

successful in passing their examinations. In January, 1897, another examination was held, at which eleven Thames students sat for the first-class mining manager's papers and five for those of battery superintendents, but the results have not yet been made known.

A feature of the Thames School is the practical nature of the instruction. The mines being in close proximity to the school afford exceptional opportunities for observing and illustrating the modes of development of mines and the different kinds and modes of occurrence of ore-deposits. An examination is made every week of one of the mines or of the surrounding country, and besides this practical work in mining and geology there is a class for field-work in surveying both above and under ground. Moreover, as the school plant is constantly treating varied and complex ores from all parts of the field, students have regular practical work in assaying and metallurgy, and are enabled in a short time to obtain as much general information concerning ore treatment as they could obtain in a much longer time by actual work in a battery where usually only one process is in operation and only one class of ore treated at a time.

#### DISTRIBUTION OF PRIZES AND CERTIFICATES.

The annual distribution of prizes and certificates was performed in the school-building on the 9th February, 1897, by the President, Mr. J. McGowan, M.H.R., a large number of students being present.

#### GOVERNING BODY.

At the annual general meeting the following officers and members of the Council were elected for the ensuing year: President, Mr. J. McGowan, M.H.R.; Vice-President, Mr. T. A. Dunlop; members, Messrs. G. S. Clark, J. H. Smith, E. F. Adams, W. Burch, L. Melhose, M. Paul, G. Denby, P. C. Hansen; Treasurer, Mr. J. Hague Smith; Secretary, Mr. A. Bruce.

#### REEFTON SCHOOL.

The falling-off in the number attending the school, due to the depression that prevailed for some years past, has not continued during the present year, the number of individuals having increased from twenty-five to thirty-three, and the work in the school in the matter of assaying and analysis is also greater, 973 assays and analyses being performed, as against 229 for the previous year. The Boatman's class, which was commenced with eleven members, was not successful, as the attendance fell off to five members, and it was then discontinued. The classes at Brunnerton and at Denniston were not visited by the Director during the year. The following is Mr. Aitken's report on the progress made at the Reefton School during the year:—

I have the honour to report on the work and progress of the Reefton School of Mines during the past year ending 31st March, 1897, which I am pleased to say has been very successful, and a great improvement on that of the previous year. The classes were attended more regularly by the students, and the number of individuals attending increased from twenty-five to thirty-three. The membership to each class and the average attendance also show an improvement on that of the previous year. I am quite sure that as the district goes ahead the numbers attending the classes will increase; and when the committee are able to furnish the school with better appliances and stock it will induce many more to attend.

Up to the end of 1896 no less than twenty-four students from this school have successfully passed the Government examinations for first-class mine managers, sixteen under the Mining Act and eight under the Coal-mines Act; besides these, a great many have been successfully prepared for the engine-drivers' and other examinations.

In the laboratory we have been exceptionally busy, and, with our limited stock of chemicals and appliances, have been almost unable to overtake the work. During the past year we have performed 973 assays and analyses, as against 229 for the previous year, showing the large increase of 744. In the performance of this work I have to thank two of the students—Mr. J. Sutherland, who has lately received a position under the New Zealand Consolidated Company, and Mr. T. O. Bishop, now attending the Otago University and School of Mines—for their able and willing assistance. In the early part of the year the laboratory was also being used by the assayer for the Consolidated Goldfields of New Zealand, when over 220 fire-assays were made in addition to those made for the school.

The classes and laboratory work in connection with the Reefton School have given me so much work that I have had but little time to attend to the outside schools. Brunnerton and Denniston were therefore not visited during the year; and the class at Boatman's had to be discontinued early, owing to the small average attendance.

The following tabulated statement will show the attendance at the classes during the past year:—

Subject.	Members.	Average Attendance.
Mining and mathematics...	18	12
Surveying ...	18	12
Assaying and metallurgy...	20	14
Theoretical chemistry ...	12	8
Practical chemistry ...	12	8
Boatman's class...	11	5

The total number of individuals attending classes would be thirty-three.

In the surveying class very little practical work could be done, as the school is without the necessary instruments. The practical work in the assaying, metallurgy, and chemistry classes was carried on under difficulties, owing to the poor appliances and insufficient supply of chemicals. The instruction given at the classes has been very much the same as that given in previous years.