

to the pupils promoted. Writing has not, in general, reached the standard of previous years, and too frequently it was necessary to draw attention to copy-books and exercise-books carelessly written and insufficiently corrected. The instruction in this subject is, however, very satisfactory in the largest schools. In geography, as in arithmetic, want of success is owing largely to a mistaken estimate of the function of a text-book. The preparation of this subject is very imperfect when not including oral teaching and the frequent use of the necessary maps. In all the work of a school, whether in pass or extra subjects, it cannot too often be insisted that the course of treatment should essentially consist of careful lessons and abundant practice, with frequent recapitulation and special tests. If such a routine were common, teachers would not so often need to express surprise at the failure of pupils when attempting to answer simple questions on the day of examination.

The following statement relating to the class-subjects gives the number of schools obtaining the various verbal awards from "Weak" to "Very good." (Two schools with only junior classes are omitted):—

Class-subjects.						
Subject.		Weak or not taught.	Fair.	Satisfactory.	Good.	Very Good.
Grammar ... ..	...	2	16	11	2	1
History ... ..	...	9	7	6	9	1
Elementary science ... ..	...	8	7	5	11	1
Object-lessons ... ..	...	5	8	11	7	1
Mental arithmetic ... ..	...	10	10	7	4	1

It will be seen that only in elementary science and object-lessons do 50 per cent. of the thirty-two schools reach the award "Satisfactory," and in these a large number are unsatisfactory. In grammar and mental arithmetic the results are good in only three and five schools respectively. Through the neglect of these subjects the pupils lose both in mental training and in the assistance their preparation affords in the study of several of the pass-subjects.

In connection with a similar statement relating to the additional subjects, it should be explained that in a number of schools the elimination of drill, singing, and needlework from the course of instruction is owing to smallness of the number or a lack of the requisite knowledge on the part of the teachers. It must be admitted, however, that there are schools where this omission has no excuse. There is especially a disappointing absence of physical training in the form of drill and other exercises. In the larger schools gymnastic apparatus was recently supplied by the Board, but apparently little advantage has been taken of the opportunity thus provided.

Additional Subjects.						
Subject.		Weak or not taught.	Fair.	Satisfactory.	Good.	Very Good.
Recitation ... ..	...	...	1	11	17	4
Drill ... ..	...	27	...	3	1	1
Singing ... ..	...	26	...	1	1	4
Needlework ... ..	...	13	1	4	11	3
Comprehension of reading-matter	...	3	11	11	6	1

The general conditions under which the teachers have worked during the year 1896 have improved in comparison with those of the years immediately preceding. A number of school-buildings have been rendered more cheerful by the painting of the interiors; a sufficiency of material for aids to teaching had, in the previous year, been supplied in the form of extra reading-books, maps, diagrams, and other school furniture, while the absence of epidemics of sickness has allowed the average attendance of the district to reach a high figure. In some cases progress has been checked by special causes, but, if during 1897 good conditions still obtain, some advance in the educational status of the weaker schools may reasonably be expected.

I have, &c.,
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The Chairman, Westland Education Board.

SUMMARY OF RESULTS FOR THE WHOLE DISTRICT.

Classes.	Total presented.	Presented in Standards.	Examined in Standards.	Passed.	Average Age of those that passed.	Average Age of passing for New Zealand in 1895.
					Yrs. mos.	Yrs. mos.
Secondary classes ...	31	...	...	...	...	...
Above Standard VI. ...	34	...	...	...	...	...
Standard VI. ...	105	105	104	92	14 2	14 1
" V. ...	166	166	159	131	13 3	13 3
" IV. ...	197	197	188	155	12 5	12 3
" III. ...	201	201	198	170	11 1	11 2
" II. ...	160	160	157	148	10 0	10 0
" I. ...	193	193	190	175	9 2	8 11
Preparatory ...	470	...	...	...	...	...
Totals ...	1,557	1,022	996	871	11 8*	11 7*

* Mean of average age.