

light, and Te Kinga. The first two places are isolated districts, being five miles from the nearest school, and, with regard to the latter place, the only means of communication between it and the nearest school (Moana) is by the railway-line, at all times dangerous for children, and in this instance particularly so on account of the bridge, upon which there are only two planks to walk on. In each place the action of the Board in providing for the education of their children is highly appreciated by the parents. At the same time I must point out that the erection and maintenance of so many small schools in the district is a very serious item in the expenditure, and will, I am afraid, eventually cause considerable financial trouble.

During the year inspection visits were paid to all the schools, and reports furnished as usual; these reports were laid before you during August last, and included reports on buildings, necessary repairs to buildings, fences, &c., suggestions for future improvements, and list of necessary school requisites, &c. By direction of the Board I prepared new regulations. These were adopted by the Board, and are now in force. The registers throughout the district are now correctly and neatly kept.

**HEALTH OF TEACHERS AND THE TAUGHT.**—The health of the teachers has again been very good. In no case was a school closed on account of sickness on the part of the teacher, and in only one instance was it found necessary to grant a teacher sick-leave, and this only for a very short term. My recommendation on this subject, contained in last year's report, was adopted by one teacher, and so beneficial did it prove that several others contemplate a similar step. With regard to the pupils, no serious epidemic visited the district during the year; their neat, clean, and healthy appearance at the time of examination was very gratifying.

**SCHOOL ATTENDANCE.**—I am sorry I cannot record any great improvement under this heading. The Act dealing with this subject has, at least in this district, proved an utter failure. Surely parents do not realise, or, realising, do not appreciate, the enormous advantage to be derived from a sound education, of which they are depriving their children; let them pause a moment and consider a few of the effects of irregular attendance. First, as it affects themselves and their children. There is always a spirit of emulation amongst the pupils; the irregular attendant gets gradually but surely behind his fellows; the spirit of emulation as gradually but surely dies. He now no longer cares whether he goes to school or whether he stays away, and the end is failure and disappointment. Then the thoughtless parent casts round for some one on whom he may throw the blame, usually this descends on the teacher—in fact, so much so sometimes as to imperil his position—who has probably been caused more trouble and annoyance by this particular child than by the remaining portion of his class or school, as the case may be, and who has, no doubt, used all his influence with both child and parent to obtain more regular attendance. Next, as it affects the teacher. Parents are no doubt aware that the salary of the teacher mainly depends on the average attendance. It is their duty, therefore, if they are at all grateful for the time and trouble bestowed on the education of their children, to give the teacher their entire support with reference to regular attendance. Lastly, as it affects the Board. The Board's income for all educational purposes, with the exception of buildings and the maintenance of the same, is derived from Government, and depends directly on the average attendance. Parents will see from the above what an all-important question regular attendance is, and how they may assist the Board or otherwise in providing for the education of their little ones.

**THE ANNUAL EXAMINATION.**—All the schools under the Board were examined, and the results compared favourably with those obtained last year. The syllabus for pass-subjects, with the exception of model drawing, is now fully complied with throughout the district. The work, which was of a more uniform character, was usually neatly done and well arranged. The following table gives a summary of results for this year, and also for 1895:—

Year.	Presented for Examination.*	Presented in Standards.	Present.	Passed.
1895 ... ..	1,684	1,066	1,007	829
1896 ... ..	1,650	1,068	1,040	862

Comparing the above, it will be seen there is a falling-off of thirty-four pupils for the year. The percentage of passes is 82·8 for 1896, as against 82·3 for 1895. The total number of children in the class above Standard VI. is 35, and the total number of infants of over eight years of age not presented for Standard I. is 133. This is a considerable reduction for the year, and I hope to see it further reduced in the future.

The following table gives a summary of results for each class:—

Classes.	Presented.	Examined in Standards.	Passed.	Average Age of those that passed.
Above Standard VI. ... ..	35	...	...	Yrs. mos.
Standard VI. ... ..	105	101	75	14 6
" V. ... ..	150	145	98	13 3
" IV. ... ..	189	185	131	12 6
" III. ... ..	214	205	171	11 3
" II. ... ..	202	198	189	10 1
" I. ... ..	208	206	198	9 1
Preparatory ... ..	547	...	...	...
Totals ... ..	1,650†	1,040	862	11 9½‡

\* Including infants and class above Standard VI. pupils.

‡ Mean of average age.

† This does not include twenty-one District High School