,559 | 11 4* |

HAWKE'S BAY.

SIR,—

Education Office, Napier, 31st January, 1897.

I have the honour to submit my annual general report on the schools subject to inspection in this district for the year ending the 31st December, 1896.

Sixty-two schools were in active operation at the close of the year, and all of them, with a single exception, were duly visited and examined. In addition to these, and with the sanction of the Board, which was given on the application of the parties concerned, I examined the Meanee and Gisborne Catholic Schools. These schools are conducted as parish schools in the places named, and they are staffed by nuns who reside in buildings attached to the schools.

The number of schools which are under the direct control of the Board has increased by five during the year, a school at Motu (sixty miles north-west of Gisborne), one at Mangatu (thirty miles in the same direction), one at Puketitiri (forty miles west of Napier), one at Umutaoroa (a few miles north-west of Dannevirke), and one at Portland Island (south of the Mahia Peninsula) having been opened to provide for the growing requirements of the district. I was unable to reach Portland Island from the mainland, although I spent three days in the attempt; and it appears to me that, unless better arrangements can be made for getting there, it will be useless making the attempt again by means of the frail Maori canoe, which is only used fortnightly by a Native who carries the mail to and from the island. There are boats on the island, and there are three lighthouse-keepers, but some rule of the Marine Department prohibits the use of a boat to the mainland, and so communication is nigh to impossible, unless some concession can be made by the proper authorities.

Attendance.—The returns of school attendance give a percentage of 83·3 of regularity, compared with 81·5 for the previous year. I notice that several of the education districts show a better result than this, but it is difficult to compare one district with another, and even one school with another, in the matter of regularity at school, for the reason that the same general plan is not adopted in the case of absentees. Sometimes children are away from school for weeks suffering from sickness, or they are temporarily employed at work of some kind, and their names are continued on the roll, with the result that a low average regularity may exist for the school, although the children who are actually going to school may have attended well. Thus two schools, each with a roll of a hundred pupils, may have a widely different average, although the regularity of those actually attending school for the same weekly period may show similar attendances. Percentages are only valuable when the same basis for an estimate is possible, and for this reason I should very much like to see a change made in keeping the school-roll, so that no doubt could exist as to the regularity of children in every district irrespective of weekly absentees. During the year I have kept a separate record showing the percentage of regularity for every school in the district. The facts were taken from the summary register in each school, and the wide differences shown in the separate districts convince me that much depends on the interpretation which teachers put upon the word "left."

Inspection.—The leave of absence which the Board so kindly granted me to visit Australia caused me to be somewhat late in beginning my work of inspection in the first half of the school-year, but the unusually fine weather assisted me to overtake the work in time for the preparation of papers for the pupil-teachers' examination in July. The visits of inspection I always look upon as of great value. A quiet visit to observe methods of instruction, and to note the working machinery of the school in its every-day dress, provides one with all that is needful to estimate what

* Mean of average age.