

One important matter often struck us on our visits to small schools with two on the staff: the principal teacher confined his attention to Standards III. to VI., while the pupil-teacher was kept exclusively with the Preparatory Class, Standard I., and Standard II., and left pretty well to herself. Indeed sometimes we were informed, when complaining of the backwardness of the lower classes, that "the pupil-teacher was responsible for them." Now, this kind of principal teacher evidently thinks that he has done his duty if he has taught what he calls "my own classes," being apparently unmindful of the fact that every class is his, and that it is as necessary for him to give his pupil-teacher opportunities of teaching the higher classes as it is for himself to teach the lower. Again, a principal teacher with one pupil-teacher in the same room should not "lose himself" in his own particular lessons, but should be all eyes and ears for any irregularity in any class in the room: hence the lower classes should always be seated to the left of the teacher as he faces the pupils.

Collective, indiscriminate answering is still too much in vogue at some schools. As a means of testing the effectiveness of the instruction, it is nearly if not quite useless, while it is certainly very misleading in its results, for one or two smart pupils supply the answer, at the first suggestion of which the rest of the class join in.

At several schools we were much pleased with the excellent manner in which the "top pupils" of classes carried out their monitorial duties.

*Examination of Schools.*—The following table summarises the examination results for each standard, and for all standards, in the district, and also shows the average ages of those that passed:—

Classes.	Presented.	Examined in Standards.	Absent.	Failed	Passed	Per Cent. of Passes on		Average Age of those that passed.
						Number presented.	Number examined.	
Above Standard VI.	...	154	...	...	...	...	...	Yrs. mos.
Standard VI.	...	506	487	19	164	323	65·8	66·3
" V.	...	997	951	46	314	637	63·9	66·9
" IV.	...	1,335	1,259	76	300	959	71·8	76·2
" III.	...	1,434	1,380	54	285	1,095	76·4	79·3
" II.	...	1,409	1,356	53	76	1,280	90·8	94·4
" I.	...	1,360	1,316	44	77	1,239	91·1	94·1
Preparatory	...	3,135	...	...	...	...	...	...
Totals	...	10,330	6,749	292	1,216	5,533	78·6	81·9
								(Mean.)

All the schools open for the full twelve months, with the exception of the two half-time schools, Marohema and Kaimoko, in the Ngamatapouri Block, were examined in standards in the usual course. These half-time schools will be visited early this year. The total number of schools examined was 129, or four more than in 1898.

On the days appointed for examination in standards there were 10,330 pupils (5,339 boys and 4,991 girls) on the rolls. Of these, 7,041, or 68·2 per cent., were in Standards I. to VI.; 3,135, or 30·3 per cent., were in the preparatory classes below Standard I.; and 154, or 1·5 per cent., had already passed Standard VI. The total number presented in the six standards is 138 higher than in 1898. Standards VI., V., and II. show increases of 34, 174, and 56 respectively; and Standards IV., III., and I. decreases of 35, 75, and 6 pupils respectively. The class above Standard VI. has the comparatively large increase of forty pupils. It is pleasing to see that the number in Standard IV. is only ninety-nine below the number in Standard III. From Standard IV. to Standard V. there is a drop of 338, and from Standard V. to Standard VI. a drop of 491: these figures clearly show that many parents are unable to spare their children to attend school after the passing of the compulsory Fourth Standard.

Of the 3,135 pupils in the preparatory classes, 595 were over eight years of age. Of these fifty-five were Maoris, and 359 had been under two years at school, or had attended irregularly.

Of the 7,041 pupils presented in Standards I. to VI., 6,749, or 95·9 per cent., attended and were examined, 292 were absent, 1,216 failed, and 5,533 passed. Measles, which was prevalent throughout the greater part of the examination tour, was responsible for many of the absentees, and, no doubt, for many failures also.

The mean of the average ages shows a decrease of two months.

*Instruction.*—Although percentages of passes are not much guide to the efficiency of individual schools, they must, when calculated for a whole district with 129 schools, indicate the general quality of the work being done. Granting this to be so, to a casual observer the instruction would appear to have very much deteriorated during the past year, for, on comparing the tables of 1898 and 1899, we find that in the latter year, with ninety-one more examined in standards, there are 238 fewer passes and 329 more failures, and the percentage of passes has dropped from 86·7 to 81·9, or 4·8 per cent. decrease. For the results in Standards I. and II. the principal teachers are responsible, for those in Standards III., IV., V., and VI. the Inspectors. In these four highest standards 3,041 passed out of 4,077 examined, or 73·9 per cent., a drop of 6·9 on the previous year's result. In all classes except Standard II. (in which there was an increase of 0·3) there was a decrease in the percentages of passes, viz.: in Standard VI., 22·8; in