

II.—PASS-SUBJECTS : NUMBERS REDUCED TO PERCENTAGES.

Classes.		School-roll.	Class-roll.		Passed, 1897.		Passed, 1896.	
		Presented.	Present.	Did not pass.	School-roll.	Class-roll.	School-roll.	Class-roll.
Above Standard VI.	...	1.4	67.8	...	...	...	...	...
Standard VI.	...	6.8	96.9	15.6	5.5	81.3	5.5	80.2
" V.	...	10.5	95.2	24.0	7.5	71.2	7.4	71.3
" IV.	...	14.3	95.8	25.2	10.1	70.6	9.8	71.5
" III.	...	15.0	96.7	18.9	11.7	77.8	11.7	77.2
" II.	...	12.5	97.6	6.8	11.4	90.8	11.9	90.9
" I.	...	11.4	97.7	2.1	10.9	95.6	11.1	93.3
Preparatory	...	28.0	89.5	...	...	...	...	...
On totals	...	100.0	96.6	15.8	57.1	80.9	57.3	80.8

SOUTH CANTERBURY.

SIR,—

Education Office, Timaru, 25th February, 1898.

I have the honour to present my report on the schools in this district for the year 1897.

No new schools have been opened for two years past ; but towards the close of the year the Board had requisitions from householders for the establishment of three new schools, and the claims in each instance having been favourably reported on, there is a prospect of three schools being opened during the current year. In addition to the sixty-five schools already in operation, I have examined the five Roman Catholic schools, which have a total attendance of 731 scholars. The Roman Catholic schools were examined in May instead of in July as formerly, and the curtailing of the school year by two months must be taken into account in judging the results of the work as set forth in the appendix. The work of examining the public schools was begun about a month earlier than heretofore, and most of the schools lost a few weeks' preparation on this account. As timely warning was given of the change of date, the detriment to the work was of no great moment ; but, as might be expected, the shortening of the school year was made the most of by the few teachers that had to find an excuse for inferior work.

Visits of inspection were paid to the Roman Catholic schools, and to as many of our own schools as I could find time for. I regret that the pressure of work compels me to forego the privilege and advantage of paying an inspection visit to every school. During a visit of this kind one gains an insight into the management and methods of the teachers that supplements the knowledge of these matters gained on the day of examination ; and there is more time for friendly suggestion and help to the teacher than when one's ingenuity and strength are taxed to the full to bring within a reasonable school-day the work of examining the scholars in all the subjects of our extensive syllabus.

I have reported on the higher work of the District High Schools of Waimate and Temuka. The work was entirely satisfactory at Waimate, and creditable at Temuka. Thanks to the interest taken in the Waimate school by the High School Board of Governors there, which has found expression among other ways in generous encouragement of deserving scholars by a scheme of scholarships and exhibitions, and in a grant towards the salary of an extra master, the number of scholars obtaining the advantages of a high-school training is now very large ; and it must be remembered that, with two or three exceptions, these scholars could not otherwise have attended any high school, for this would have involved the expense of higher fees and of living away from home, too costly an undertaking for the parents of those that form the bulk of the attendants at the higher classes of a district high school.

The following table shows the examination results of the Board's schools for the whole district :—

Classes.				Presented.	Examined in Standards.	Passed.	Average Age of those that passed.
							Yrs. mos.
Above Standard VI.	...	...	...	109	...	...	...
Standard VI.	...	...	...	334	324	272	13 8
" V.	...	...	...	520	499	396	12 11
" IV.	...	...	...	759	741	532	12 0
" III.	...	...	...	745	727	608	10 10
" II.	...	...	...	705	695	673	9 7
" I.	...	...	...	592	582	574	8 6
Preparatory	...	...	...	1,475	...	...	...
Totals for 1897	...	...	...	5,239	3,568	3,055	11 3*
Totals for 1896	...	...	...	5,291	3,570	3,043	11 5*

* Mean of average age.