

3,439; passed, 2,959; average age, 11 years 5 months. More schools have done well in arithmetic than in any other of the pass-subjects, and in very few were the results unsatisfactory." In our own district this year the general pass results in arithmetic are no higher than those of 1895, though the Third and Fourth Standards have made a decided improvement each year; but the Sixth did as badly as ever. The uneven nature of the cards, which was especially noticeable in Standard VI., is a constant cause of complaint, although in the setting of so many examples this must be to some extent unavoidable. In our opinion, too, the problems in the more difficult sets were often too complicated in character. The tests for Standard III. were, in proportion, too simple and much easier than the corresponding cards set in 1894. A numerical statement is given below, showing the number of failures in arithmetic as a percentage of the number present in each standard:—

			Standard VI. Per Cent.	Standard V. Per Cent.	Standard IV. Per Cent.	Standard III. Per Cent.
1894 ...	...	...	69	61	55	39
1895 ...	...	...	51	57	40	29
1896 ...	...	...	69	56	37	26

Our higher standard arithmetic is yet far from being in a satisfactory state, the total number of failures in this subject being still out of all proportion to those in other subjects.

Reading.—The practice of preparing for reading or spelling two reading-books in each standard, though general, has not yet become universal. In last year's report we gave notice of our intention to insist upon this course in the three lower standards, but, as many of the schools were more than half-way through their year's work before the publication of the report, these had some difficulty, owing to shortness of notice, in satisfying the increased demand. We take this opportunity of reminding teachers that no such excuse will avail next year. The spelling this year shows a large increase of failures, partly owing to the additional requirements, and, as we have frequently pointed out, to the neglect of wider preparation in the lower standards. The children in most of our schools read with fluency and expression from the books they have prepared, and for general excellence in this subject we can especially commend the Toi Toi Valley girls.

Writing is usually a very satisfactory subject, but many have disregarded the notes which we penned last year calling attention to the neglect of letter-junctions, the directions for which are to be found on the inside of the covers of Jackson's books.

The teaching of *drawing* is slowly improving, and a wider interest is being taken in the examinations conducted by the Wellington Technical School. Westport Boys' and Richmond Boys' Schools sent up candidates for the first-grade examination, and pupils from the Toi Toi Valley, Nelson Central, and Westport Boys' Schools obtained second-grade certificates for freehand drawing, several from the last-named school also passing in model drawing.

With regard to the remaining subjects of the syllabus, we have the pleasure to be able to note a substantial improvement in *geography* and *recitation*. *Grammar* is still a weak subject, although some improvement is observable this year. Analysis of sentences is very poorly done. We frequently have papers presented in which a highly-elaborate scheme of analysis is set out, the result evidently of laborious effort on the part of both teacher and scholar, and yet the various members of the sentence are distributed in a manner that shows an utter disregard for its obvious meaning. The requirements of the examinations would be met by the use of a much simpler form, showing clearly the subject, predicate, and object, each grouped with its enlargements and extensions, and the children should be led to test their own work and to be able to give a reason for every step of the process. The last remark applies in an equal degree to their parsing exercises.

We have still to complain of the meagreness in many instances of the programme of *object-lessons* presented, and propose to remedy this defect by the issue of a more comprehensive list to be prepared for the next examination, from which list will be taken the subjects of composition for the Third Standard class.

In many of our larger schools, especially those in Nelson City, Westport, Brightwater, and Reefton, the pupils go through an extended course of physical and military training. In the interests of the children we regret that the practice is not general. Some teachers, who have lately shown fresh interest in the matter, have complained of the difficulty of procuring suitable books. Copies of "Infantry Drill, 1896," are now to hand, and the first part of the new issue will be found especially suited to school use, as a much larger proportion than usual of the book is devoted to physical training.

Our remarks under the heads of "Order" and "Discipline and Manners" show that we are thoroughly satisfied with the way in which the majority of our schools are conducted. Our teachers, too, in spite of many disadvantages, are, as a rule, willing, earnest, and zealous, their faults, of which we have not been slow to complain, being due rather to the want of scholarship and training than to negligence. We believe the *personnel* of the service is improving, and that the district, as a whole, has made no retrogression this year, while improvements in certain directions, though slight, makes us more hopeful of the future.

We have, &c.,

G. A. HARKNESS, M.A.,
W. LADLEY, } Inspectors.

The Chairman, Education Board, Nelson.

GREY.

GENTLEMEN,—

3rd February, 1897.

I have the honour to lay before you my annual report on the Grey public schools for the year ending the 31st December, 1896.

There were at the end of the year twenty-eight schools at work under the Board, being three in excess of the number for last year. The three new schools are placed at Nobles, Upper Moon-