1902.

NEW ZEALAND.

EDUCATION:
REPORTS OF INSPECTORS OF SCHOOLS.

[In continuation of E.–1B, 1901.]

Presented to both Houses of the General Assembly by Command of His Excellency.

AUCKLAND.

SIR,— Education Board, Auckland, 7th March, 1902.

I have the honour to submit a general report on the schools of the Auckland District for the year 1901.

The number of schools in operation at the close of the year was 395, being fourteen more than at the close of last year. Of these, 362 were inspected, besides twenty Roman Catholic diocesan schools and the Parnell Orphan Home. In half-time schools only one of the grouped schools was inspected. One school was not inspected, and three were closed when visited (two of them twice) for inspection. Seventeen new schools have been opened in the course of the year. A few of these were old-established schools that have been reopened after being closed for a longer or shorter time. Two schools were closed in the course of the year.

In all, 413 schools have been examined, including twenty Roman Catholic diocesan schools and the Parnell Orphan Home. Two newly established schools were not examined.

The following table shows in summary the examination results of the public schools for the year. Except in very rare instances, the passes in Standards I. to V. were determined by the head teachers, whilst those in Standard VI. were determined by the Inspectors :—

Classes.	Roll-number.	Examined.	Passed.	Average Age of Pupils in each Class.
				Yrs. mos.
Above Standard VI.	356	...	...	...
Standard VI.	1,835	1,781	1,358	13 10
" V.	2,813	2,714	2,308	13 1
" IV.	3,601	3,489	3,007	12 3
" III.	3,583	3,501	3,008	11 3
" II.	3,480	3,414	3,058	10 1
" I.	3,335	3,255	3,102	9 1
Preparatory	9,997	...	...	...
Totals	29,000	18,154	15,841	11 7*

* Mean of average age.

At the Roman Catholic diocesan schools the roll-number was 1,541; 929 pupils were examined, and 720 passed in one or other of the standards.

The public schools show for the year an increase of 300 in the roll-number, of eighteen in the number examined, and of forty-eight in the number of pupils who passed one or other of the standards. Approximately 87 per cent. of the pupils examined in standards passed or gained promotion.

This year, as last, the statement of the average age of pupils relates to the pupils on the rolls of the several standard classes, and not to those who passed the several standards. The average age of the pupils in Standard VI. is three months lower than that for last year, while in Standards IV. and III. it is higher by six months and three months respectively. The average age at which Standard I. is passed remains unchanged at nine years and one month. The intervals between the average ages of the successive standards are one year or less, except in passing from Standard II. to III.

In determining the promotions in Standards I. to V., head teachers have generally insisted on a satisfactory standard of proficiency. In some of the small schools, however, pupils have been passed in reading and writing who do not seem fit to be promoted. In all schools, fluency, distinctness, accuracy, and a fair measure of intelligent expression should be considered indispensable for any pass in reading. Where these requirements are not met the Inspectors will exercise their right to substitute their own passes for those of head teachers.

A year and a half ago head teachers were asked to divide the year's work of each class in reading, arithmetic, geography, history, and science into as many suitable subdivisions as they intended to hold periodic examinations for testing progress and helping to determine promotions. Some considerable difficulty has been experienced in getting this not unreasonable demand complied with. Probably no teacher would prefer a haphazard subdivision of the year's work in these subjects to one that has been deliberately and maturely considered; and the failure to arrange this matter in a satisfactory way is no doubt due to a feeling that the head teacher might soon be removed to another school or another sphere of work. My object in making this demand was to avoid as far as possible overpressure towards the end of the year, and to secure an equable rate of progress with due regard to revision during its currency. The first plotting-out of the work will no doubt prove tentative and in some respects unsatisfactory, but a detailed scheme once sketched out can be easily amended, until in a very few years its crude features are eliminated, and a permanently satisfactory scheme is worked out. I attach great importance to this matter.

During the year satisfactory progress has been made in all the more important branches of instruction except grammar.

In a considerable number of the large schools the teaching is highly efficient, and it is satisfactory in nearly all of them. As in previous years, the efficiency of the urban schools at the Thames is hardly equal to that of the urban and suburban schools of the City of Auckland, but in them, too, considerable improvement has of late been made. On the whole, the reports on the village and country schools furnished to me by the Assistant Inspectors express satisfaction with the work of the year, and encourage the expectation of continued improvement. Many of the defects noted by them are due to conditions created by the too extensive and varied course of instruction now prescribed, to the frequent changes of teachers that are more or less unavoidable in a service that cannot draw freely on a reserve of qualified teachers, and to the necessity for employing in some small schools young teachers who have had no special training for, or opportunities of becoming acquainted with, the management and organization of schools of this class. The Board could do much to raise the efficiency of small schools by establishing in or near Auckland a model school of this type, to which inexperienced teachers could be sent for a short time to study the organization and the methods of work best suited to the circumstances of the schools they are about to conduct. I would earnestly urge the Board to provide a model school of this kind as soon as practicable.

In spite of the greater difficulty of the New Zealand Graphic Readers, more or less improvement in reading is noted by all the Inspectors. In this connection Mr. Grierson says, "I have been both pleased and surprised to find that most of the pupils appreciate and enjoy the more difficult reading-matter supplied by the New Zealand Graphic Readers. I had feared that in small schools the task of mastering these books would prove too heavy, but such has not been the case, and on the whole the reading and the spelling in the district (the southern) have during the past year been quite satisfactory." Mr. Crowe also observes, "During the early part of the year but little, if any, improvement (in reading) was noticeable. The schools examined during the last five months (all of them rural and village schools), however, showed in many instances much improvement." I have myself made systematic inquiry into the facility with which the new Readers are dealt with, and my conclusions are in substantial agreement with those expressed above by Mr. Grierson. The new books are for the most part as readily worked up as were the ones formerly in use, and the study of the Second Readers is found to be much easier. And I have no doubt that the wider training in reading that is now being given to the lower classes will in a year or two lead on to increased ease and intelligence in the study of the higher books. Writing of the schools of the north central district, Mr. Mulgan points out that "a considerable advance has taken place in the teaching of reading during the past year"; though he thinks "much improvement is yet possible." "Want of fluency, of clearness of enunciation, and of distinctness generally, was the commonest defect"; and he concludes that "the results in this subject are still disappointing." It must be clearly understood that these criticisms do not apply to the rural schools of this education district generally, and I regret that they should be true of a district that during the past three years has enjoyed the earnest and stimulating supervision of Mr. Dickinson and Mr. Mulgan as Inspectors. The truth seems to be that in the north central district irregular attendance, the claims of work in aid of the family, and other special local circumstances seriously interfere with efficient school-work. I hope that the improvement in reading that Mr. Mulgan notes will be continued and increased under Mr. Goodwin, who has now taken charge of the district. The unfavourable conditions that retard progress in the north central district obtain with nearly equal force in the northern district. Speaking of it, Mr. Purdie says, "In most of the schools reading is at least satisfactory. In some, however, it is very monotonous, and does not give the impression that the subject-matter has been understood. Generally," he adds, "pupils have to be told the pronunciation of new words. They do not attempt by syllabification to find out for themselves the approximate pronunciation." This stupid method of training children as if they were mere monkeys or parrots was incidentally referred to in my report of last year, and cannot be too strongly condemned. In nearly all the Readers now in use lists of the new and difficult words appear at the head of the lessons; and on purpose to facilitate this training in sounding simple syllables in combination, and in putting the accent on the proper syllable, the words are divided into syllables and

accented. Such matters as Mr. Purdie here points out show us the urgent need of a training-college for teachers. Considerable numbers of them have but a humble conception of what the teacher's aims should be. They deem it enough, for example, if children at the end of a year can read a particular book or couple of books: whether the teaching has been so handled as to train and develop the power of reading similar matter that has not been seen before is but little considered. The Inspectors do what they can to remedy such evils, and their exertions are by no means futile, but a sound course of training at the outset of a teacher's career would be more effective, and would largely prevent the acquisition of bad habits and low aims that may be difficult to correct later on.

In the larger schools the Standard VI. pupils on the whole acquitted themselves creditably in reading passages of prose previously unseen. In the smaller this, the only true test of the effective teaching of reading, was much less successfully dealt with, and a good few pupils had to be absolutely failed for the Sixth Standard because of inferior reading. It should be clearly understood that pupils who cannot read an easy passage of prose that has not been seen before cannot be passed for Standard VI.

The comprehension of the matter and language of the reading-lessons shows considerable improvement, though our teachers but rarely attain any high degree of skill in dealing with this point. During the year the pupils of the higher standard classes have been asked to write out on paper the meaning of a few uncommon words, and the sense of a phrase or short sentence of some difficulty, in addition to the brief oral questioning that accompanies the hearing of reading. This practice will be continued, as it has quickened among teachers a sense of their shortcomings, and promises to stimulate their efforts for improvement. Written tests of this kind are in their sphere of great value, for they show teachers, and pupils too, in a clear and definite way how delusive and disappointing is much that wears the guise of satisfactory oral answering.

Spelling continues to be carefully and efficiently taught. Errors in spelling familiar words in composition and other written exercises still show some want of careful attention among pupils, as mistakes are rarely made in the same words in dictation exercises.

The teaching of writing is on the whole satisfactory. In the larger schools it is in general efficiently and in a good many cases well taught, and the great majority of the written papers given in at the annual examinations showed neat and careful writing, though it was by no means always in the copy-book style. Mr. Mulgan is the only Inspector who reports unfavourably on the teaching of this subject. "In the majority of the schools examined," he says, "the work was not satisfactory, though in some of the schools it was well done." The meagre rate of improvement in this subject in the smaller schools is doubtless mainly due to the inefficient supervision of penmanship in other written exercises than those done in copy-books. It is not, however, altogether a question of want of attention and care on the part of the teachers. The contrast in quality between the general writing and the copy-book writing must be largely due to the different rate of speed at which the two exercises are habitually done. General written exercises are, it may be, too rapidly written to be well done, but commonly enough the ordinary exercises in copy-books are too slowly written. Two copy-books are filled in twelve months, and rarely more. I consider that the majority of the pupils should be able to do much more than this in that time. In most schools all the pupils in a class are made to write at the same rate. There is no real occasion for this; pupils who show freedom in writing might well be allowed, and indeed encouraged, to go on at their own pace, without waiting for the whole class to keep up with them. As things are, we get pretty good but decidedly slow writing in copy-books, along with more rapid but inferior writing in other exercises. Would it not be a gain if we sacrificed something in the style of the copy-book writing for speed, and for the general improvement in all written exercises that should follow from assimilating the speed of writing in copy-books and in other exercises? In any case, a cardinal aim in the teaching of writing should be the acquisition of reasonable quickness and freedom in the exercise. In a good many of the larger schools these are even now fairly well attained.

"I am sorry," Mr. Grierson writes, "that I cannot express any great amount of satisfaction with the teachers' efforts to carry out their instructions with regard to the teaching of writing. The correct writing posture and the holding of the pen do not receive the attention they deserve." Few of our teachers, as far as I can judge, succeed in training their pupils to habitually hold the pen properly. Considering how good the discipline of the schools generally is, this fault must be attributed to virtual indifference on the part of teachers. I have made special efforts to rouse them to a sense of the importance of these matters, and cannot but regret that I have not been more successful. So long as our pupils are allowed to let the pen-handle rest in the hollow between the thumb and the palm, to place the first finger opposite to or farther back on the holder than the thumb, to let the thumb and the first finger touch each other on the pen-holder, and to let the forearm hang unsupported in air, freedom and flexibility in using the pen cannot be secured, and a slow, stiff, cramped style of writing will be acquired. The acquiescence in these faults that comes under an Inspector's notice almost daily is deplorable. In dealing with this matter few head teachers do their full duty.

Drawing from the flat is efficiently taught in the great majority of the schools, and the geometrical drawing of Standards IV., V., and VI. is in general satisfactory. The slate drawings from copies put on the blackboard have been creditably done in most of the larger schools. In Standards I., II., and III. the teaching of geometrical figures is too exclusively dogmatic. Actual comparison of the sizes of angles and the length of lines is rarely attempted, and pupils are generally quite unable to use a pair of compasses or a sheet of paper folded to a proper angle, to measure or compare the sizes of different angles, *e.g.*, to demonstrate that a right angle is greater than an angle of 60 degrees, or that the adjacent angles of a rhomboid are of unequal size. The figures to be studied can, however, be correctly drawn to dictation, and satisfactory definitions

of them can be repeated, though the reluctance to look at a figure when giving its definition points to an effort of the memory rather than of the understanding. The model-drawing at the pupil-teachers' examination is in general poorly done, and some of the attempts are ludicrous.

Very fair progress is being made in the teaching of composition. Of all the subjects taught in the elementary school this taxes the teacher's resources most heavily, and it is the one in which the Inspectors find it most difficult to give helpful advice, and in which text-books give the least assistance. A great deal of very satisfactory work was met with in the large schools, and creditable exercises were received with more or less frequency in schools of all classes. Grammatical accuracy and a proper division of sentences are now very generally attained, and there has been distinct improvement in the fullness and methodical arrangement of the matter. Too many teachers are satisfied if their pupils get the minimum amount of matter that will pass muster, and do not sufficiently urge them to write out as much as they can. It is in Standard IV. that the work is weakest. The heads supplied as aids in finding subject-matter are often poorly used, the pupils being allowed to make a single sentence about each head, a practice that involves a want of coherence and of proportion in the prominence given to points of trifling and of great importance. Where heads are given, the pupils should be carefully trained to deal with them properly, so as to produce a sequence or series of sentences varying in length and complexity, and exhibiting a proper and sufficient use of relative pronouns and of subordinating conjunctions (practically other conjunctions than "and" and "but"). Much of this could and should be quickly practised orally—a feature in the teaching that one rarely sees adequately used. In particular, the fault of using parts of the verb "to be" as the usual stating word in the sentence should be discouraged, and classes should have practice in finding other stating words as substitutes for the "copula + adjective" predicate. Early in the training of Standard IV. might come practice in reproducing short pointed stories. After this the writing of narratives and descriptions suggested by pictures, such as we find in Nelson's "First Illustrated Composition Book," would be found most helpful. In Standards V. and VI. the defects of the composition exercises are much more due to poverty of thought and a meagre vocabulary than to grammatical inaccuracy or inability to arrange the matter forthcoming into sentences and paragraphs. The remedy for these defects seems to me to lie not so much in special lessons in composition, though these are, of course, most necessary and important, as in constantly fostering the habit of clear and orderly thought, and in enlarging the working vocabulary by a more thorough and intelligent literary study of the prose-reading lessons in Standards V. and VI. This is a matter in which the teachers of this district as a body have hardly risen to their opportunities. The mere teaching to read, largely by imitation and sometimes by a deadening simultaneous drill, and to explain single words—which has hitherto absorbed so much of their attention and effort—is little more than the foundation on which intelligent literary training rests. The propriety of the arrangement of the matter in sentences and in paragraphs, the transitions from topic to topic, the order and development of the leading trains of thought, the force and fitness of figurative language and inversions of order, the varying senses of the same words in different connections—these and the like are the matters that literary study notes and considers. These aspects of the prose lessons, considered as examples of literary work, should be systematically brought out, and used to develop habits of thinking by training the pupils to understand and follow out the orderly and clearly expressed thoughts of others. I know from experience that much of what I am describing can be done in the higher classes of the elementary school, but it cannot be done unless the mechanical difficulties of reading are fairly well conquered in the Fourth Standard class, and it is only since the new reading-books came into use that this much-wished consummation can be achieved. Teachers who may be unable to embark on this high course of study can give the like discipline in a more modest way by training their pupils to give, in their own words, the gist or purport of whole paragraphs or other long portions of the prose lessons read. Practice in exercises of this kind might fitly form the close of most prose-reading lessons in the two highest classes. In South Australia this exercise is specially enjoined on teachers of the higher classes, for the good training in language that it gives. Practice in oral composition of a useful kind is to be had in connection with other lessons—science, history, object-lessons, &c.; but the literary study of the prose-reading lessons possesses an intellectual value, and will impart a training, of a much higher order. To the latter we must mainly look for further improvement in the composition of the more advanced classes. As a rule, the paraphrasing of verses of poetry taken from the reading-books was moderately done, and it was often poor, sometimes indeed wretched. Our teachers are apt to blame the difficulty of the passages set for these poor results, but there can be little doubt that they are the natural outcome of a defective training.

Arithmetic is efficiently taught in the great bulk of our schools. In recent years the examination tests supplied by the Minister have become distinctly easier, sometimes one fears too easy, but there is little evidence that this has reacted unfavourably on the teaching. In many schools the fundamental principles of vulgar fractions are little understood and insufficiently impressed. Many children who can work out ordinary examples in the various rules of fractions quickly and accurately are unable to explain clearly how we change two-thirds to twelfths, or how we show that a half is greater than a third. In one school (Newton West) I was pleased to find regular exercises given in demonstrating the chief points by the subdivision of lines, and such teaching should form part of fraction drill in every school. I may here take opportunity to direct attention to a diagram, called "Fractions at a Glance," that appears as an advertisement at the end of Cowham's "New School Method." Teachers would do well to make a large copy of this on a sheet of brown paper to affix to the school-walls. At the recent scholarship examination the values of the fractions $\frac{3}{4}$, $\frac{5}{9}$, $\frac{5}{12}$ were readily compared by competitors by reducing the fractions to a common denominator, as the somewhat misleading phrase goes, but no explanation of the principle used that was of any value was given by a single competitor. No one thought of a second way of com-

paring the values—by changing the fractions into equivalent ones having the same numerator. The expression "reducing fractions to a common denominator" is one better dropped. Pupils will understand the addition and subtraction of fractions much more clearly if they are taught that they must "change the given fractions to others of equal value, but having the same denominator," before these operations can be carried out.

Mr. Grierson remarks that "mental arithmetic is seldom presented in a brisk and attractive manner calculated to excite interest and emulation." He also regrets "the neglect in Standards I. and II. (and even Standard III.) of rapid mental addition and similar mechanical calculations, the foundation for which has been so laboriously laid in the preparatory class." The other Inspectors do not advert to this special defect, and I do not think it is of very general occurrence. Practice in the kind of drill Mr. Grierson has in view can be readily given by means of Nelson's "Mental Arithmetic Drill Charts," which are now supplied to all schools on requisition. Both Mr. Crowe and Mr. Purdie note improvement in the teaching of mental arithmetic, and I have often found it good. The time devoted by pupils to arithmetic is almost nowhere less than five hours a week. For a long time I have felt that more than one-fifth of the whole school-time should not be required for a sound training in this subject.

The geography of Standard VI. has been better taught this year than in any previous one. Physical geography, from its inherent difficulty, is still considerably inferior to political, more particularly in the smaller schools. In the other standards geography is a class-subject, and the instruction, though narrow and book-bound, has been on the whole satisfactory. It would greatly benefit by a wider and fuller knowledge of the subject among teachers. A good few seem to know little more than is contained in the text-books prepared for the use of the pupils in the schools. In many schools Standards IV., V., and VI. are grouped together in this subject. The plan of teaching Standard VI. by itself and grouping Standards IV. and V. is much more to be commended.

The year has seen no general improvement in the teaching of grammar. The work of Standards III. and IV. is still distinctly better than that of the higher classes. In Standard IV. the inflections of the noun, pronoun, and adjective are seldom thoroughly known. In the higher standards of all the larger schools from a third to a half of the pupils show a satisfactory knowledge of what has been taught, but many of the others cannot so much as tell the parts of speech with any correctness. Even in small schools the proficiency of pupils in the same class is very unequal. I think the exhibition of a simple "parsing table" on the wall before the pupils in Standards V. and VI. would be an important aid to the quick and thorough working-up of parsing, now such a bugbear. In the smaller schools classes might with advantage be more frequently grouped for lessons in grammar, for some in the lower classes would always be equal to dealing with the work taken up for the first time in the upper. The indifference of so many pupils to this subject, and the like indifference about pen-holding in writing, form the most serious blots on the discipline of our schools.

The teaching of history on the lines laid down in the syllabus is generally satisfactory.

On the whole, steady improvement is taking place in the teaching of science in nearly all the schools that are properly equipped with apparatus. Mr. Purdie notes that in a few of the northern schools "it is really well taught," and the same can be said of a fair number of the larger schools in and around Auckland. In a good many the teaching is still largely dogmatic through the want of appliances for demonstrating experiments. I hope that the new financial arrangements will enable the Board to give more liberal help towards equipping with the more necessary apparatus schools still unprovided with it.

Considering how easily object-lessons can be illustrated by objects for examination and comparison, the training in observing, in describing forms and qualities, in noting and comparing points of likeness and difference, and in inferring the more obvious links between cause and effect and quality and use is still somewhat disappointing. In the larger schools these lessons are mainly given by junior teachers, and the lack of power to secure lively attention and of skill in getting clear, full, and connected oral answers makes the lessons relatively ineffective. I have been pleased to note growing familiarity with the names, forms, and uses of the parts of common flowers, matters of almost universal interest. Mr. Grierson considers the object-lesson teaching satisfactory, Mr. Purdie thinks it fairly satisfactory, as does Mr. Goodwin also. Mr. Mulgan is less satisfied with what he has seen in this field during the year, and deplores the way in which the giving of information distorts the teacher's aims in handling object-lessons. In connection with this, teachers would do well to study the ideas explained in Circular 369 of the Education Department, London, printed in Cox and Macdonald's "Practical School Method." All the pupil-teachers of the third year teach an object-lesson, for which marks are given in connection with their annual examination. They often try to teach more in one lesson than can be properly handled and impressed, but in most respects the lessons are fairly well given. They take great pains to provide a variety of materials, &c., for illustration, and generally show a praiseworthy desire to avoid telling what can be seen or shown, or easily inferred. In these respects their lessons are ahead of those given by many more experienced teachers. The custom of combining classes P., Standards I., II., and III. for these lessons is not to be commended, and will not hereafter be approved, except in the very smallest schools. It is much better to take Standards II. and III. together as a separate and more advanced class.

Recitation of verses is seldom unsatisfactery, and is generally creditable.

Drill is good in many of the larger schools, and in general satisfactory elsewhere.

Singing, for which, alas! but little time can be spared in the present onerous course of study, is also satisfactory as class singing where teachers are competent, but the time is insufficient for giving pupils the power of reading melodies even in the tonic sol-fa notation at sight. Practice of singing is still far too much confined to the special lesson for it. Under this head Mr. Grierson

remarks, "As teachers often advance as an excuse for not teaching singing in small schools that the children will not or cannot sing, I wish to mention that admirable singing has been obtained in several bush schools from a handful of children, within twelve months of the schools having been taken over by young men, who are winning their spurs, and are therefore determined to teach everything."

The teaching of the preparatory classes continues to be in the main most satisfactory. In the larger schools progress is somewhat retarded by the great size of the classes, and the inherent difficulty of securing sustained application during rather long lessons. I am convinced that the policy of keeping the classes or divisions smaller (seldom more than twenty), of taking the children to the floor for all reading-lessons, and of making the lesson-times shorter would make progress more rapid and more satisfactory. The average age at which pupils pass Standard I. is still high, and it is just as high in the large schools as in the small. In many of the latter, indeed, beginners reach the Standard I. stage more quickly. In the larger schools progress at this stage ought to be more rapid.

A good deal of suitable kindergarten work has been done in a number of the schools, and it is quite a pleasure to the children. It is likely to be taken up more freely during the coming year. Few of our infant and lower standard teachers are able to find two hours a week for kindergarten and manual training, one hour being as much as they think can be spared. I have asked the Minister if half the usual grant could not be made to schools that give an hour a week to the teaching of these subjects, and have been informed that it cannot. The Board should renew this application, when the Minister's decision might perhaps be modified. Even in kindergarten and manual training "half a loaf is better than no bread," and the Department, which exists to serve the taxpayers among other objects, might yet recognise this fact.

In one or two schools "brush-work" has been substituted in some of the intermediate standards for the ordinary drawing course, but it would be premature to speak of results, which, however, are not unpromising.

As yet nothing has been done to provide regular instruction in woodwork or practical cookery, though the Department offers substantial grants in aid of such classes on very reasonable conditions. Early in the year I suggested that immediate provision should be made for teaching these subjects in the city and suburban schools at two centres, one at Newmarket and the other at Newton East or Howe Street. To classes at these centres pupils from most of the city and suburban schools could easily walk. I was then, and still am, of opinion that these special subjects cannot be conveniently taught either at each school or at a single centre. It seems to me that there is urgent need of adequate provision for giving the girls of the higher classes a course of instruction in cookery not only in Auckland, but also at the Thames. In the other great educational centres of the colony a start in this direction has been already made.

As to methods of teaching, I fear a considerable number of the Board's teachers do not show any burning desire to learn; they cherish the comfortable ruts in which they have gained some success, content to rest and be thankful. Only a minority evince real dissatisfaction with their former aims and achievements by striving after something better and higher, and making themselves more and more living ministers of culture. This attitude is chiefly apparent among the younger teachers, who are less backward at trying experiments and casting about for methods of realising their aims. The aims are the fundamental things; they mould and leaven the whole mass of methods and procedure. Too many of our teachers are content with low aims; they work too exclusively for results, and not enough for the training and building-up of faculty, of general mental power. Habits of study, of earnest and attentive work among their pupils, count for too little with them. This is no doubt largely due to the very burdensome course of study prescribed by the Department. For nearly a generation our teachers have been working under these unfavourable conditions, and it is little wonder if their aims have taken a permanent set in a bad direction. It is also due in no small measure to the want of a systematic study of the aims of education at the threshold of their career, at good training-colleges, such as produce so salutary an effect in Great Britain and North America.

Among defects in methods of teaching a few points may be here referred to. Most noticeable, perhaps, is the neglect to use the blackboard constantly, and especially at reading-lessons, for noting and impressing points of difficulty, and for aiding revision at the close of the lesson. The reluctance of so many of our teachers to systematically employ this aid to thoroughness is almost unaccountable. Some think it takes up too much time; but properly used it does not waste time or effort, but economizes them. Another defect is the ineffective and unskilful use of simultaneous reading, and too frequent resort to it in the higher classes, where much individual practice of reading is most needful and valuable. Of like nature is the custom of hearing pupils read or answer questions in turn. This is a serious cause of listlessness and inattention. Equally to be censured is the neglect of sufficient blackboard drill in arithmetic, at which teachers keep whole classes too constantly employed in working examples on slates, while they merely check the answers. At least two-thirds of the teacher's time during every arithmetic lesson should be taken up with blackboard drill and teaching either of some standard class as in the smaller schools, or of some section of a single class as in the larger schools, the pupils being trained to do the calculations orally and smartly, to give clear explanations of all the processes used, and in all but mere mechanical exercises to state in a brief connected way the leading steps in the working when the solution has been completed. Though oral answering has improved of late, and continues to improve, there are but few schools in which it could not be made much better than it is. Some teachers do not take the trouble to train their pupils to give all answers in sentence form. It is comparatively easy to get this done if teachers are in earnest about it and insist on it. But it requires great skill and much perseverance to train pupils to give oral answers of satisfactory completeness, clearly set forth and often stated in a short train of sentences. Here especially good

answering depends on good questioning. A good many of our teachers are now endeavouring to give this kind of training, not without encouraging success. I should be glad to find the interest of the head teachers of the larger schools in this matter more thoroughly roused.

In handling lessons in reading and explanation, teachers would do well to deliberately work out and adopt a general scheme or routine of treatment that could be advantageously followed in all ordinary circumstances. Pupil-teachers might be required to do the same. One rarely sees evidence of a thoughtful plan underlying the handling of lessons in this subject.

In the great majority of the schools the order and discipline are good, and in very few are they unsatisfactory. The best and highest test of discipline is the spirit of work, the steady earnest application shown by the pupils. Judged by this exacting test, our schools compare very favourably with any of which I have had experience. Referring to this, Mr. Purdie says, "It is pleasing to note the very large number of pupils in our schools who put forth serious effort in dealing with their school work. It may with safety be said that the number of pupils who give evidence of possessing a good spirit of work has very greatly increased of late years." This is, I believe, true of the whole education district, and I know of nothing that reflects greater credit on the teachers as a body than this notable improvement in discipline in the best sense of the term.

All the Inspectors testify to the zeal and fidelity of the great majority of teachers of all grades. Their duties are arduous and trying, and demand for their skilful performance a happy mixture of qualities of mind and temperament that is not of every-day occurrence. Considering the difficulties of their work and the heavy demands on their mental and physical energies, we can feel assured that, in spite of some inspectorial grumbling and hammering at what may be thought lofty ideals, they are doing good service to the community, and striving with more or less success to give us of their best.

I have, &c.,

The Secretary, Auckland Education Board. D. PETRIE, M.A., Chief Inspector.

TARANAKI.

SIR,— Board of Education, New Plymouth, 22nd April, 1902.

I have the honour to submit my report for the year ending the 31st December, 1901.

At the close of the year sixty-six schools were open. Tongaporutu was examined, but was closed shortly afterwards. The Tutatawa School and the half-time school at Purangi were opened for the first time, but only the former was visited. In all, sixty-five schools were examined, and the following table shows the summary of examination results:—

Classes.	Number on Roll.	Present.	Passed.	Average Age of Pupils in each Class.	
				Yrs.	mos.
Above Standard VI.	54	52	...	15	2
Standard VI.	181	173	126	14	1
" V.	397	379	270	13	8
" IV.	527	507	362	12	7
" III.	566	549	422	11	6
" II.	603	582	475	10	6
" I.	540	510	441	9	2
Preparatory	1,468	...	...	...	
Totals	4,336	2,752	2,096	12	4*

* Mean of average age.

The table has been computed somewhat differently from preceding years. Pupils above Standard VI. are included among those present, and their ages are considered in making out the return of average ages. This accounts for the apparent increase in the mean of the average age—from eleven years eleven months in 1900 to twelve years four months—whereas for Standards I. to VI. it is the same. A pleasing feature is a further increase in the number of pupils who are remaining in the higher classes, the increases during the year being—above Standard VI., 45 per cent.; in Standard VI., 22 per cent.; and in Standard V., 26 per cent. Comparing the figures for 1901 with those in Mr. Murray's last report—1894—I find the above classes have increased as follows: Above Standard VI., 980 per cent.; Standard VI., 151 per cent.; Standard V., 89 per cent. As regards those above Standard VI., the figures imply, of course, that the class was practically non-existent in 1894, there being only five pupils for the whole district.

This comparison, which covers the period during which the dairying industry has been maturing in the principal dairying district in New Zealand, seems to me to have an important bearing on a much-discussed question—the effects of the industry on the children of the district where it is carried on. I am afraid, however, I stand alone among the Inspectors in even hinting that the dark cloud of child-labour is not so dark as it is painted, and that it has a silver lining; but after seven years in Taranaki I may be allowed to know a little about the subject. I have yet to be convinced that an industry that here, at any rate, has lifted the parents from positions of penury and want to positions of comparative affluence has not proved beneficial to the children, who are now kept longer at school, and sent more regularly. I am not shutting my eyes to the existing evils, but venture to assert that to the question there may be another side differing somewhat from

that receiving almost general acceptance. But I do not wish to enlarge again upon a subject dealt with at some length in my last report.

The average age for Standard I. is the highest in the colony, the next being Auckland, with nine years one month. It has fallen by eight months since 1894, but seems to me to be still too high. The pupils in the country, owing to bad roads and long distances to be travelled, do not begin school life as young as they do in the towns, and this tends to raise the average ages. In some cases, however, pupils are kept in the preparatory classes longer than is necessary. This is seen from the examination schedules, which show, in the case of each pupil, the age and the time since admission. In the infant department the teacher has absolute freedom of classification, and in many cases is able to bring the highest infant class well up to the requirements of Standard I. Indeed, in arithmetic, spelling, and writing, work beyond the requirements of Standard I. is not infrequently presented. It may not be advisable at the examination to present such pupils for Standard I., but there is no apparent reason why, in the following year, such pupils should not omit Standard I. and prepare for Standard II. I am pleased to say that during the past year instances of such promotion have been more frequent than formerly, and the results have been very satisfactory.

During the last two years the head teacher of the school has examined pupils in Standards I. to V., and has submitted his results to the Inspector for approval. In Standard VI. the passes are determined by the Inspector. The teachers as a whole have exercised sound judgment, and have conscientiously examined their classes. Indeed, in a few cases a rather too high standard has been exacted. In some instances I have found it necessary to exercise the right to revise a teacher's results. In fact, I may say at once that repeated experience has taught me that not the slightest reliance can be placed upon the results of the examinations held by a few of the teachers, though the teachers as a body have not abused their privileges, and have proved themselves worthy of the confidence placed in them. I must say that I have been very pleased with the manner in which young teachers who have been a comparatively short time in sole charge of schools examined their classes. In the schools where the teachers have shown a lack of discrimination in examining the pupils in the pass-subjects, the class-subjects are invariably more or less unsatisfactory. Even where the teacher has satisfactorily examined in the pass-subjects I am not always satisfied with the instruction in the class-subjects, which are intended to train the intelligence rather than tax and overload the memory. The standard regulations state that in Standards III. to V. the pass depends, *inter alia*, upon the regularity of the instruction in the class-subjects, and in Standard VI. upon the regularity and sufficiency of the instruction of the class-subjects. If a pupil has been on the roll during the whole year, and has not attended regularly, his instruction in the class-subjects cannot have been regular, and consequently the teacher would be justified in refusing him a pass, and the Inspector would be justified in considering this irregularity if he found it necessary to revise the teacher's results. This, however, has not constituted an important factor in passing or failing pupils. If, however, the attendance has been satisfactory, the regularity of the instruction will be indicated in great measure by the quality of the work received. It is clear, therefore, that the teacher's neglect of the class-subjects in Standards III. to VI. entails liability to failure on the part of the pupils. Moreover, it will be noticed that in Standard VI. the instruction in the class-subjects must be sufficient. There are some teachers who render themselves liable to the operation of these conditions. As a matter of fact, I have never enforced the conditions, but for continued neglect I shall not hesitate to do so.

In determining the promotions in Standards I. to V. teachers should attach due weight to the results of the periodic examinations, and should not be guided only by the examination held immediately before the Inspector's visit, for in such case undue weight is given to adventitious and fortuitous circumstances, and too little to steady progress and persistent effort throughout the year. What I have indicated is not in accord with the wording of the regulations, but is quite in accord with their spirit. The Instruction-book, in which the work done during each fortnight is entered, serves, both to the teachers and to the Inspector, as an excellent guide to progress, and in great measure obviates the necessity for drawing up a scheme of work, for the teacher at any time in the year can readily compare his progress with that of former years. At the same time it is desirable that before commencing the work after an examination a teacher should take a survey of the work, and, dividing the year into at least four periods, should determine what under normal conditions might be reasonably undertaken during each period. This is what is expected by the "scheme of work" as indicated in the standard regulations. The periodic examinations should be held at least every three months, and as the annual examination approaches should be held more frequently.

The frequent changing of teachers militates to a great extent against the continuity of the work, and against the efficiency of the training of the pupils. Though in the Instruction-book is contained a complete record of the work done, the incoming teacher frequently considers that little responsibility attaches to him for the work of his predecessor. The instructions are perfectly clear on this point: Direction 6, "When a teacher resigns charge of a school, class, or division he must see that the entries are posted to the date of his leaving, so that the incoming teacher may take up the work exactly where it was left off." Direction 7, "When a teacher takes charge of a school, class, or division he should make himself conversant with the work undertaken by his predecessor. The incoming teacher will be expected to make such revision as time and circumstances permit, so that continuity of the work of the year may be interfered with as little as possible." Not infrequently, however, has the work of the previous teacher been ignored, and no revision of object-lessons, science, history, &c., undertaken. A change in the staff should not involve a great break in the work, for with the Instruction-book before him the incoming teacher should readily pick up the threads of instruction. Sometimes, however, it seems to me that the number of changes might be reduced by transferring or promoting teachers. When a teacher obtains another position or leaves the service, the incoming teacher can seldom take up the duties at once. During the interval a relieving

teacher is sent, and there are two breaks instead of one. This could in some instances, I am sure, be avoided if promotion were offered to deserving teachers, for the appointment could be made without loss of time. Wherever this has been done the result has been satisfactory.

The colonial scale of staffing reduces the number of our pupil-teachers by about 50 per cent., and thus curtails the chief source of our supply of teachers. Even with the larger number of pupil-teachers vacancies had to be filled by appointing teachers from other districts. But even this source of supply will in great measure be cut off, for all over the colony there will be an increased demand for teachers, as in many schools teachers are being displaced by assistants. Even at the time of writing there is great difficulty in procuring teachers, and it has been found necessary to give our fifth-year pupil-teachers appointments as assistants or sole teachers. I am afraid it may be found necessary to go further, and give such appointments to pupil-teachers who have not completed their four years' course of training. Another result of the colonial scale of staffing will be that most of the pupil-teachers will be trained in the larger schools, and though they may have good opportunities for studying class-teaching they will have little or none for studying organization, and will be at a great disadvantage when placed in charge of country schools as sole teachers.

There is a general impression that, as the teachers examine Standards I. to V., there is a great saving of the time of an Inspector in carrying out the examinations. That the excessive night-work which was formerly general has been diminished, and not before it was time, I will admit; but in this and similar districts there is very little saving of time, if by that is meant that the work of examination occupies fewer days in the year. The majority of schools are small, and, as it is impossible to take more than one a day, in these there is no such gain. A school of about a hundred pupils may be taken in one day if the teacher's examination be satisfactory; but, if not, it will take two days as formerly. In large schools, however, a day, or even two, may be gained; but, as there are only two what may be termed large schools in the district, and in the Stratford School the examination of the secondary work more than absorbs any gain in examining the primary work, it will be seen that the "saving of time" is considerably overestimated. The labour entailed in an examination depends upon the efficiency of the teacher's examination. If he has carefully examined his pupils there is less; if not, there is more. From an Inspector's point of view, however, there is a distinct gain under the present system. As I have stated above, in the majority of schools the teacher's examination is satisfactory, and not so much of the Inspector's time is occupied in correction. More attention can therefore be given to teaching classes, discussing methods, and to giving general assistance and direction such as had formerly to be left to the inspection visit. The annual visit may thus be made to partake more of the character of a combined examination and inspection.

"The Public-school Teachers' Salaries Act, 1901," came into force at the beginning of this year. Teachers under the several Boards receive equivalent emoluments for similar positions, whereas formerly the teachers in the districts containing large centres of population were paid at a much higher rate than were teachers in districts with a large preponderance of small schools. The change is undoubtedly for the better, but at the same time some of the assistants in the larger schools are underpaid. The backbone of the staff of a large school comprises the infant-mistress and the first and second male assistants. The mistress of a school with an average of from 511 to 570 has, as a rule, charge of the infants, numbering probably 120 to 150. She is responsible for the groundwork of the pupils' training, and for much of the training of the pupil-teachers. She receives £150 a year without house allowance, while as teacher of a school of fifty pupils she would receive £150 per annum and a free house or £20 house allowance. Again, in the same class of large school the second male teacher receives £130 per annum, whereas a male teacher in charge of a school with an average attendance of twenty-nine receives a slightly higher salary, and in addition has a free house or £20 house allowance. The former has to be responsible for a large upper standard, and usually plays an important part in the general organization of the school. Not infrequently he is a teacher of experience and proved skill. The teacher in charge of the small school has often only just completed his apprenticeship. The absence of recognition of certificates in the payment of salaries is to be regretted. To my mind, the recognition of the value of the certificate—especially the division of the certificate which depends on skill and experience—as proposed by the Inspector-General, was admirable; fair, equitable in its incidence, not oppressive, but at the same time an inducement to a teacher to improve his status. It was a bonus for length of service and improved skill, and a means whereby a teacher, without being transferred, could improve his position financially. Now salary is dependent only on the average attendance, and the teacher's skill, whether good or only fair, is not taken into account. It is to me incomprehensible that no provision has been made for an allowance to teachers who are compelled to obtain sick-leave, and they cannot be expected to enjoy a special immunity. As the matter stands at present, on the day a teacher obtains leave from any cause whatever his pay stops, or else the school remains understaffed, and in the case of a school with a sole teacher must be closed. If a relieving teacher is sent he receives the salary of the position, and the unfortunate teacher who is compelled to obtain leave has his pay stopped immediately, no matter how long and valuable his services may have been. For administrative purposes 11s. 3d. per unit of average attendance, together with an additional sum of £250, is allowed to Boards. So far as the Taranaki Board is concerned, the amount is considerably less than administration has hitherto cost, and will result in impaired efficiency. If to meet the decrease in income the Truant Officers are dispensed with there will be, I am convinced, a considerable falling-off in the attendance, despite the more stringent provisions of the new School Attendance Act. Teachers will be harassed by irregular and poor attendance, and work will consequently suffer. Grants for school libraries may have to be stopped; nothing can be done in the way of establishing classes for the instruction of teachers and pupil-teachers; and in every way there will be educational stagnation instead of progress. But the basis on which the grant for administration is calculated is altogether erroneous, for the cost of administration, being dependent upon the distribution of

the pupils, bears little relation to the average attendance for the district. Take one item alone—cost of inspection. If all the pupils of the district were collected into a few large schools, I could examine with ease three times as many pupils, while the Board's income would be increased nearly threefold. Other items in the cost of administration would not be increased by the increased number of pupils. It must therefore be evident that the principle of paying the Board's expenses on the average attendance is arbitrary and unfair. While every care has been taken that the units of the teaching profession should have the "living wage" one heard so much about, the same consideration has not been shown to Boards. The principle that might have been adopted—a graduated scale of payments—is acknowledged by the Department in the payment of teachers' salaries (the smaller the school the larger the increment of salary per unit of attendance), and by the Boards in their payments to Committees for local administration, but is ignored in the payments to Boards for administration.

The newer schools are well lighted, well ventilated, and in every way suitable for carrying on school work. Many of the older buildings, however, are far from satisfactory. They are too small, too low, poorly ventilated, and badly lit. The Board has each year done what it can to improve and enlarge these buildings, but the grant is utterly inadequate for the purpose. No private owner of property would allow buildings to depreciate, owing to lack of painting and lack of general attention, as our schools are depreciating. The interiors of many have never been painted, and one is struck by the utterly dismal appearance of the room as one enters, and pities the unfortunate children who, for five hours a day, have to remain in such depressing surroundings. Even the new infant-room at Stratford had to remain unpainted owing to lack of funds. Many of the porches are far too small, and others are mere shells, unlined and unpainted, and in a few cases the schools themselves have not been lined. Twenty-two schools are without residences, and a teacher has frequently the greatest difficulty in securing accommodation of even the poorest description. One teacher used to sleep in the school porch. An attempt was made to provide a cheap residence by making the school a little longer and partitioning off about 13 ft. as a residence, but the result has not been satisfactory. There are still four schools like this—Matau, Tarata, Whangamomona, and Ratapiko—and they are not included in the twenty-two that are mentioned as being without residences. In one of the above "residences" there is living a teacher with five or six children. Again, last year a teacher made additions to his residence, and another built a residence, on the condition that the amount was to be refunded out of the next building grant. It is decidedly *infra dignitatem* that the Board should be placed in the position of having to receive from teachers advances on the building grant in order to meet the requirements for residences. Quite a number of the residences require enlarging and renovating. In a number of schools the desks are so broken and shaky that satisfactory clerical work is almost impossible. Additions are urgently needed in a number of schools, and the Central School is very crowded. In two cases halls are hired to ease the pressure. At the West Infants, before the hall was used, there were seventy infants in a room 22 ft. by 22 ft., and in a number of schools there are extra desks almost up to the doors, and there is no "floor space" at all. Though the Department has recognised the needs of the district, and has considerably increased the building grant, even with the increase the amount is insufficient to meet the most urgent of present requirements, and had the last grant been doubled many necessary works would have to be left untouched.

The sixty-six schools open at the end of the year may be classified in respect of efficiency as follows: Good to excellent, 19; satisfactory, 22; fair, 11; moderate or inferior, 14. The schools are classified according to educational progress rather than according to examination results, and the terms "good," &c., indicate the estimate of the skill displayed by the teaching staff in the work of instruction. By "satisfactory" is meant that, while the results are not good, the work is what may be termed "of average quality," or that under the circumstances much better work could not be expected. By "fair" is meant that there is room for considerable improvement. The inferior schools range in size from small schools to schools with an average attendance of about a hundred, and the teachers display little aptitude for their profession, or are in other ways unsatisfactory. At the time of writing five of the teachers in the schools classed as inferior have resigned or have been removed.

Reading, I am pleased to say, shows very satisfactory progress, and in very few schools is such a thing as "sing song" reading heard. In previous reports I have indicated the methods by which I consider reading should be taught, and last year I again referred to them. Spelling in the special test is satisfactory, but, as I have before said, is often very weak in the general work, though far from so weak as formerly. Writing is generally satisfactory, and—I say it in fear and trembling—must compare favourably with that of other districts, if one can judge by the copy-books and exercise-books one sees. Much of the work in the examination papers and in the exercise-books is very neat, and the work is neatly arranged and set out intelligently. Composition, though leaving room for improvement, shows steady progress. In Standard III., and often in Standard IV., it is very satisfactory; while that in Standards V. and VI. does not show the advance on the work of the lower classes that is desirable. The satisfactory character of the work in Standard III. is undoubtedly due to the good oral training the pupils receive from the time they enter the preparatory class. As I have on a former occasion said, the simple colloquial errors are eradicated before Standard III. is reached, and such expressions as "I done it," "He seen it," are very rarely heard in school. Arithmetic, as indicated by the test cards, is generally satisfactory, and the method of treatment shows a steady increase in intelligence. Mental arithmetic remains poor.

In class-subjects the work in seventeen schools was from good to excellent, in thirteen satisfactory, in twelve fair, in thirteen moderate, and in ten was inferior. General geography was, as a rule, satisfactorily taught, and in quite a number of cases excellent memory maps of New Zealand were sent in. Physical geography and mathematical geography still leave much to be desired. The old system of drawing I hope to see disappear soon, or become only a part, and a

small one at that, of more intelligent training. Free-arm drawing cannot be satisfactorily introduced unless at some expense for appliances; the slates which are used, and by some teachers used well, being only a makeshift substitute. Brushwork in many of the schools is displacing drawing, and the progress has been very satisfactory. Grammar as at present prescribed is not, and never will be, satisfactory. This seems rather a sweeping statement, but throughout the colony the Inspectors report on it unfavourably. Indeed, there is little in it to appeal to the children, and the educational results are not commensurate with the labour expended. Good mental training could be obtained by teaching much of the grammar as incidental to composition, and formal grammar should be confined to what will lead to an intelligent apprehension of the synthesis of the sentence. In Standard III. I have required pupils to begin the study of grammar with the study of an easy sentence and its component parts, to know the meaning of a clause and a sentence, and then to proceed to the work of the syllabus. In Standard IV. children learn quite enough if they know the parts of speech, and that phrases and clauses may be equivalent to the parts of speech, and perform the same functions. Much of the Standard V. grammar is quite unnecessary. Strong and weak verbs, subtleties of conjugation, and so on, are I consider mere waste of time for primary school pupils, and the work of Standards V. and VI. might well be confined to analysis and a little parsing. Object-lessons continue to improve, and often receive very skilful treatment. I have previously mentioned how unsuitable are some so-called object-lesson books, and I am pleased to see that they have almost disappeared as guides to method. I have no hesitation in recommending Garlick and Dexter's "Object-lessons in Science" for Standards I. to III., which I consider the best book for method of treatment. Murché's "Object-lessons in Science" for Standards I. to VI. also are good books. The most favoured subject for science is agricultural knowledge, which is capable of ready illustration by experiment without much expense, and is valuable as a training in observation and reasoning. The general science is not satisfactory, as I have reported *ad nauseam*. When giving a syllabus of the work undertaken in science, teachers will be required to hand in also a list of the experiments performed, and a large proportion of the questions will be on these. Handwork I have touched upon above. I am pleased with the rapid strides it has made. In a number of schools recognition under the Manual and Technical Instruction Act has been asked for. In many others the work is being carried on without such recognition, and many of the teachers have provided the necessaries for the work out of their own earnings. Last year a grant was given by the Department for the instruction of teachers in the work for school classes, as indicated by the regulations under the Manual and Technical Instruction Act, and when classes were established I was more than gratified at the interest taken in the work, about one-half of the teachers of the district being enrolled. When one considers that it is quite impossible for a large number in the outlying districts to be present the attendance is more than satisfactory. A word of recognition is specially due to the teachers from the country, some of whom come long distances and spend a long and trying day, leaving home early and getting home late, and being fully occupied from the time they reach town to the time they leave, for the classes are held in both the morning and the afternoon. At the time of writing the classes have been reopened and are being even better attended. The examinations at the end of each term were very satisfactory, and certificates were issued on the results. I wish also to place on record my appreciation of the efforts of the instructors, for whose time, zeal, and intelligence any remuneration the Board is able to give them is an inadequate return.

As regards discipline, I classify the schools as follows: Good to excellent, 54; satisfactory, 5; fair, 5; moderate, 1.

Every year the work of the district is becoming heavier. Organization, the classes established for the instruction of teachers, the opening of new schools, the greater distances to be travelled, and the work entailed under the Manual and Technical Instruction Act, all involve so great an increase in the work, both "in the field" and in the office, that I have been unable to cover the ground to my own satisfaction.

I have, &c.,

W. E. SPENCER, M.A., B.Sc.,
Inspector of Schools.

The Chairman, Taranaki Education Board.

WANGANUI.

SIR,— Education Board's Office, Wanganui, 1st March, 1902.

We have the honour to submit our annual report on the state of education in this district.

I. *General.*—The number of schools in this district continues steadily to increase. Last year we reported that ten new schools had been added to our lists; this year we close with 151, an increase of seven on last year's total. Seventeen schools in two years significantly mark the prosperity and growth within our bounds, and as clearly indicate the increasing demands made on our energy and our time. This latter fact your Board has generously acknowledged. Scattered as our schools undoubtedly are, following as they do our main river-courses or cautiously feeling their way in towards the feet of the distant Ruahines, remote from railways, linked in the back blocks by bush roads, and separated in many instances by considerable distances, it is impossible for us to both inspect and examine them all. One hundred and fourteen were inspected by us this last year, and 141 were examined. This latter number (which does not include four Roman Catholic schools) exceeds that of any former year by eleven. As showing how rapidly our work is increasing, we give the schools examined for each of the last seven years: 1895, 106; 1896, 114; 1897, 116; 1898, 125; 1899, 129; 1900, 129; 1901, 141. As we have stated, and as all indications show, the total will mount with each incoming year.

It would be but the needless repetition of past reports to go into details over the defects discovered at our inspection visits. The average teacher still continues to do average work, the good teacher still strives to excel, while the very poor and lazy teachers give us no small anxiety in determining whether they should or should not, and when they should, be asked to seek another calling. The isolation of many of our teachers has frequently been brought home to us, and we have pondered over the question, how best to prevent them from falling into depression of spirits and mechanical routine in work, and how to kindle their enthusiasm by contact with a crowd of fellow-workers all striving for the same goal. We have also more than once had the question borne in on us whether it would not be for the benefit of education and for the good of certain teachers who are out of touch with their district, or have fallen into mechanical ways, if the Education Board had the power of effecting suitable transfers. This power could be easily limited or defined so as to preclude any tyrannous dealing, and thus exerted would prevent future trouble and ill.

We shall not enter into detail over our observations at the examination visits. Each school has been faithfully commented on, and we shall trust to these reports and to means adverted to in another place to work any wished-for changes next year. As is to be expected, the number on the examination rolls continues to rise, the increase this year over last being 483. The preparatory classes are larger by 238, and Standard VI. by 104. The average age of the standards continues to decrease. For the first time that of Standard VI. has fallen below fourteen years. Five hundred and ninety-nine pupils, each over eight years of age, were not presented in any standard, but in most cases satisfactory reasons were given. The table attached will give all the usual information about the standards.

Fifty-nine pupil-teachers presented themselves at the annual examination in June. Of these sixteen failed. Now that the Board has staffed its schools in accordance with the new scale, and has adopted a resolution stating that henceforth pupil-teachers will be allowed to remain in the school of their first appointment as long as possible, we hope to see better results in their work generally, and more easily to be able to sheet home deserved blame for neglect of their supervision and training. We are eagerly looking forward to the day when one scheme of training will rule the pupil-teachers of the colony, and when their period of apprenticeship will finish with a year or two spent in a well equipped training-college. As that day is still somewhat distant, we hope, before another year is out, to elaborate a scheme by which, taking advantage of the main district high schools in the district, our pupil-teachers will receive a somewhat better training than heretofore. In spite, however, of all drawbacks, we believe the pupil-teachers of our district will compare favourably with those of any other Board.

The annual examination for scholarships took place in December. Thirty-six candidates sat for the senior and thirty-two for the junior. The work done and the percentages gained by the seniors will compare favourably with those of any previous year; the work of the juniors, on the other hand, showed a falling-off. With the increase in the staffing and efficiency of our district high schools, and with the tuition at these free, the whole question of scholarships will sooner or later require revision.

II. *District High Schools.*—Two district high schools (Wanganui and Hawera) were at work during the whole year. At the former twenty-three pupils who had passed Standard VI. and at the latter eighteen sat for the examination prescribed. Since the examination Wanganui has reopened with some eighty pupils, and Hawera with close on forty. Marton District High School is now in full swing with some thirty pupils, and Feilding has about fifteen in high-school classes. The new District High School of Palmerston promises to eclipse all the others, nearly ninety high-school pupils being in daily attendance. Five district high schools with such attendances of ex-Standard VI. pupils speak volumes for the interest in education taken by the people of our district. We need not point out that these schools add very considerably to our duties. Looking ahead, we confess that we have no fears for the future of any of these schools. We have to thank the Board for the trouble taken in selecting the special assistants. In their hands we are assured that the pupils will be carefully and efficiently trained, and that their schools will take no mean place in the ranks of the colonial institutions of this kind. We have held various conferences with them all, and have discussed such topics as: Aim of a district high school; basis of its time-table; how far should it follow the traditional lines of the secondary schools; what languages should be taught; importance of English, &c. By means of these discussions we were enabled to come to a common understanding as to aim and work and yet leave room for the individuality of each teacher and the special needs of his district. In future conferences, with experience to guide us, we shall still further define both aim and work.

At Palmerston the high-school classes are worked in the closest connection with the technical. In Wanganui and Hawera we shall take care to make the connection even closer. In our opinion, all the scholastic institutions of the colony should be so correlated and co-ordinated that as little lapping as possible will take place, and each grade will be bound to all others by many links. We are hoping for the day when the idea that a boy or girl having passed all the standards has finished his education will be rooted from the minds of the community, and will be supplanted by this other, that till a boy or girl of our towns has passed sixteen or seventeen his education should continue. The aim of education should embrace the three ends—the good man, the good citizen, and the good workman; and, as the primary schools can but prepare the way for attaining these, technical and secondary schools should be called on to perfect their work.

III. *Changing Conditions and Relations.*—The new responsibility laid on teachers by the last syllabus carries with it certain implications which have not yet been grasped in their fullness. It implies on the one hand that teachers are judged competent to promote or withhold their pupils till Standard VI. is reached, and that the Inspector is much less an examiner than a supervisor, and is to allow for the individuality of the teacher and the special circumstances of the school

district. Up to the present most teachers have not shaken off the trammels of the past, and too many still prepare their pupils in what they think will be the minimum requirements of the Inspector's wishes. They have not yet grasped that they should set the aim in each subject and in each standard, that they should carefully map out the work to secure these, that they should prepare their pupils along these lines, and should at the year's end submit aim, method, tests, and results for the Inspector's consideration and judgment; while willing to submit all to whatever trials or proofs he may demand. We take it that the Inspector's relation to his teachers is somewhat similar to that of a headmaster to his subordinates. He has to exercise right supervision, and see to it that the young teachers are encouraged and helped, that the lazy and incompetent are blamed or summarily dealt with, and that the honest and faithful workers receive their due meed of praise. He must, too, maintain a certain standard of efficiency and of pass-promotion in all the schools, so that the careless and dishonest teacher does not earn undeserved praise for a large percentage of passes while his more faithful brother is considered harsh and unsuccessful. But, above all, we consider that more and more he has to regard himself as an expert among experts, as an experimenter among experimenters, and, putting aside all cut-and-dried theories, must calmly watch while his teachers find out right methods and right procedure, must collate and compare the results, and pass on the information thus gained for the benefit of all the workers. More and more we shall strive to get our teachers into the new attitude both towards their profession and towards ourselves. We are expecting that the new syllabus will aid us in this matter, and that it will grant a larger measure of freedom for the exercise of experiment and of individual choice. We have often thought it would be a good thing if, within certain limits, teachers were allowed to ascertain the best order in which to teach the rules of arithmetic and the syllabus of work in geography. Why, for example, compel every teacher when teaching Standard II. in geography to jump from the consideration of definitions to a survey of the continents and oceans of the world? Some might prefer a progressive widening of the child's horizon—the proceeding from the surroundings of the school out into the surrounding district, and then out to a few main features of our country. It would be an easy enough matter to allow them this privilege. A better correlation of the school subjects is also required. Drawing, for example, should no longer be an independent and isolated subject, but should be linked to the object-lessons, science, reading, history, &c.

IV. *Prospective.*—In several talks with our teachers we have laid it down that henceforth they must have ready for our approval plans and general schemes of work, notes of lessons and diaries in connection with these, and the copies of the principal examination tests (with the results) set to determine progress. We believe that no teacher can do good work who has not a clear idea of his aim, both in the subject as a whole and in each and every lesson given; and, further, that really good work is possible only when there has been due preparation. A clearly defined aim, with evidences of thoughtful preparation: these we consider we have the right to expect from every teacher. Moreover, we shall expect that head teachers place before us evidence of their supervision in these and other respects. In our examinations we shall expect that the lists in object-lessons, in science, and in recitation, and the work done in grammar and history, correspond with the time given these by the time-table. It has been too noticeable in a number of schools that one or two of these subjects are more or less neglected, and that the knowledge of the pupils in them bears no relation to the time apportioned them. For the purpose of testing the work of the school we shall first determine if the time is fairly allotted among the different subjects; then if a fair amount of work is professed in each; and, lastly, what kind of knowledge the pupils have of this. It would be well, we consider, to abolish the terms "pass" and "class" altogether, and substitute others which would not lead any teacher to suppose that any subject he has to teach can be neglected partially or wholly. The isolation of many of our teachers, their lack of training in science, their ignorance of kindergarten and manual training, and the distrust of self which all these engender, forced on us the conclusion about the middle of the year that a summer school would be of immense benefit to them. That institution was launched, and, although its session took place after the close of the year on which we are now reporting, we may be allowed a few words with reference to it. The direct benefits from its classes surpassed our expectations, while the indirect were incalculable. It removed the fear of attacking new subjects; it proved that science could be taught experimentally at a trifling cost, and for the most part with home-made apparatus; it intensified, if it did not create, a feeling of oneness amongst our teachers; it aided in establishing a better relationship between teachers and Board officials; and it sent not a few of the teachers back to their work with new enthusiasm and higher ideals. For ourselves, we believe it has lightened our work for this next year, and that several teachers who have given us some anxiety in the past will henceforth give us only pleasure in the examining of their schools. It has certainly proved that our teachers are only too willing to avail themselves of an opportunity of better equipping themselves for their work. We are indebted to the headmasters and leading teachers of the district for the fine example they set their juniors at the "school." We took advantage of this gathering of all our teachers to have talks with them respecting past and future teaching, and also to carry on the work it had so well begun. A reading association has been formed, which we hope will bring the members into contact with the classics of education. Collegiate and other classes will shortly be launched in our three centres, having for their object the raising of the status of our teachers. And here we may be allowed the parenthesis that the number of our teachers who are proceeding for higher examinations will compare favourably with any education district of the colony, and that every one of them deserves special praise.

Inspectors' reports usually make the defects bulk large, and pass over with slight remark the excellencies. We hope that nothing we have said will convey any other meaning than that the Board has in its employ a large number of earnest, enthusiastic, and hardworking teachers, who, often with little encouragement, do their duty cheerfully and unfailingly. It is their aim to have

their schools taking no mean place among those of the colony. It is our hope to encourage and help them in this. It is our expectation that their number will increase.

We have, &c.,
JOHN SMYTH, M.A., D.Phil., | Inspectors.
JAMES MILNE, M.A., |

The Chairman, Education Board, Wanganui.

SUMMARY OF RESULTS FOR THE DISTRICT.

Classes.	Presented.	Present.	Absent.	Failed	Passed	Per Cent. of Passes on		Average Age of Pupils in Each Class.
						Number presented.	Number examined.	
								Yrs. mos.
Above Standard VI. ...	179	160	19	...	...	...	...	...
Standard VI.	677	642	35	142	500	73·8	77·8	13 11
" V.	1,025	965	60	209	756	73·7	78·3	13 2
" IV.	1,369	1,311	58	267	1,044	76·3	79·6	12 3
" III.	1,419	1,361	58	243	1,118	78·7	82·1	11 4
" II.	1,347	1,290	57	114	1,176	87·3	89·1	9 8
" I.	1,364	1,330	34	119	1,211	88·7	91·0	8 9
Preparatory	3,464	3,113	351	...	...	...	...	...
Totals	10,844	10,172	672	1,094	5,805	80·6	84·1	...

WELLINGTON.

SIR,— Wellington, 31st December, 1901.

I beg to present my twenty-eighth and final report on the primary schools of the Wellington Education District for the year 1901.

My colleagues (Messrs. Fleming and Bakewell) and I have examined all the schools in operation, and inspected all but a few very small distant aided schools, which are not usually visited more than once a year. We have also again examined and inspected eight Roman Catholic schools. During the year 1901 there were 143 Board schools open—two less than in the previous year; the following four schools being closed—Wharau, Wainuioru, Te Mai, and Woodhurst; and two—Saunder's Road and Horoeka—being newly opened.

The total roll-number of the Board schools for the past year was 15,241, and for the previous year 15,211, giving an increase of only thirty children on the books. The number of children presented in Standards I. to VI. for the past year was 9,768, and for the year before 9,758, showing an increase of only ten; and if we take into consideration the number (490) classed above Standard VI. in 1900, as compared with 481 in 1901, this increase is reduced to one child. Practically, therefore, the number on the books for the present year, and also the number presented in standards, remains unchanged from the previous year, 1900.

The number of children passed in standards (including those above Standard VI.) was 8,543 in 1901, and 8,231 in 1900, showing an increase of 312 in the number of children promoted. Of this increase, seventy-three were in Standard I., nineteen in Standard II., thirty in Standard III., 145 in Standard IV., and seventy-three in Standard VI., with a decrease of twenty-seven in Standard V. In the district as a whole 87·5 per cent. of the children presented in standards were promoted. This percentage reached 89·5 in the average of the eleven largest schools, and in the remaining schools, including Roman Catholic, the general average was about eighty-five—a satisfactory numerical result.

In my last two reports I have shown a grading of the schools made with the object of testing in a measure their status year by year. I have again followed the plan this year, and the estimate for the past three years is here given: 1899—Satisfactory, 81; fair, 40; inferior, 15: total, 136. 1900—Satisfactory, 81; fair, 51; inferior, 13: total, 145. 1901—Satisfactory, 85; fair, 48; inferior, 10: total, 143.

The eighty-five "satisfactory" schools are working under good conditions, and are doing good work in all sections; the forty-eight "fair" schools are not under unsatisfactory management, but are either working with weak assistance or with serious drawbacks; the third set of ten "inferior" schools are in a weak condition, though not necessarily under incompetent teachers. The classification as to the actual state of the school is irrespective of conditions; and it shows that much remains to be done before every school is doing the best work possible; which, as I understand, should be the outcome of an efficient system.

An analysis of this grading shows that the largest schools are most satisfactory, and the country schools under one teacher are the least commendable. Many of the latter are, however, exceptionally well taught schools, and, although it must be admitted that they are the most difficult to manage, it does not follow that the condition of the others should not be improved. The following is the analysis: Schools with over three hundred children—Satisfactory, 11. Schools with one hundred to three hundred children—Satisfactory, 16; fair, 5; inferior, 1: total 22. Schools with less than one hundred, having more than one teacher—Satisfactory, 13; fair, 12; inferior, 2;

total, 27. Schools under one teacher—Satisfactory, 33; fair, 26; inferior, 7: total, 66. Aided schools—Satisfactory, 9; fair, 5: total, 14. Infant schools—Satisfactory, 3.

In the eight Roman Catholic schools 1,112 children were presented in 1900, and 1,079 in 1901, showing a small decrease of thirty-three. The number presented in standards in 1900 was 656, of whom 558 passed; and in the past year, 1901, the number of standard children was 644, of whom 566 passed. These results tend to show that the efficiency of the schools is maintained. Improvement is in evidence also in the extent and quality of both standard and class work. In several of these schools elementary science, drill, and kindergarten occupations received more attention than formerly; and the teaching of arithmetic is much more satisfactory than it was in former years. Good reading, composition, and needlework are features of these schools; and very commendable order and control are met with.

The destruction of the Thorndon School buildings last year by fire, and of the Terrace School this year, caused much inconvenience for a time in the carrying-on of the work of these large schools; but it speaks well, I think, for our educational system and the Board's resources that the results of the examination of these schools show no falling-off, and thus testify to the efficiency of the teaching, the energy of the staffs, and the excellence of the management.

As, on the whole, there is no increase in attendance, the demands for increased school-space will necessarily be limited to certain localities, unless the Education Department insists on an increased supply of 200 cubic feet per child in all schools. I note also that a limit to the erection of small up-country schools appears to have been reached, at any rate until fresh settlement has been opened up. The Carterton School is for the most part becoming antiquated, and it is a question now whether it should remain in its present position. The Mount Cook Girls' and Lower Hutt school buildings, though long condemned, are still doing duty. The new Terrace buildings about to be erected and the Thorndon just completed will mark a new departure in improved designs. The alterations at Newtown and the improvements lately effected in several up-country schools will add considerably to the improved accommodation. The full floor-space of 12 square feet per child, with a height of 14 ft., has been allowed in these later structures; and it goes without saying that such extended space, as is now rightly insisted on by the Education Department, cannot be supplied without greater outlay per head than was formerly deemed sufficient. To my mind, it is of national importance that the schools, which are so much the homes of the youth of the colony, should be thoroughly sanitary, convenient, and tasteful in their furnishing, with plenty of playground, air-space, passages, ventilation, and lighting; and to provide these a liberal building grant will be necessary.

I am pleased to report that, as a whole, neither the standard nor the class work shows any falling-off in quality, and that there is a distinct improvement generally in the class-work of all the larger schools, and in that of many others, especially in grammar, word-knowledge, science, and geography. The strictures made last year with regard to the teaching of writing are still called for—the handwriting in many schools being defective in form and style, and giving no indications of being systematically taught. It is as true to-day as it was a quarter of a century ago that the frequent use of suitable mental exercises and the careful teaching of rapid and ready methods of reckoning are the surest ways to success in the teaching of arithmetic, and such work calls forth the best energies of the most skilful teacher. I have been hammering on this refractory subject for many years, and yet it is far from assuming the constructed shape I could desire. In much arithmetical work that is still accepted as satisfactory, because the answers are correct, the processes employed are not the simplest, nor do the modes of procedure show in detail a knowledge of ready methods. It is not in the extent of the programme, but in this readiness of methods that further improvement in this work should be looked for.

In many details of school-work marked improvement is apparent—such as in the order, discipline, desk drill, kindergarten paper-folding, and the substitution of plasticine for clay in modelling. Special features of the year are the organization of games, such as tennis and croquet, and the erection of flag-staffs in the playgrounds of many schools.

I am also very pleased to find greater attention being paid to the manners and behaviour of the children, a point to which I have alluded in special addresses in many schools. The devotion to duty by our best teachers is most commendable, and I feel sure a case has occurred during the past year in which one of our country teachers, the late Miss Elkin, of Wallaceville, might have prolonged her life had she been less conscientious and less self-sacrificing in the discharge of her duties.

During my term of office cadet corps have always been in existence in some schools of the district, and I may say they have always been encouraged by me. To illustrate this I will quote an extract from my report for 1878: "There is a well-trained cadet corps established in the Te Aro (Ghuznee Street) School. It is drilled by an officer from the Armed Constabulary Barracks, and is a credit to the school, the master (Mr. Holmes) serving as captain. The corps is efficient and attractive. The present champion rifle-shot was, as a boy, a member of the Te Aro Cadet Corps." For some time past I have advised the introduction of battalion drill and the encouragement of the formation of cadet corps in all schools sufficiently large, the equipment of these corps with proper light rifles, the appointment of officers, the dressing in uniforms, and the training of bugle bands. This was approved of at the time, and a capable officer (Mr. McDonald) appointed to carry out this arrangement. Subsequently the Board allowed the scheme to fall through. I am now pleased to find the Education Department has taken some such scheme in hand, and there is a prospect of the movement being a great success, for I am sure it will be, as it is in New South Wales, a help to the discipline in schools, an aid to the physical development of our young men, and a means whereby the military defences of the colony will be most effectively provided for. It is further satisfactory to find that the Board has reinstated Mr. McDonald in his proper position as officer in charge of our local corps.

The question of the training of young teachers is again before the minds of educational

authorities, and I am sure much good to the cause of education could now be effected by more normal-school training. Our Saturday classes afford very useful help in the teaching of some special subjects, such as kindergarten paper-folding. Formerly the first practical lessons in science were given to teachers, and other very helpful training afforded until the grant-in-aid ceased. Twenty years ago I reported as follows: "In comparatively few schools is the work that of a teacher trained for his profession. The contrast between a school working with good methods and that of a school under an untrained or an unprogressive teacher is very great. It surely must be an established truth in educational as in other matters that if work is to be done it should be well done; and to attempt to work without skilled labour simply means that it will be imperfectly done." These words are true to-day in too many instances. The best educational system will not turn a bad school into a good one, nor will it make any school the best that it might be. Only the skilled teacher can do that, and hence the importance of the best selection of teachers, and of a training which, coupled with personal influence for good, will fit them for their special duties in life.

The contrast between the present state of education in the district, as shown in this report, and the condition of affairs in 1874, when I commenced my duties, is very remarkable; and I purpose, on this occasion of my retirement from the service, giving a few particulars which may be of general interest.

In 1874 I travelled nearly everywhere on horseback over the Wellington, Wanganui, Patea, and Marlborough districts, examining all the schools. The two former districts were in the Wellington Education District, and I took the work of the two latter by special permission of the Wellington Board. Then roads were bad, rivers were mostly unbridged, and tracks through bush or scrub frequently used. Excluding the last three districts of the four mentioned, I examined thirty-two schools in the present Wellington area, which included five in the city, ten in the Porirua Valley, six in the Hutt Valley, and eleven in the Wairarapa.

At my first examination I simply classified in Standards I. and II., which may be estimated at Standards I. and III. of the present code. On an average two children out of ten on the roll passed Standard I.; and of those passing Standard I. one-fourth passed Standard II. Six months later I examined in Standard III. (say, Standard V. of present code), when there were in all the present district only twenty-seven children who could fairly meet requirements. The first examination in Standard IV. (say, Standard VII.) was made in 1875, when four pupils passed in this part of the district.

There are only five teachers now in the service who were doing duty in 1874. I note with satisfaction that nearly all the present leading head teachers have done duty in this district for twenty years or more, and have contributed in no small degree to the educational progress which has been made.

The opening of the Mount Cook Infant School, built on a design made by the architect of the London School Board, in January, 1878, inaugurated the infant-school system in this district; and by its invaluable work it has proved a distributing centre in all infant instruction—tonic sol-fa singing and the earlier kindergarten occupations.

For the past fifteen years the teaching of drawing has extended its scope and advanced in quality; teachers have been thoroughly instructed, and an immense amount of examination work has been overtaken. As it is now decided to discontinue the first-grade examinations, the work of the schools will be largely judged by the character of the class-work as it appears in the pupils' drawing-books; and this closer inspection should lead to greater accuracy of detail, and encourage pupils to take greater pains with their ordinary work. Nearly all the head teachers are now capable drawing instructors, and the future classification of pupils, in this subject as in others, may be safely left in their hands.

At the beginning of 1890 my colleague Mr. Fleming was appointed, and, again, three years ago Mr. Bakewell came to our assistance.

I have, &c.,

ROBERT LEE,

Chief Inspector.

The Chairman, Wellington Education Board.

SUMMARY OF RESULTS FOR THE WHOLE DISTRICT.

Classes.	Presented.	Present.	Passed.	Average Age of those that passed.
				Yrs. mos.
Above Standard VI.	483	...	...	...
Standard VI.	1,040	1,011	831	13 8
" V.	1,496	1,470	1,211	12 11
" IV.	1,908	1,862	1,591	12 1
" III.	1,953	1,923	1,655	10 9
" II.	1,838	1,800	1,629	9 8
" I.	1,726	1,702	1,626	8 9
Preparatory	4,797	...	...	...
Totals	15,241	9,768	8,543	11 3*

* Mean of average age.

EIGHT ROMAN CATHOLIC SCHOOLS.

Presented, 1,085; present, 644; passed, 566.

HAWKE'S BAY.

SIR,— Inspector's Office, Napier, 26th March, 1902.

The year ended the 31st December, 1901, has been, from an educational point of view, one of much importance to teachers and to the future welfare of the country. The coming into operation of the Manual and Technical Instruction Act, the adoption of a teachers' colonial scale of salaries, and the offer of special grants by the Government for the furtherance of secondary education by means of district high schools, will characterize the year as significant of impending educational changes.

It would be premature to deal with these matters in their initial stage, more particularly with regard to their probable effects upon the future educational work of the colony; but already there are signs that advantage will be taken by teachers and those interested in the extension of public education to avail themselves of every benefit the Government may offer for the advancement of education in the country.

The opening of technical classes by the Board for the benefit of teachers shows how alive the teachers themselves are to gain an insight into those aspects of art and science that are daily forcing themselves into recognition as subjects of instruction in the public school. From the remotest parts of the education district teachers have come to attend the classes in Napier, Gisborne, and Dannevirke, at heavy cost, and, although six months have passed since the classes were first established, there is no sign of slackness or loss of interest in the work that is being done for the future benefit of education in the schools of the district.

As yet the question of district high schools has only arisen at Gisborne and Dannevirke. For a number of years such a school has been successfully working in the former town, but the recent decision by the Board to make the secondary classes free to all pupils who have passed the Sixth Standard is likely to have an important effect in the work of secondary education in the Poverty Bay district. By means of maintenance scholarships the country children, equally with those of Gisborne, would be able to enter the secondary classes; and should the Board establish such scholarships the course of instruction will require some amendment in the direction of introducing subjects like advanced model and freehand drawing, type-writing, shorthand, and the elements of agriculture. Dannevirke has only reached the initial stage in its claim for secondary classes. No doubt a school where secondary subjects could be taught is wanted somewhere between Woodville and Takapau, and Dannevirke is certainly the town best suited for the purpose. But the question of maintenance is one of some difficulty. The special grant from the Government, even when fees are charged, will not suffice for the extra cost of staffing such a school, and unless further help can be obtained, as in the case of the Gisborne School, it is difficult to see how a district high school can be maintained for the benefit of bush settlers.

The adoption of a colonial scale of teachers' salaries needs no remark, as the Act under which the scale was adopted only came into operation at the beginning of 1902.

In my previous report the statement was made that the schools in the district were ready for a forward movement. By this was meant that the great body of teachers were ready to advance in the educational work as soon as opportunities allowed them to do so. It was not intended to convey the impression that the schools established by the Board were so built and equipped as to be pronounced satisfactory. Unfortunately, such is not the case. After nearly twenty-five years of administrative work it is much to be regretted that the Board, under what is known as a free public scheme of education, is so hampered for funds that proper school provision cannot be made. Apart from the question of teachers' residences, the erection and completion of school buildings has at no time sufficed for the necessities of the children for whom the Board are supposed to make provision. Out of eighty-one school buildings in the district fourteen do not belong to the Board, and twenty-six schools are without a residence. Apart from these serious deficiences, several schools are sadly overcrowded, and are a menace to the health of the children. Then, there are Hatuma, near Waipukurau, Mahora, near Hastings, and Whatatutu, some ten miles from Te Karaka, where schools are being called for, so that a large sum of money is needed to provide for the present educational requirements of the district.

Attention has so often been drawn by me to the unsatisfactory condition of the school buildings along the East Coast, but without avail, that I am constrained to suggest to the Board the advisability of asking the Department to take over schools in Native districts mainly made up of Native pupils. At Mohaka, although less than sixty children are attending the present school, the building is far too small for this number. There are nine pupils belonging to European parents, so that whatever school provision is made it will be mainly for Natives. The same disproportion exists between the Native and European children in other districts, and it seems but reasonable either that these schools should be taken over by the Department, or that sufficient funds be provided to erect the necessary buildings to enable the Board to have the children properly instructed under fair working conditions. Strong discontent exists among the coast settlers at the seeming neglect shown towards them in the matter of suitable school buildings, for, whilst they see well-ordered schools for the Native children, the so-called Board schools are merely makeshifts, having nothing that characterizes them as places for the training of children. Men who go out into the remoter parts of the district to establish a home feel strongly on this question, and it will be a good day in the interests of settlement when more consideration is given to the question of proper school provision for the children of settlers whose life is too often one long hard round of profitless toil. £8,000 is certainly not too high an estimate of what is necessary for school buildings alone; but I would impress on the Board the fact that a teacher's residence is almost a necessity in country districts, as teachers are often placed under great disadvantages where no house is provided.

Although certain of the schools are overcrowded, the past year has not added largely to the attendance results compared with the returns for the previous year. No new school was opened,

and the total number of names returned on the examination schedules was only thirty-five in excess of those for the year 1900. This apparent stagnation in the school attendance appears to have arisen mainly in consequence of the removal of the people from place to place, when the children remain at home either to assist in domestic work or until such times as they can be sent to school without inconvenience.

The regularity of attendance of children at school shows a slight improvement. In the year 1898 it was 85 per cent. of the roll-number, in 1899 it fell to 81·7 per cent.; but it rose the following year to 83 per cent., whilst for last year it stood at 83·3 per cent. It is difficult to say what effect the School Attendance Act of last session is likely to have upon the general regularity of attendance at school, but in the case of Native children an improvement is already noticeable at Wairoa and Mohaka. In order to foster regular attendance the Patutahi School Committee have instituted what appears to me as being a very laudable scheme. To every pupil who makes full attendances throughout the school year a silver medal is presented by the Committee, with the name of the pupil and the year in which the medal is gained engraved on it. The plan has now been in operation for four years, with the following results: First year, one medal; second year, thirteen medals; third year, sixteen medals; and last year twenty-two pupils made the full 422 attendances, one of the winners being a Native. This appears to me as a satisfactory result, and it shows what is possible without the introduction of Truant Officers, policemen, Magistrates, and Police Courts into the school life and training of young children. School Committees have it within their power to do a great deal of good in the furtherance of education in a district, and the example set by the Patutahi Committee might well be followed in places where the school attendance is not satisfactory.

For the first time in a period of twenty-three years I was unable to individually examine in standards the whole of the pupils who are returned as belonging to the schools, as shown in the tabulation given below. My absence from duty for three months as a member of the Public-school Teachers' Salaries Commission threw upon a number of teachers in Patangata and Waipawa Counties the responsibility of examining their own pupils in all standards, including Standard VI. All promotions were made by the teachers without the usual supervising control; but, having subsequently examined all the papers that were sent to me from the different schools, I am satisfied that no undue liberty was taken with the privilege they enjoyed, and I wish here to express my thanks to those teachers who carried out the full examination of their pupils during my absence from duty. With the exception named, all my usual visits to the schools throughout the district took place; and the Catholic schools were also examined, though not inspected. I do not think, however, that it will be possible any longer to continue my examination of the Catholic schools, for, though very willing to do so, the increasing number of Board schools, and the additional calls upon my time through the working of the technical classes for teachers and the operation of the Manual and Technical Instruction Act, compel me to limit external work as much as possible. In my opinion, the examination of the Catholic schools has been of public benefit, and it will be a pity if arrangements cannot be made whereby such schools may have the benefit both of inspection and examination on the lines of the Education Act.

The accompanying tabulation gives in summary form the total presentations, promotions, &c., for the year. With the exception of Standard VI., all promotions were made by the teachers in accordance with the new departmental regulations. For the convenience of comparison the results of the previous year's examinations are also added:—

I.—Board Schools.

Classes.	Presented.		Examined.		Absent.		Failed.		Passed.		Percentage of Passes in		Ages.	
	1901.	1900.	1901.	1900.	1901.	1900.	1901.	1900.	1901.	1900.	1901.	1900.	1901.	1900.
Above Standard VI.	79	60	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Standard VI. ...	464	406	446	403	18	3	121	110	325	293	72·8	72·7	14·0	14·0
" V. ...	734	640	719	627	15	13	147	98	572	529	79·5	84·3	13·1	13·2
" IV. ...	937	947	926	928	11	22	138	121	788	804	85·1	86·9	12·2	12·3
" III. ...	1,019	1,121	1,005	1,064	14	57	141	150	864	914	86·0	85·9	11·1	11·2
" II. ...	1,066	1,067	1,054	1,017	12	50	114	101	940	916	89·2	90·0	10·0	10·2
" I. ...	1,082	1,061	1,067	997	15	74	110	86	957	911	89·7	92·3	8·8	8·9
Preparatory ...	2,675	2,719	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
	8,056	8,021	5,217	5,033	85	219	771	666	4,446	4,376	87·1	86·9	11·3 *	10·1 *

II.—Catholic Schools.

Above Standard VI.	2	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Standard VI. ...	42	567	42	...	...	...	24	...	18	...	42·8	...	...	...
" V. ...	69		68	...	1	...	22	...	46	..	67·6	...	...	...
" IV. ...	125		123	...	2	...	33	...	90	...	73·1	...	...	...
" III. ...	101		100	...	1	...	14	...	86	...	86·0	...	...	...
" II. ...	113		106	...	7	...	12	...	94	...	88·7	...	...	...
" I. ...	94		91	...	3	...	11	...	80	...	88·0	...	..	...
Preparatory ...	232	311	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
	778	878	530	530	14	37	116	145	414	422	79·6	79·6	...	...

* Average.

The above table presents some interesting results. In the Board schools 5,033 pupils were examined in standards in the year 1900. As each teacher promoted his or her own pupils, there were altogether eighty examiners; and the result of their combined judgment gave 86·9 promotions for every 100 pupils examined. Last year the same number of examiners tested the standard work of 5,217 pupils, and the promotions were 87·1 for every 100 pupils examined. In the Catholic schools, with seven examiners, the promotions for 1900 and 1901 were identical. Results such as these could not possibly take place by a fast-and-loose system of examination, and it shows that, although the basis may differ which teachers accept for a standard pass, great care is bestowed upon the work of examination. A reference to the table will show how closely the pass results approximate one another in the Board and Catholic schools in the three lower standards; but in the higher work of the schools there is a wide difference in favour of the Board schools.

My views have always been in the direction of giving the utmost latitude to the practical and trained teacher to classify his pupils in the way he deems best; but, under the present standard system and the new requirements to qualify for a pass, I am afraid there is danger looming ahead. Under Regulation 4 of the standards of instruction a Standard V. pupil may pass the standard by taking the arithmetic and composition of Standard IV., a Standard IV. the arithmetic and composition of Standard III., and a Standard III. the arithmetic of Standard II. Under the old regulations geography and drawing were included among the pass-subjects, and a pupil who failed in more than one subject was deemed "to have failed" in the examination. Personally, I do not object to the inclusion of drawing and geography as class-subjects; but, taking into consideration the technical meaning of the word "pass" as applied to an examination, it seems a retrograde step to allow pupils to be certified as having passed Standard V. when yet they may not have even a moderate acquaintance with Standard V. requirements as set forth in the regulations. Fortunately, the cases are few in this district where pupils are allowed to pass under the conditions named in the regulation; but the danger remains, and will continue to operate in modifying the effective work for a pass unless a definite number of subjects and a definite standard of attainments can be arranged to qualify for promotion.

I have not yet noticed that free classification has improved the pass-work in any of the schools; on the contrary, the rush that is setting in to teach half a score of new subjects under the Manual and Technical Instruction Act is going to have a serious effect upon what must be set down as the essential work of a school. It is quite evident to any reasonable being that reading, writing—and by this is meant the power to express thought—and arithmetic cannot be set aside in the instruction and training of children; but how are the school subjects that are enumerated in the regulations under the Manual and Technical Instruction Act to be taught? If they are of more importance in the preparation of children than the present standard subjects, whether pass, class, or additional, why not substitute them? It is quite certain that all the subjects cannot be taken without terrible weakness and superficiality somewhere. For more than twenty years I have urged upon the notice of the Board the need of adaptive education, but it must be along scientific lines. Technical training is not the outcome of spasmodic effort, as certain of the teachers appear to think. System, plan, definiteness, observation, and utility must all be kept in view, and the mere giving of a few isolated lessons will not, and should not, satisfy the requirements under the Manual and Technical Instruction Act. Indeed, it would be well if teachers, before taking up any school subjects under the Act, would make themselves acquainted with the regulations that have been issued in connection with them, and then consider whether the work in their own school warrants the introduction of additional subjects. A crowded syllabus is much to be dreaded, and yet a number of teachers, without any apparent reason, and too often without the necessary training themselves, have commenced teaching certain of the subjects enumerated in the Manual and Technical Instruction Act regulations. Disappointment and failure are the sure result of such proceedings. In these remarks I do not wish in any way to make little of the earnestness and the desire of the teachers in the pursuit of knowledge. It is the duty of teachers to anticipate the future. By all means let there be a wider grasp of the work that has to be taught in the schools, but first of all let science appear in the methods of instruction in the essential subjects of that work.

The earlier forms of instruction supplied children with what in these times is properly classed as old and unimportant information; but the children in a world of competition and rapid change have to acquire the art of living, hence the teacher of to-day must be observant and alert and even anticipatory in the interests of his pupils. A breaking-away from the old methods and forms of instruction has become a necessity, and he will be the successful teacher of to-morrow who anticipates to-morrow's wants and prepares his pupils accordingly. But this is a difficult thing to expect from teachers who reside in isolated districts. Again and again my mind is impressed with the thought that teachers in outlying districts ought to be entitled to a remove after a term of years. Isolation dulls the mind and so acts upon a teacher that he in too many instances loses grip of the advancing thought that impels the town teacher into activity. But it is the system rather than the teacher that is at fault. With all the efforts that the Board have made a number of teachers remain unaffected by the advantages that are available owing to the formation of teachers' technical classes in Napier, Gisborne, and Dannevirke. Opportunities should be provided for the intellectural intercourse of teachers. It provides the most rapid and the cheapest means of influencing the minds and creating national tendencies in a country, and it would be well if all the teachers in the service of the Board could meet together in Napier at regular intervals, as was done on a former occasion, for the purpose of dealing with some of the more important aspects of school work.

The Technical School, under the direction of Mr. Anderson, is continuing to do some good work, and its influence is beginning to be felt in the schools of the district. The plan of holding an annual examination in drawing for all the children at the same time bids fair to be very successful.

Some of the schools show excellent work, and the efforts made in original-design brushwork and advanced model are very suggestive as to the possibilities in the way of economic training in this direction.

All the students who completed their year's course of technical training at the Napier Training School have obtained appointments as teachers under the Board, and it is gratifying to find that they are doing well. The more one sees of the work of those teachers who have passed through a regular course of training and preparation the stronger grows the conviction that a period of training in the art and science of school-keeping is essential in the life-work of every teacher. A second year as a student at one of the university colleges would add immensely to the value of the preparation, and should anything be done in the way of extending the system of training young teachers for public-school work this aspect of the question should not be overlooked.

The science work in the schools lacks appliances to illustrate what is attempted in the way of preparation. The few diagrams in physiology and the illustrations in Murché's "Science Readers" are all that the children have to help them in the preparation of the syllabus work. The spirit of inquiry is sadly lacking in the school life generally, and the text-book rather than the book of nature is dealt with in the science training of the children. Here and there one finds an exception, and some fine specimens of plants, insects, and of native birds' eggs have been collected by some of the children in the bush districts. But individuality among children is far too little fostered, and too often one finds that the greatest dread of pupils is to put down their own thoughts. The book is taken as the standard, and originality of thought and of expression are seldom fostered in class preparation.

Drill for boys and girls has grown into popularity in the majority of schools, and in quite a number of them the boys excel in military drill, whilst the girls have club drill and calisthenic training of a type. But one thing appears to me as wanting in the physical training of girls, and that is deportment. Gracefulness in walking in the case of a woman is worth striving for, and this can easily be attained if attention is paid to this aspect of training during the calisthenic exercises.

Of the moral aspects of school life little need be said. Committees do a good deal in the way of supervising and visiting the schools to see that things are going on properly. There certainly is no lack of educational interest on the part of Committees, who quickly discover for themselves the efficiency or otherwise of their school. Assistance is readily given in the case of teachers who wish to carry out anything for the good of a school or a district, and the ignorant Committee-man is fast disappearing as a factor in the work of education.

The buildings that are the property of the Board are generally in good working order, the grounds are neatly kept, and the fences are in fair repair. The teachers' residences in a number of cases require some attention, but otherwise I do not anticipate that any large demands for repairs will be made by Committees during the current year.

I have, &c.,

The Chairman, Board of Education, Napier. H. Hill.

MARLBOROUGH.

Sir,— Blenheim, 20th January, 1902.

I have the honour to submit my eleventh annual report on the condition of primary education in the district.

The number of schools open during the year varies with every quarter. For that ending the 31st March sixty-one schools were in operation; for the June quarter, sixty-six; for the September quarter, sixty-five; and, for the December quarter, sixty-three. These fluctuations are caused by the temporary closing of small aided schools, due to the difficulty of obtaining teachers willing to accept situations in remote and dull localities for the very small remuneration obtainable. These constant changes, besides being, of course, injurious to the progress of the scholars, are exceedingly troublesome in the office, as it is frequently discovered that a school has been closed only by the absence of an attendance return at the end of a quarter. I suggest that in future the correspondents be required to give at least one month's notice of the closing or reopening of their schools. The total number of scholars on the rolls also necessarily varies with each quarter, and the report will refer to the numbers on the rolls of the schools at the date of the annual visit. This year the roll-number at the time referred to was 2,077, or forty-eight less than were returned in 1900. The decrease is due partly to the temporary closing of schools already mentioned, and partly to the success which has attended the newly established High School, the majority of whose pupils would probably have been attending some of our primary schools.

The following statement of the roll-numbers during the last ten years is interesting, though revealing the unsatisfactory truth that of late years there has been no increase, but rather a tendency towards a diminished school population. In the year 1890 the roll-number was 1,826; in 1891, 2,002; in 1892, 1,991; in 1893, 1978; in 1894, 2,079; in 1895, 2,169; in 1896, 2,185; in 1897, 2,130; in 1898, 2,135; in 1899, 2,099; in 1900, 2,125; and, in 1901, 2,077. This roll-number was distributed amongst the several classes as follows: 58, or about 2·8 per cent., in Standard VII.; 167, or 8 per cent., in Standard VI.; 211, or 10 per cent., in Standard V.; 264, or 12 per cent., in Standard IV.; 283, or 13·6 per cent., in Standard III.; 257, or 12·4 per cent., in Standard II.; 240, or 11·5 per cent., in Standard I.; and 597, or 28·7 per cent., in the preparatory class. These proportions vary slightly from the corresponding figures last year, being 2 per cent. higher for Standard VI., 1 per cent. lower for Standard V., and the other classes being about ½ per cent. lower.

The number of scholars promoted in Standards I. to VI. was 1,276, or 61·5 per cent. of the roll-number and 92 per cent. of the number examined in those classes. The failures altogether amounted to 108 (or about 8 per cent. of the number examined), and were distributed as follows: Thirty-four, or nearly 21 per cent. of the number examined in Standard VI.; twelve, or nearly

6 per cent., in Standard V.; twenty-two, or nearly 9 per cent., in Standard IV.; twenty-two, or 8 per cent., in Standard III.; eleven, or 4 per cent., in Standard II.; and seven, or nearly 3 per cent., in Standard I. These figures show an improvement all round of from 1 to 4 per cent. The high percentage of failures in Standard VI. is no doubt partly due to the fact of the syllabus for that standard containing two pass-subjects which were class-subjects in all the standards below, though arithmetic, as usual, is responsible for a considerable number. It is an official fiction that the placing of a subject in the class group ought not to affect the thoroughness of the teaching of that subject, but experience shows that there is a vast difference in the effect of that teaching as exhibited at the annual examinations. Nor is this necessarily due in all cases to any want of attention on the part of the teacher. The fact of a subject not being required to secure promotion is well known to all the scholars, and no doubt frequently induces a carelessness and indifference which, when combined, perhaps, with a distaste for the subject itself, cannot fail to neutralise to a great extent the most efficient teaching, and therefore to bring discredit upon a school which is not always deserved.

In my last report I expressed the intention of leaving for the future the results given by the teachers unaltered unless under special circumstances. As, however, such special circumstances have arisen, and as I was unwilling to make any invidious distinctions, I felt bound to treat all schools this year as before, taking advantage of clause 6 of the regulations empowering me to "examine all the pupils of the school." I was also more inclined to do so since my absence on the Public-school Teachers' Salaries Commission prevented my renewing that valuable insight into and experience of the actual work of the schools which the visits of inspection so abundantly afford. I therefore substituted my results for those of the teacher whenever they differed, and in some of the large schools several special cases were considered in consultation with the teachers and marked accordingly. Altogether I refused promotion in thirty-two cases which were passed by the teachers.

As the failures in the Board schools amount to 29 per cent. of the number examined, while the number for the whole district is 21 per cent., it appears that the larger schools are relatively less successful, on the whole, than the smaller ones, a fact which I have frequently noticed and which is easily accounted for.

I think it is highly desirable that there should be some common understanding with respect to the promotion of scholars from one standard to another. The regulations say that pupils in Standards III., IV., and V. may be allowed to pass though failing in two subjects, so that a scholar may fail in spelling and arithmetic, or in spelling and composition, and yet be promoted to a higher standard. I think it should be recognised that the provision is not mandatory, but merely permissive, and that, in the best interests of scholars, it should be applied only under exceptional circumstances, and that great weakness in any two subjects should be a bar to promotion. This should undoubtedly be the case in Standards V. and VI., and neither "exemption" nor "proficiency" certificates should be issued to a scholar who fails in any two of the pass-subjects of his standard.

Class-subjects.—Taking thirty schools in which all the upper standards are represented, and employing the notation prescribed by the Department, the following shows the amount of success that has attended the attempt to fulfil this portion of the standard requirements: Geography—Good, 13; satisfactory, 7; fair, 6; moderate, 1; inferior, 3. Drawing—Excellent, 1; good, 3; satisfactory, 12; fair, 8; moderate, 6. Grammar—Good, 1; satisfactory, 2; fair, 9; moderate, 11; inferior, 7. History—Good, 5; satisfactory, 11; fair, 6; moderate, 2; inferior, 6. Science—Satisfactory, 6; fair, 13; moderate, 6; inferior, 5. Recitation—Good, 5; satisfactory, 3; fair, 12; moderate, 10. The schools not included in these figures are chiefly small aided schools, in which one (or more) of the upper standards was not represented. Handwork, although not unknown in some of our schools, has not yet been generally taken up, but I expect a fair number will have something of the kind to present at the next examination. Several schools continue to employ kindergarten methods in the preparatory and lower standards, and some very pretty and creditable examples of such work were shown at the annual visit. I expect many of the schools will introduce modelling this year, and have already a supply of plasticine for that purpose.

Additional Subjects.—Of the three subjects now included in this group needlework is taken up in all schools having women teachers, and, in not a few cases, with creditable results, considering the very short time that can be spared for the purpose. Singing is practised at ten schools. There are a few larger schools not taking this subject, but I do not consider that this must necessarily be regarded as "a ground of reproach," clause 10 of the regulations notwithstanding. In most of the schools named the singing is taught by ear only, and in few is there much instruction in the theory. Drill was presented in nine schools. In the Blenheim and Renwick Schools the drill and the exercises of both boys and girls were very good.

School Year.—If such reports as this are to be employed as a means of comparison, either with schools in the same district or with those of the colony generally, it is of the greatest importance that there should be something like uniformity in the length of the school year—that is, in the number of half-days during which the schools are at work. Leaving out schools that have been closed for a portion of the year, the average number of times that the other schools in the district have been open is 334. The longest school year was 462 half-days, two small aided schools having been open so often. The shortest was 286 half-days. The average was slightly lower than it was last year, owing partly to the extra holidays given in connection with the Royal visit. The scholars who failed in Standard VI. attended, on the average, 287 times, or less than 144 days out of the year. The highest attendance of these was 364, and the lowest 119 half-days, or sixty days out of the whole year. The requirements of the syllabus can with difficulty be met in well-staffed schools by a full year's attendance, so that the only wonder is that so few fail to come up to the standard after such a poor attendance. Although the evils of irregular attendance

have been pointed out and bewailed year after year in reports from all parts of the colony, it seems to be as rampant as ever. If the consequences fell only upon those who are defaulters in this respect it would be comparatively of minor importance; but the regular scholars lose no small portion of their time, the teachers and Committees suffer pecuniary loss, and the country does not receive full value for the liberal expenditure on primary education. The appointment of Truant Officers may to some extent mitigate the evil, and time will show how much benefit will accrue from the last amendment of the School Attendance Act. The withdrawal of the permission to employ the police as Truant Officers is one of the many mysterious arrangements quite unintelligible by the ordinary citizen; but I am convinced that until the police are charged with the duty of enforcing its regulations any School Attendance Act will be little better than an elaborate sham.

Average Age.—In the regulations that were superseded by those now in force it was provided that "Whenever a child more than eight years of age is presented in Class P the principal teacher shall give the Inspector a written explanation of the reason for not presenting the child in Standard I." In the new regulations this has been omitted, and, instead, the last paragraph in Regulation II. reads, "The Inspector may require from the head teacher a written explanation in the case of any pupil whose age is much above the average age of the pupils in that class for that school or for that education district." Under the former regulations these lists of children over eight years retained in the preparatory class were always supplied and reported upon. This year, as it was not demanded, only a few schools presented such a list.

The average age at which children in the district have passed the several standards is given in the table below. The aided schools have at present the effect of raising the average age of the higher and lowering that of the lower standards. The reason of this is evident. As a rule an aided or household school is not started until there are three or four children, or perhaps more, of school age. By this time the oldest is perhaps ten or eleven years of age, often older, and these, commencing at one of the lowest standards, are well advanced in years before they reach the Fifth and Sixth; but all the children below school age enter the school as soon as they reach that age (five years), and under the favourable conditions of absolutely regular attendance, together with, in the majority of cases, fairly good teaching, pass annually from class to class.

Small Schools.—The small aided schools in the Sounds County have, with very few exceptions, fully justified their existence by producing as good results as it is reasonable to expect. At sixteen of them I promoted every scholar examined, and in only one case, where the result was not so satisfactory, the teacher was not to be blamed, but greatly to be pitied. At a few of the small schools some of the class or additional subjects are omitted, such as history or science, but the majority take up, more or less successfully, every subject of the syllabus, excepting singing and drill.

The latest regulations for the examination and classification of the scholars in primary schools have now been under trial for two years, and, although the long-expected and desired relief from the unreasonable demands of an overloaded syllabus has not yet been granted, the teachers of the colony have been again called upon to present their annual balance-sheets independently of the inspectorial auditor, and to endeavour to satisfy the often unreasonable expectations of Committees and parents. After nearly a quarter of a century under the old system, parents and the public generally, who have accustomed themselves to the receipt of a more or less satisfactory annual dividend in the shape of a "percentage of passes," are unwilling to accept the verdict of the teacher alone as to the result of the year's work, which parents are often led to consider satisfactory or otherwise according to the success which may have attended their own children. Judging from last year's reports from all parts of the colony, and from the local results this year, it seems probable that the craving for apparently good results has been fairly well satisfied; but how far that satisfaction is due to the exceedingly lenient nature of the regulations remains to be discovered hereafter. I am convinced, however, that no great gain to the cause of true education is possible under any system which compels the teachers of all schools, large and small alike, to attempt to satisfy the inordinate requirements of the existing syllabus, or to be regarded as "highly censurable" if they neglect any part of it. If the teachers are to be trusted with freedom of classification, and the experience in the Old Country is decidedly in favour of the supposition, they should be trusted entirely; and the Inspector's examination should be confined to the Fifth and Sixth Standards, for the purpose of issuing certificates of "exemption" in the former and of "proficiency" in the latter. If, however, the teachers are to be trusted to that extent, there is no reason why even the issue of these certificates should be withheld from them, except that the mistrust of some parents and Committees would for a time give some trouble until a more lengthened experience of the real advantages of such a system should have entirely abolished the insensate desire for a "good percentage of passes." It perhaps will always be desirable, in the interests of teachers of household and very small schools, to have the teachers' classification confirmed (or otherwise) by the Inspector, seeing that such teachers are so immediately under the influence of parental pressure, and in the majority of cases would greatly prefer that this should be done. If such a change could be brought about the number of Inspectors might be considerably reduced, and more time could be devoted to the far more important portion of the duties peculiar to them as Inspectors as distinguished from examiners.

The admittedly unsatisfactory practice of judging the condition of a school by the results of a single examination has been often insisted upon, and every Inspector must have felt from time to time that in certain cases the outcome of his examination has not presented the condition of the school as favourably as his experience, gained by inspection, had led him to expect. If, however, the efficiency of a school is to be gauged chiefly by the Inspector's knowledge of its working condition as observed at the visits of inspection, these visits should be more or less frequent, according to his experience of the circumstances of the school and the methods of teaching

employed, and every facility should be afforded to render such visits valuable to himself and helpful to the teachers. Even now the condition of the exercise-books at a few of the best schools affords some evidence of the efficiency of such schools; but, in view of the fact that at present the promotion of scholars by the teacher is liable to revision or alteration by the Inspector, it is imperative that a more systematic use of exercise-books throughout the district should be insisted upon, and what is (to a certain extent) the practice at some schools should be compulsory in all. In order to bring about an improvement in this respect I propose to issue a circular strongly recommending a systematic use of exercise-books in all standards above Standard II. These books should contain exercises on each subject taken by the class in regular periodic order, and with a frequency proportioned to its importance, such order to be noted on the time-table. Each exercise should be dated by the scholar (this of itself being an exercise of practical utility) and initialled by the teacher after examination. All errors should be distinctly marked in coloured pencil, and in the Fifth and Sixth Standards exercises in composition, grammar, analysis, &c., should be rewritten as corrected on the opposite page. Bearing in mind that it is not the mere quantity of these exercises, but the care with which they are examined and corrected, in which their value consists, the expense to the parents would probably be little or no more than it is at present (for exercise-books are used, after a fashion, in all schools), and in the rare cases of real inability to provide books they should be supplied free of charge. These exercise-books might also contain the written work of the periodical examinations that are, or ought to be, held from time to time by the head teacher. If proper attention were paid to cleanliness and neatness of writing and arrangement of the work in these books, the use of copy-books in the upper standards might almost be dispensed with.

I now offer a few remarks upon the treatment in this district of some of the subjects of the syllabus.

Reading is, on the whole, fairly well taught, and gives rise to a very few failures. I think that in some schools the second reading-book supplied by the Board to provide more practice is not so much used as it should be, and at the next "annual" visit I intend to use both books in testing this subject. At some schools the preparatory classes were set by the teacher to read a book which was far beyond their stage of progress, while in others the children in this and the First Standard class evidently knew the lessons "by heart," and could "read" as well with the books closed as open. Among authors who have lately wrestled with the intricate and complex subject of school management, Messrs. Collar and Crook consider that this ability to say off the whole piece without the book is by no means to be deprecated, as it "may be generally regarded as a proof that the child understands the sentence." I cannot say that my experience points in this direction, and am glad to find the authors recommending an increased supply of reading-books as a remedy for this tendency. In the upper preparatory classes, and in Standards I. and II., a third book might advantageously be used, as is the case now in several districts. The quantity of reading-matter in the books used below Standard I. is very small, and three could easily be employed to advantage. The three sets of books, though containing entirely different lessons or stories, would not include very many new words, as there is a narrow limit to the number of words of one or simple words of two syllables; so that, while affording much additional practice in reading, the increased difficulty with regard to spelling would not be so great as might be supposed, and, by judicious selection on the part of the teacher or examiner, might be reduced to a minimum. As might be expected, the reading at the small schools is often better than at the larger ones, this being no doubt the result of the much larger amount of practice that it is possible to give to the smaller numbers attending them. The overabused and equally overpraised method of teaching this subject by the aid of simultaneous reading would, in the hands of a strong vigilant teacher, be advantageous to large classes, as giving them far more practice than they can possibly obtain otherwise in the limited time usually allotted to this portion of the syllabus; and, on the whole, with the proviso given above, its advantages, in my opinion, outweigh its disadvantages. There is heard occasionally an outcry for the adoption of one set of reading-books for the whole colony, but I am by no means in sympathy with this proposal; indeed, I consider that it would be in every way an unmitigated calamity if such a course were adopted. That every child in New Zealand in any given class should be compelled to read the same lesson, on the same very limited number of subjects, set forth in the very same words—even if the best of all possible books were selected—would be carrying the craze for uniformity to an absurd and mischievous extent. A large majority of the children attending our primary schools have little inclination and less opportunity for reading outside the school walls, and the effect of the suggested system would be to reduce a large proportion of the youth of the colony to one dead level of ignorance of everything not touched upon in the reading-books selected. The only argument in favour of such a proposal that I have heard is based on the expense to parents who move from one education district to another; but, in my opinion, this is a much overrated objection to the present arrangement. Although the number of complaints may be considerable, the cases of real hardship from this cause are, comparatively speaking, very few. In my experience, extending over a quarter of a century, I have found that the greatest grumblers at the cost of books are frequently better able to afford it than others who cheerfully provide all that is needful for their children's progress, the former frequently consuming in self-indulgence and on unnecessary and unwholesome expenditure on their children's appetites sums that would provide them with books many times over.

Writing in copy-books, on the whole, leaves little room for complaint. It is, however, not uncommon to find two or three different kinds of copy-books in the same school, and even in the same class. The last is probably caused by children, moved from one school to another, bringing with them the book they had been using in the former school. This must interfere considerably with the satisfactory teaching of the subject, and is somewhat embarrassing to the Inspector at the

annual visit. Although the copy-book writing in the district is fairly satisfactory, the same can by no means be said of the ordinary handwriting of the scholars as judged by the specimens produced in the written work of the examination, which is frequently very poor and occasionally abominable. At the next examination I shall use transcription from one of the reading-books as a test for writing in all schools, reverting, in fact, to my former practice in this respect.

Spelling this year is, next to arithmetic, the least satisfactory of the pass-subjects. While very good at some schools, in others it was far from creditable. At one school in the Sounds not a single scholar, out of eleven presented in Standards III., IV., V., and VI., passed in this subject. At Blenheim Boys' School it was exceptionally good, as only four failed out of 101 in the four upper standards. As the dictation and spelling tests are always given out by the teacher, no part of the weakness disclosed can be attributed to the unfamiliar voice or pronunciation of the dictator. Some teachers, until checked by me, would repeat the phrase or word several times, and no doubt are in the habit of doing so during the year. This is a practice much to be condemned, as it "has a bad effect upon the discipline by removing the necessity for attention." In the schools where I noticed this fault the failures in spelling were generally numerous. The authors already quoted make a suggestion which I think a good one, and likely to improve the results in this subject. They suggest that the "spelling bee," which was so much in vogue some years back, should be utilised in schools. A spelling bee might be held once a month in each class, limited, of course, to the words that had been previously met with in their reading or other books. If properly managed, and some small prize or privilege were awarded to the "last out," it would excite much interest in the subject. In the higher standards, if not in all, each scholar might have the right to suggest one or more words, and I believe that the scholars would take much more interest in this portion of their work, and would derive much benefit and no little enjoyment also from some application of this "entertainment" to their school life.

Arithmetic: It is not easy to account for the notorious fact that this subject, though taking up fully one-fifth of the whole school time, invariably produces the least satisfactory results, and that relatively the largest proportion of failures should be found not in the smaller, but in the larger schools. Probably this weakness is due to one or more of the following causes: (*a*) Defective methods of teaching; (*b*) insufficient care in the examination of the daily work; (*c*) the prevalence during the year of the practice of copying; (*d*) overconfidence of some of the brighter scholars at the examination; (*e*) carelessness on the part of others; (*f*) the slovenly formation of figures, leading to numerous mistakes; (*g*) want of methodical arrangement of the various stages of the work. Probably all these defects help to bring about the unsatisfactory results referred to, and most of them might be laid at the door of weak discipline. No fault can be found with the tests supplied by the Department this year, as they are well within the limits of the syllabus; indeed, comparing them with questions set by me at Westland for the year 1879, which I have now before me, I am surprised at the difference, both in the number and the nature of the questions, compared with those considered sufficient at the present time; yet the results obtained were better than they were here at this examination. The questions then set for Standard VI. were twelve in number; for the Fifth, ten; for the Fourth, eight; and, for the Third, eight; against five in each standard at the present time. One cause of the success of the Westland schools at the time referred to was the fact that the scholars had a choice of questions, the number they were required to work being (as nearly as I can remember) seven in Standard VI. and six in the other standards. This was a great advantage to the scholars, and was, I think, a fairer test of their real progress. Another very important advantage enjoyed by the Westland schools at that time was the fact that no failure was recorded unless the scholar had attended 75 per cent. of the number of times that the school had been open since the previous examination. No doubt if similar advantages were enjoyed now there would be a marked improvement in this as well as in other subjects, and a better state of things might be revealed than is manifest under the present system. There appears to be a pretty general opinion amongst Inspectors that the quantity of work required in arithmetic by the present syllabus could be considerably lessened without injury to the cause of education; but, although I shall probably find myself in the minority, I cannot think that this is either necessary or desirable. I should very much prefer to see a reduction in the number of subjects demanded, without any great relaxation in the requirements of those retained. With arithmetic, as with grammar, the mere practical utility of the subject to the vast majority of the scholars attending our primary schools is quite of secondary importance. In these days of high pressure and competition in all walks of life, but especially in business and mercantile pursuits, this is very evident. No bank clerk, for instance, would waste his employer's time in calculating the interest on an overdraft, the discount on a bill, or the value of an annuity, but would simply turn to a set of tables and take out the figures in one-tenth of the time that even an expert arithmetician would calculate them. In fact, in ninety-nine out of every hundred cases the ability to add up long columns of figures rapidly and accurately is of far more practical value than all the rest of the arithmetical work of the syllabus. So that if the question of practical utility in after-life is to be alone considered, then, indeed, a very extensive reduction in the present requirements would be both possible and advisable. A high authority on education (Dr. Fitch) says of arithmetic, "It is conspicuously one of those subjects of school instruction the purpose of which extends beyond itself. You cannot measure its intellectual usefulness by looking at its immediate aims"; and a few lines further on he describes it as a "science, because it investigates principles, because he who unearths the truths which underlie the rules of arithmetic is being exercised not merely in the attainment of a particular kind of truth about numbers, but in the processes by which truth of many other kinds is to be investigated and attained." Many similar opinions on the subject of arithmetic are to be found in works by authors of repute, and I cannot believe it would be advantageous to true education to reduce to any great extent the present requirements of the syllabus.

Grammar, among the class-subjects, occupies the same position as arithmetic among the pass-subjects, and probably from nearly the same causes. Unlike arithmetic, however, grammar, defined by Lindley Murray as "the art of speaking and writing the English language with propriety," is practically useless. In the edition of the standard regulations issued in 1892 (page 6) the following remarks are made on this subject: "The great value of grammar depends on its character as a science of elementary logic, as a study of the forms in which the processes of thought stand revealed. In this aspect it plays a very important part in the development of intelligence, and is pregnant with suggestions that may guide the pupil into ways of philosophic thought when his school days are over. It is, moreover, a science of classification, and among the classificatory sciences it has this advantage: that there is no need to go far afield to find the objects of it; they are accessible always and to every one, being the thoughts of our own minds and the words of our own lips." Similar opinions are expressed by many eminent writers on education, and, having regard for them, I cannot think it would be wise to dispense with this subject, as has been suggested, or even to limit it (except as a pass-subject) to "the grammatical basis of composition."

At the present day, when such vigorous and enthusiastic efforts are being exerted for the promotion of practical (*i.e.*, technical and manual) instruction, there is some reason to fear that the claims of intellectual education in primary schools may be altogether thrust aside, and its pursuit relegated solely to high schools and universities.

The Catholic Schools.—I was unable to examine these schools last year through press of work, and this year for the same reason I was compelled to limit my examination to the Sixth Standard classes. Ten girls and six boys were examined, and all passed but one girl. The nine girls who passed made an average of 69½ per cent. of the possible marks, four of them gaining "credit passes"—that is, over 75 per cent. of the total marks. The boys averaged 62 per cent. of the maximum. The average age of the girls who passed was fourteen years and six months, and that of the boys thirteen years and seven months; and, though the girls gained a higher average of marks than the boys, they had the advantage of nearly a year in age and a very much more regular attendance, the boys averaging only 250 attendances, against 367 by the girls. Both schools did very good work, the only weak subject being arithmetic; and a few of the girls were not very successful with spelling. On the other hand, the composition of the girls was, on the whole, somewhat better than that of the boys; so that, taking one thing with another, I consider they were practically equal, and both can bear comparison with most of our larger schools. The standards below the Sixth were examined, according to the regulations, by the teachers.

Scholarships.—The annual competitive examination of candidates for scholarships took place in December. The number of candidates was the same as at the last competition—twenty, sent up by one private school and nine Board schools. The number who qualified by gaining 60 per cent. of the possible marks was nine, the same as last year; but the average age of these was nearly three years less than that of the candidates in 1900. The scholar at the head of the list was sent up by one of the small country schools, which has long been noted for the uniform excellence of its work; and the second in order of merit has the distinction of being, with one exception, the youngest of the twenty candidates. The scholarships to be awarded were: Two country scholarships of £35 per annum and three town scholarships of £10 per annum; in addition to which the Governors of the High School allotted two "free" places to the next in order of merit of those not gaining ordinary scholarships. For the first time a private school has sent up a candidate, and, although he did not take a very high place on the list, it does not follow that his real attainments are in any way inferior to those of many of the other competitors. Unless the curriculum of a private school is in harmony with the public-school syllabus in the subjects dealt with by both a private scholar would be heavily handicapped in competition with scholars entirely and continuously trained under the Government regulations. Next year there will be only one country and two town scholarships offered in addition to the two "free" places.

For the first time since their institution by Mr. T. L. Buick the M.H.R. medals have both been taken this year by the same school—Renwick. These medals are given one to the boy and the other to the girl in the Marlborough Education District who gains the highest marks in the Sixth Standard at the Inspector's examination. In awarding these medals those only are considered who are presented in Standard VI. for the first time, and I think that there should be some limit as to age; but that is a matter for the donor to consider.

If the suggestions before made with regard to the systematic employment of exercise-books throughout the year are generally adopted, I purpose next year, as a rule, to accept the judgment of the teachers of all schools above Grade O as to the promotion of their scholars.

It is a matter worth serious consideration whether some of the despised old-fashioned methods of school management should not be brought into use under the new system, which throws such serious responsibility upon the teachers. It is customary nowadays to decry all or nearly all the methods practised by our forefathers in educational matters, and with overweening self-complacency to condemn as inferior everything that has not been evolved during the last few decades. Under the pressure of their new responsibilities the conscientious teachers will feel the want of some more trustworthy evidence of fitness for promotion than the bare results of an annual or quarterly examination, and this, I think, might be found in the adoption of some of the despised "old-fashioned" practices.

The practice of "taking places" in class, and of keeping a record of the average place of each scholar, together with a well-considered system of marks for, say, regular attendance and punctuality, weekly place in class, neatness and cleanliness of written work, general good conduct, &c., with a reduction of marks for breaches of discipline or other bad conduct, would, I believe, furnish the teacher with far more reliable data for his decision at the end of the year; while it would arouse and keep alive a healthy spirit of emulation, which could not fail to assist the progress of the whole school.

All this would, of course, take up time that cannot well be spared from the hours devoted to instruction, and would therefore encroach upon what certain teachers regard as their leisure moments; but, as I remarked in my first annual report for this district, a teacher whose heart is in his work and who is actuated by one of the highest motives of which human nature is capable—the desire to advance the moral and intellectual welfare of his fellow-creatures of the next generation—has no leisure hours so long as anything remains to be done for the benefit of his pupils and the furtherance of the cause of true education.

In the expectation of some alteration in the existing syllabus I have delayed recommending what is, I think, necessary—a special programme for work above Standard VI. Some amendments are also desirable in our pupil-teachers' regulations, which I have also postponed in the hope that some movement in the direction of a colonial system of training as well as of payment would shortly be made by the Department. As the Public-school Teachers' Salaries Act will make it necessary for the Board to revise all its regulations, these matters might receive attention at the same time.

I have, &c.,

The Chairman, Education Board, Blenheim. JOHN SMITH, Inspector.

SUMMARY OF RESULTS FOR THE WHOLE DISTRICT.

Classes.	Number on Roll.	Present.	Passed.	Average Age of those that passed.
				Yrs. mos.
Above Standard VI.	58	...	...	...
Standard VI.	167	163	129	14 4
" V.	211	204	192	13 2
" IV.	264	252	230	12 1
" III.	283	275	253	10 9
" II.	257	253	242	9 7
" I.	240	237	230	8 7
Preparatory...	597	...	...	...
Totals	2,077	1,384	1,276	11 5*

* Mean of average age.

NELSON.

SIR,— Education Office, 28th January, 1902.

We have the honour to lay before you the following report on the public schools for the year 1901:—

One hundred and twenty-two schools were at work during the last quarter of the year, and with the help of Mr. T. G. Malcolm, who acted as assistant Inspector for three months and a half, we were able to examine them all.

During the year three new schools were opened—at Upper Tadmor, Arnold's, and Maruia Station; but five others—Sunnyside, Ligar Bay, Scott's, Buller Ferry, and Owen Junction—have been closed, so that the total is two below that recorded last year. Visits of inspection have also been paid to ninety-three schools, it being found impossible during the first half of the year to reach all the small outlying settlements. The average weekly number on the rolls for the September quarter was 5,680, as compared with 5,814 in 1900, so that the annual decrease still continues, and to a greater extent than formerly. This falling-off was general throughout the colony for the years 1899 and 1900. This year the loss of numbers is most apparent in the gold-mining centres. In some coal-mining parts the school-rolls have grown larger with settlement.

The average attendance for the year has been 4,733, or 82·8 per cent. of the average weekly number on the rolls. This year the working average only has been kept—that is, days on which the attendance was less than half the number on the school-roll have not been taken into account. This we regret, as the strict average formed the fairer basis for estimating regularity of attendance and making comparisons between different schools. While the working average is retained as a basis for the payment of capitation, the fraction upon which it is calculated should, we consider, be not lower than three-fifths, or 60 per cent. As at present estimated, a large school, in which the attendance is generally regular, obtains little or no benefit from the retention of the working average, the attendance rarely, if ever, falling below half, so that the special provision for abnormal days of excessively bad weather, sudden epidemics, &c., acts by comparison as a handicap upon regularity of attendance. As a result of good attendance we naturally found that the best examination results were shown in schools where the attendance reached over 90 per cent. To see the reverse of the picture, and note how careless parents can be of the educational interests of their children, we have but to look at the attendance at Ngatimoti (67 per cent.). It is truly disheartening to conceive of an able teacher wearing himself out in the public service and receiving from the parents no more support than these figures would indicate.

The following is an extract from the report of the Minister of Education for the year 1900: "In regularity of attendance there has been an improvement in every district except in Nelson, which remains the same as in 1899, and Marlborough and Southland, which show a slight falling-off. In Grey and Westland the high figures which were attained in 1899—89 per cent. and 86·8 per cent. of the average roll-number respectively—have increased to 89·1 and 87·5 per cent. Otago, with an attendance of 86·9 per cent. of the number on the roll, stands at the head of the

larger education districts." The average attendance for that year throughout the colony was 84·1, but in the Nelson District only 82·9 per cent., although that is the highest percentage that has so far been recorded here. Even if we except the farming and the hop- and fruit-picking districts, we cannot yet view with complacency the degree of regularity with which the rest of the schools are attended. The three largest centres in the district, Nelson City, Westport, and Reefton, show this year respectively 85·1, 80·3, and 81·6 per cent. At our inspection, or, as they are sometimes called, "surprise" visits, which, of course, are paid in any weather, we usually found, so far as numbers go, the schools in fair, if not good, working order. The following were exceptions to the rule: (1.) A school of sixty on a very fine day, when hop-picking was near at hand, showed only thirty-five present. (2.) At a smaller one of seventeen the Inspector and the teacher were favoured by the presence of three mites, who alone had had the courage to face a trifling drizzle. (3.) At a third, one very stormy morning, when the river was in very high flood, with part of the district and the railway-line submerged, only ten children were present out of forty-two, and we deemed it advisable to send these out for their own safety when an overflow from the river surrounded the school-room. Thanks to prompt action our serious rescue-work in this case was confined to helping a half-drowned cow to struggle on to the playground, after a long and perilous journey down the river. A somewhat similar experience befell us on one of our recent examination visits. On his way to the school your Inspector found the teacher and one of her elder pupils playing the Good Samaritan and practising "life-saving," though perhaps not exactly of the kind intended in the syllabus of the Manual and Technical Regulations. Two long-woolled sheep had fallen into a small creek beside the path, and, though the young ladies had successfully "grassed" one, the weight of the other was too much for their united strength. With some misgivings the Inspector undertook the task, and "passed," but not with ease. (4.) At one school of twenty-four, notorious for the irregularity of its attendance, we found one fine day in May only twelve children present. (5.) At another small one of ten, one very wet morning, after a toilsome journey of eleven miles, the Inspector met no one but the teacher.

In addition to the public schools, we have this year examined the children of the Whakarewa Orphanage, St. Canice's School (Westport), and the Sacred Heart School (Reefton).

On the 31st December there were in the Board's employment 152 teachers, whose classification was as follows: Head teachers—Certificated or licensed, 40: assistants—certificated or licensed, 29; uncertificated, 2: sole teachers—certificated or licensed, 46; uncertificated, 35: totals, certificated or licensed, 115; uncertificated, 37. The numbers for 1900 were—Certificated or licensed, 115; uncertificated, 41.

An improvement is shown in the reduced number of uncertificated assistants, and the twenty-one schools in this district having each an average attendance lower than ten are responsible for most of the uncertificated sole teachers. Before much improvement can be looked for in the staffing of such small schools the rate of payment must be increased. The colonial scale is welcome in this respect, as its rate is higher than the Nelson Board could afford; but, even so, it is altogether inadequate. By the adoption of the scale which makes provision for such small schools the Government has recognised what has long been a debatable point—the right of such schools to exist, and, consequently, its duty to maintain them. Double rate of pay, or £10 *per capita*, would be none too great an allowance, and even then for a maximum of five scholars would only be equal to pupil-teacher rates. In all, forty-eight pupil-teachers were employed, and of these six are certificated and two others have passed the necessary examination.

The adoption of the colonial scale of staffs will ultimately mean the displacement of twenty-two pupil-teachers by the appointment of ten assistant teachers. The schools affected will be chiefly those with an average attendance of from thirty-one to sixty-six; but some of the larger schools will also lose teachers, so that, although some will be greatly benefited, the majority will suffer in staffing by the change.

Fifty-two candidates presented themselves for the pupil-teachers' entrance examination in June, and twenty-six passed, the majority of the failures being caused by incorrect spelling. Vacancies have been regularly filled by those who have passed this or a higher examination. In future pupil-teachers will be required only in schools having each an average attendance exceeding ninety, and, as these at present in this district number only nine, opportunities of entering the service in this way will be much restricted. The establishment of the entrance test has proved of very great use, and now the passing of this examination should be the minimum requirement from the teacher of even the smallest household school.

A summary of results for the whole district has been extracted from the annual return, and, with the corresponding totals for 1900, is shown below:—

Classes.	Number on Roll	Present in Standards.	Passed.	Average Age of those that passed.
				Yrs. mos.
Above Standard VI.	197	...	...	...
Standard VI.	444	428	314	13 6
" V.	603	586	458	13 0
" IV.	742	723	549	11 3
" III.	693	663	535	10 10
" II.	665	647	524	9 3
" I.	671	648	563	8 9
Preparatory	1,654	...	...	...
Totals	5,669	3,695	2,943	11 1*
Totals for 1900	5,802	3,867	2,998	11 3½

* Mean of average age.

The total number on the roll is 133 below that of 1900, the decrease being most noticeable in Standards III. and V. The number examined in standards includes some who, though examined by their teachers, were not present at our examinations. When their absence was satisfactorily accounted for, and we judged from the teachers' results that there was no question of their ability to pass the examination, we thought it would be too severe to deprive them of their certificates. The opposite state of matters prevailed at one school, several children who had absented themselves from the teacher's examination turning up eagerly at ours. This was exceptional, as we generally found very little difference in the attendance at the two examinations. The average age is much lower than in 1900, especially in Standards IV. and VI., where the difference amounts to eleven and five months respectively.

The total number present at examination was 5,345. At forty-five schools, of which Motupipi (62), Richmond Girls' (56), Hope (49), and Dovedale (44) were the largest, every child on the rolls was present, whilst Black's Point (92) and Foxhill (88) had each only one absentee.

The new regulations for the inspection and examination of schools wisely allow an Inspector considerable latitude in his method of conducting an examination. In regard to the examination in pass-subjects of Standards I. to V., our general practice this year in the larger schools has been to test a school's efficiency by sampling the work of each class. As a rule one or more classes were also fully examined in detail; but the valuation of the head teacher was accepted, unless we strongly disapproved. In the smaller schools controlled by sole teachers we found it advisable in fairness to all to re-examine each scholar in pass-subjects. We have always doubted the wisdom of expecting teachers to examine for certificates classes which they themselves have taught. The mere setting of the examination-papers places a conscientious teacher between the horns of this dilemma: Is he to set questions of a form with which he has familiarised the children, or is he purposely to avoid them? In the one case the tests may be so stereotyped, in the other so altogether unusual, as to appear quite unfair to an impartial outsider. As a rule, in the largest schools we have had little occasion to differ from the judgment of the head teacher. In the small and intermediate schools—that is, for example, those in which two teachers are employed in each—very marked differences of opinion have been displayed. The general tendency among such teachers when acting as examiners is to represent every scholar in every class as perfectly capable of doing his work in every subject, a conclusion which our own examination has rarely, if ever, confirmed. When allowance is made for the natural inclination to put on as good an appearance as possible, and for the degree of uncertainty which necessarily attends upon examinations, causing the same candidate to produce different results on two successive days, one is forced to the conclusion that a fairly successful teacher does not necessarily make a good examiner. In most cases the teacher manifestly has been either lax or not sufficiently strict in supervision, having failed to take steps to isolate the different members of the class. We have too often had to complain during our own examination of neglect in this particular, the supervision being then considered the teacher's special function. Rarely has the discipline been so thorough as to render keen supervision unnecessary, and keenness is often the very point that is lacking. Having failed to attain their first and highest aim teachers too often hopelessly neglect the second, which on examination day at any rate would make amends for the absence of the first. Some of the sole teachers, again, we fear, do not, strictly speaking, examine at all. The children are so dependent upon the teacher for help and direction during the time of teaching that the teacher apparently fails to distinguish between teaching and examination, and still allows these aids to continue. For faults such as we have indicated, and for the defective classification arising from them, the after-examination of the Inspector is to some extent a remedy. By the regulations the Inspector's results are final, and the power thus conferred has, during the last two years, acted as a check upon the hasty promotion of scholars in Standards I. and II., a weakness which we have continually pointed out for years past. The examination in this district of Standards I. and II. has on this account been more exacting during this year and the one previous. Possibly other Inspectors have had similar experiences, and the fact of their having had (by the new regulations) more control over these classes may have had some effect in reducing the number of passes, which, as shown in the report of the Minister of Education, was lower last year than previously.

In fifteen schools the examination showed unsatisfactory results. All but one of these were small schools taught by sole teachers, most of whom were uncertificated, several of them being but recently appointed. In some instances, for various causes, the scholars had not had a full year's preparation, and in these we shall be greatly surprised if better results are not forthcoming next year.

Reading and recitation are usually well taught, though in some parts a twangy pronunciation, particularly of the "ou" and other vowel sounds, prevails. The aspirate difficulty, though not common, is still in evidence. More care in the selection of teachers and unremitting attention on their part are essential to maintain the purity of our mother tongue. The recitations are often tastefully rendered, especially when the children have been trained to recite simultaneously. But preparation should not be spasmodic; some verses should be learned each week, and a list of all pieces studied during the year presented for examination, those specially prepared being marked. Reading is in one sense now the most important subject in the syllabus, a pass in it being essential to obtaining a certificate in Standards I. to V. The tendency on this account to accept inferior work must be carefully guarded against.

From the percentage of passes given below it would appear that arithmetic is slowly improving. In estimating the number of passes in this subject we have counted a pass in lower standard work than that for which the child was presented in English as a failure. The arithmetic passes are as follows: 1901—Standard VI., 58 per cent.; Standard V., 63 per cent.; Standard IV., 67 per cent.; Standard III., 76 per cent. 1900—Standard VI., 62 per cent.; Standard V., 47 per cent.; Standard IV., 66 per cent.; Standard III., 77 per cent. 1899—Standard VI., 48 per cent.; Standard V., 57 per cent.; Standard IV., 69 per cent.; Standard III., 69 per cent.

In the papers set by us to Standard II. failures were numerous; but in Standard V. the figures quoted show improvement, the proportion of those who succeeded in doing their work correctly being higher than we have ever previously recorded. The work now is much more nearly uniform in quality, the collapse of all classes in a school being now a rarity; but it is not entirely satisfactory to find that only two-thirds of the scholars are equal to the test applied. In some cases more orderly arrangement and setting out are required, but more commonly it is the solution of problems that presents the chief difficulty. To quote Mr. Petrie, "Problems form the best, if not the only, test of intelligent teaching." Methods, we think, are improving, but the examiner must have patience amounting to disease who can follow the mass of figures shown up by some scholars who have ill-digested the unitary system. In many small schools more blackboard practice is required to give greater mental facility, and accuracy would be helped by training all to form mentally approximate results.

A reduction in the syllabus is now looked for. The weights and measures demanded from Standard IV. might well be limited to the minimum required in ordinary business life; but at the same time the requirements of Standard I. might well be raised, as at present they are not proportionate to the amount of reading and spelling expected, nor do they form a sufficiently strong groundwork for after-training.

In spelling we find the greatest difference between the estimate of the teacher and that of the Inspector, and in some few cases the divergence was quite unaccountable. Standard I. children found very great difficulty here, more failing in this subject than in any other, though this was not the case with Standard II. In the higher classes one out of every four scholars failed in spelling, the proportion being very nearly the same as that previously recorded, Standards V. and VI. showing better, Standards III. and IV. worse, results than those of last year. In setting tests in each class from at least two books we are perhaps maintaining a high standard, which makes this as a pass-subject the most difficult, next to arithmetic, in every class except Standard VI. So long as the present regulations hold, passing an examination carries with it a certificate of competency only, without even the necessity for promotion, or, in case of failure, for refusal of promotion; so that there seems to us to be no need to lower the efficiency marks in any subject, but rather to uphold them, so that the desire to obtain a certificate may continue to afford a stimulus to education. In Standard VI. we propose in future to set for dictation previously unseen tests, containing, of course, nothing unusual, words being selected as hitherto from prepared Readers.

In composition, which was much better this year, especially in Standards IV. and V., we often met with careless misspellings of common words. Wherever, as in the case of "there" and "their" or in the misplacing of an apostrophe, they could be regarded as grammatical errors they were treated as faults, and marks were deducted accordingly. In Standard VI., in addition to the reproduction of a narrative, an essay, or in the case of a small class the description of a picture or photograph, was usually required. These tests, which gave more scope for originality, were often well answered.

Writing is generally satisfactory, and often, in well-disciplined schools, good. When weakness in this subject prevails it is much more common in the lower classes than in the higher, unevenness, irregularity, and carelessness being the result of weak discipline and of the lack of a high ideal in the junior teacher, a common failing in regard to this subject. In the higher classes, in which the vertical writing is in vogue, great advantage to freedom and the acquirement of a running hand has been gained from the use of Jackson's Nos. 11 and 12 or Corresponding Style.

We have little to add to former reports in regard to the class-subjects. As a rule, with the exception of grammar and handwork, they are all satisfactorily taught. Sole teachers have long been looking for a reduction in the number of these and of the additional subjects, or permission to make a restricted choice, though the opportunity to substitute handwork for one of the former has not yet been generally taken advantage of.

The year has been an eventful one in many ways, especially in the encouragement given by the Department to manual training and to secondary education. At the Inspectors' Conference in January liberal subsidies for the establishment of district high schools were announced. In consequence of these the Westport District High School has been converted into a free school, and another district high school has been established at Motueka and will shortly begin work. Early in the year, too, special grants were made for the encouragement of manual and technical training. Instructive lectures were given at three different centres by one of the organizing Inspectors, and classes for the instruction of teachers have, at the expense of the Department, been carried on in Nelson. The difficulty of procuring apparatus and the uncertainty as to where the responsibility for the initial outlay should rest have so far deterred several teachers from undertaking favourite branches of work, but different school classes in the following subjects have, before the close of the year, been authorised: Kindergarten manual exercises, modelling, brushwork, dressmaking, cookery, ambulance, and swimming and life-saving—and almost all are now in operation. For each of these, except the cookery class for girls in Nelson City, the instructor is the class or school teacher who was previously in the service of the Board. The teaching of sewing has been considered satisfactory in seventy-eight schools, the reports describing it as good in thirty-two, and excellent in sixteen. In six small schools up till the time of examination sewing had been neglected, and in eleven others, in which there were no female teachers, such instruction could not be expected.

We regret that the colonial scale of salaries, in spite of many advantages, makes no provision for sewing-teachers. Other marked defects of the measure are, we consider, the meagre capitation allowance to Boards, especially those in small districts, the want of provision for relieving teachers or for retiring-allowance, and the absence of fitting recognition of a teacher's qualification or length of service.

Singing has been taught in thirty-four schools, the instruction given being considered satisfactory in twenty-five.

Drill in one form or another has been taught in forty-five schools, and with satisfactory results in twenty-three. The members of our three cadet corps have had this year the pleasure of a trip to Christchurch on the occasion of the ducal visit. Such an experience could not fail to be of educational benefit to the children if looked at merely in the light of receiving the advantages of travel. We have often thought that, if it were possible in this district for children in the farming localities to exchange places with those in the mining centres on the other side of the dividing ranges for, say, six months of the year, all would greatly benefit intellectually.

Though the year has been one of transition it has not been one of stagnation. While matters educational have been seething in the whirlpool of politics, school work has been carried on with fewer interruptions than in the previous year, teachers have in general worked steadily and zealously, and we consider that the district has not only held its own but made progress.

The examination report of the secondary class of the Westport High School has, as usual, been laid before you, and shows that this department is well and ably managed.

We are pleased to see that a pupil from Waimangaroa School has won the first place in the recent competition for the Victoria College scholarships. For three years in succession one of these has been awarded to a pupil from this district, which has now twice had the distinction of heading the list of competitors.

We have, &c.,

G. A. HARKNESS, M.A.,
W. LADLEY,
} Inspectors.

GREY.

SIR,—

I have the honour to submit my annual general report on the schools subject to inspection in this district for the year ending 31st December, 1901.

The number of schools in active operation at the close of the year was twenty-nine, as against thirty returned under this heading for 1900, the deficiency being caused by the closing of the school at Orwell Creek. All the above schools, as well as the four Roman Catholic schools in the district, were inspected and examined.

School work was this year considerably affected by sickness, and in a less degree by numerous holidays; teachers, however, laboured hard to overtake the lost time, and their efforts were usually attended with success. In consequence of sickness being so prevalent during the year, the district will scarcely maintain its usually high position for average attendance amongst the other districts of the colony.

Towards the latter part of the year the district was visited by Mr. Isaac, one of the Inspectors appointed under the Manual and Technical Instruction Act, who gave some instructive lectures on the various subjects under his charge. By permission of the Board these were attended by the majority of our teachers, many of whom evinced considerable interest in the subjects dealt with. Excepting the carpentry class at the Greymouth District High School, manual and technical instruction have found no place in our schools. There is now reasonable hope that the work of Mr. Isaac will bear fruit, and that we shall see during the coming year at least one branch introduced in several of our schools.

At the last meeting of the Board for the year a resolution was passed granting free tuition at the Greymouth District High School to all ex-passed Standard VI. pupils, such a course being rendered practicable on account of special grants having been made by the Department for secondary subjects in district high schools. This should prove to be a great boon to the advanced pupils in our schools, and should practically do away with the class at present designated Standard VII.

The annual examination was conducted in a similar manner to that described in last year's annual report, and I think I am justified in saying that in determining the promotions in Standards I. to V. our head teachers have, as a general rule, been extremely honest in their judgment. I should like to point out, however, that every pupil should be made to understand that steady progress, as shown by results of periodic examinations during the four quarters of the year, is essential to passing into a higher class, and that promotion does not altogether depend on the result of the last periodic examination which takes place previous to the Inspector's annual visit. This is a point that is sometimes lost sight of by our younger teachers in their anxiety to have on paper a "good pass," for which they obtain credit from the public.

I have again to complain of some want of care in filling up the class-lists. Teachers might reasonably be expected to read and carry out the instructions printed on the back of each form.

I have adopted the same method as employed last year in estimating the general efficiency of our schools. Summarising the results, I find that in the pass-subjects five schools gained a mean mark between 80 and 89 per cent.—very good; eight schools gained a mean mark between 70 and 72 per cent.—good; thirteen schools gained a mean mark between 60 and 69 per cent.—satisfactory; and three schools gained a mean mark between 50 and 59 per cent.—fair. In the class-subjects one school gained a mean mark between 80 and 89 per cent.—very good; twelve schools gained a mean mark between 70 and 79 per cent.—good; six schools gained a mean mark between 60 and 69 per cent.—satisfactory; seven schools gained a mean mark between 50 and 59 per cent.—fair; and three schools gained a mean mark between 40 and 49 per cent.—weak. In the additional subjects one school gained a mean mark between 90 and 100 per cent.—excellent; eleven schools gained a mean mark between 80 and 89 per cent.—very good; four schools gained a mean mark between 70 and 79 per cent.—good; eight schools gained a mean mark between 60 and 69 per cent.—satisfactory; and two schools gained a mean mark between 50 and 59 per cent.—fair. Three schools were unrepresented in additional subjects.

The following is a general summary of results for this year: Total presented for examination, including infants and pupils above Standard VI., 1,556; total presented in standards, 982; total

present in standards, 954; total promoted to a higher class, 826. Similar figures for 1900 were 1,598, 1,045, 1,028, and 946 respectively.

The total number of infants is 521, and the total number of infants over eight years of age not presented for Standard I. is eighty-four. Similar figures for the previous year were 492 and seventy-three respectively.

The increase in the number of pupils of over eight years of age and the decrease in the percentage of pupils promoted to a higher class may, I think, be fairly accounted for by the prevalence of sickness throughout the district. The general quality of the work as gauged by my efficiency marks is only slightly lower than last year.

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

Classes.	Presented.	Present.	Passed.	Average Age of the Pupils in each Class.
				Yrs. mos.
Secondary class and class above Standard VI. ...	53	...	...	...
Standard VI.	114	111	93	13 11
" V.	168	162	134	12 11
" IV.	179	176	140	12 3
" III.	170	168	147	10 8
" II.	179	172	162	9 3
" I.	172	165	150	9 0
Preparatory	521	...	...	...
Totals	1,556	954	826	11 4*

* Mean of average age.

Speaking generally, the progress previously noted has been well maintained, and each year sees the work of the different schools becoming more uniform. Reading has made some improvement, which is to be attributed partly to the fact of our having new Readers this year, and partly to the fact that promotion to a higher class mainly depends on proficiency in this subject. The establishment of small school libraries is well worth the consideration of our teachers, especially in the country, where suitable reading-matter for our children is scarce. In one or two instances where libraries have been formed I have found improved reading, and with it improved intelligence. One book for reading is altogether insufficient for our requirements, and until we can devise some means of obtaining more varied reading-material I do not see how any great improvement is to be effected. Spelling is well done, with few exceptions. An erroneous impression appears to have got into the minds of some of our teachers regarding this subject—viz., that the pupils are expected to be able to spell every word contained in their reading-books. A reference to the syllabus will show that such is not the case, and that they have been unduly severe in their demands. Writing is not as good as I should like to see it. Some teachers are quite indifferent as regards the position in which the pupils sit, and also as regards the holding of the pen. Teachers in our country schools have not a great deal of time to devote to the actual teaching of this subject, but I feel satisfied that better work could be done, and would be done, if they would constantly bear in mind the above points, and always insist, no matter what work is being done, on having it neatly and carefully written. Arithmetic is a fairly satisfactory subject, and the setting-out is generally good. Composition is by no means a strong subject, but is making satisfactory progress, the work being much less mechanical than in former years. Here, again, a school library would be of immense benefit. Paraphrasing is poorly done—that is, if it is attempted at all; and, whilst sentences are usually well corrected, the reasons given for the corrections made are just as often incorrect. The teaching of grammar, which is one of the weakest subjects we have, is mainly responsible for this. Grammar, in our country schools, is certainly at least one standard below what it should be. In most of our schools history is taught according to the syllabus—so many dates and so many events. I do not place much value on it except as a memory exercise, and much prefer treating it by reading-lessons from some historical Reader. Political geography is fairly taught. It is, however, hardly up to the standard it was before being relegated to the class group of subjects in Standards III. to V.; but the training of physical geography is very indifferent. Physical drill is now being taught in four schools. This is some improvement, but it could with advantage become more general. As regards discipline and the manners of the pupils, these are highly satisfactory, and the schools are usually clean and tidy. There have been occasions when I have had to complain of a want of tidiness regarding the school surroundings, and also a want of cleanliness regarding the offices; but these, I am glad to say, are exceptional cases. Whilst touching on sanitary conditions I should like to point out that more care might well be exercised regarding the lavatories. These are almost invariably in a bad state, and cause serious damage to the buildings. Another point I wish to mention is the necessity for having the school tanks cleaned out periodically. I believe I am correct in stating that in many cases they have not been cleaned out since erection.

The Roman Catholic Schools.—Reports, &c., were prepared and furnished to these schools in every respect similar to those supplied to schools directly under the Board. Appended are tables similar to those dealing with our own schools: Total presented for examination, including infants and pupils above Standard VI., 270; total presented in standards, 169; total present in standards, 161; total promoted to a higher class, 160; total number of infants, 92; total number of infants over eight years of age not presented for Standard I., 5.

Classes.	Presented.	Present.	Passed.
Secondary class and class above Standard VI. ...	9	...	...
Standard VI.	19	19	19
„ V.	33	30	29
„ IV.	23	23	23
„ III.	31	28	28
„ II.	39	37	37
„ I.	24	24	24
Preparatory	92	...	...
Totals	270	161	160

I have, &c.,
WILLIAM L. F. FETCH, M.A., Inspector.

The Chairman, Education Board, Greymouth.

WESTLAND.

SIR,— Education Office, Hokitika, 5th February, 1902.

I have the honour to present the following report on the primary schools of the district for the year 1901: All the schools were examined with the exception of a household school that was opened during the year. In addition the examination of five Catholic schools, the secondary class of the Hokitika District High School, the pupil-teachers, and the candidates for scholarships was duly conducted. Owing to my absence from the district for three months the inspection was not so complete as usual, but nearly all schools with an average attendance over twenty and several smaller schools were visited at least once.

The following table supplies information regarding the number of pupils and of promotions in connection with the examinations held during the year:—

PASS-SUBJECTS.

Classes.	Total Roll.	Present at Inspector's Examinations.	Passed.	Average Age of Pupils in each Class.
				Yrs. mos.
Above Standard VI.	45	42	...	14 11
Standard VI.	109	99	85	13 9
„ V.	127	121	104	12 11
„ IV.	149	136	108	12 4
„ III.	143	133	125	10 11
„ II.	128	121	112	9 9
„ I.	120	115	104	8 9
Preparatory	332	286	...	6 9
Totals	1,153	1,053	638	11 3*

* Mean of average age.

It may be noted that of 1,153 pupils on the rolls 100, or nearly 9 per cent., were absent at the Inspector's examination. In standards there were fifty-one absences, as compared with twelve in the preceding year. This increase is apparently due to indifference, induced by the fact that in the larger schools the promotions are practically based on a previous examination by the headmaster. It must be regarded, however, as evidence of a lack of interest or control on the part of the parents or the teachers when such absences are numerous. If a true estimate is to be made of the school year it is essential that at the examination every pupil should be present.

The following information may be found of value: The percentage of pupils in the various classes compared with the total roll is—Above Standard VI., 3·9; Standard VI., 9·5; Standard V., 11; Standard IV., 12·9; Standard III., 12·4; Standard II., 11·1; Standard I., 10·4; Preparatory Class, 28·8. The percentage of failures in Standards I. to VI. is 18, an increase of six on that of the previous year. The number of pupils presented in a lower class in arithmetic is twenty and in a higher class three, no other instances occurring of the exercise of freedom of classification. Of the 332 pupils in the preparatory classes fifty were over eight years of age, and the reasons stated for their presence in the class were in general satisfactory.

The work of the schools of the district has been carried on under conditions somewhat adverse. The chief of these is a diminution of the number of half-days on which the majority of the schools have been open. The reduction is due to the large number of holidays occasioned by special events and to the prevalence of sickness. Few schools have maintained the normal rate of from 420 to 430 half-days, while in connection with fourteen, including some of the larger schools, that number has been reduced by fifty or more half-days. The result, as already stated, was an increase

of 50 per cent. in the proportion of failures, and the reports on the various schools show a general decrease of efficiency. Even where a good standard has been maintained the preparation of the pupils has probably been accompanied by hurry and pressure that must eventually be detrimental to true educational progress. Other hindrances to the obtaining of good records were the numerous changes of teachers during the year and the introduction of a more difficult set of Readers. A return to normal conditions and the earnest endeavours of the teachers will, it is hoped, produce improved results during the coming year.

Under the circumstances referred to it is not of great advantage to criticize in detail the preparation of the various subjects of the course of instruction. The decrease in the proportion of promotions indicates less efficiency in connection with the pass-subjects, and the accompanying summary of results furnishes evidence that the instruction in the class-subjects has also fallen below the standard of previous years. A satisfactory feature, however, is the increased interest taken in military drill and physical exercises, and the efficiency in this subject has reached a higher point than in any previous year. In addition to the usual examination in arithmetic, tests were given in the higher standards of fairly long exercises in compound addition, the limit of time allowed being such as to require a moderate rate of speed. A very small proportion of the number of pupils worked the exercises correctly, and the result supports the comments of last year's report on the necessity for modifying the syllabus in arithmetic so as to confine the instruction more to rules of commercial importance. At the same time the teachers will find it of advantage to provide opportunity for practice in such exercises.

The introduction of handwork has been delayed owing to a lack of familiarity with suitable methods on the part of the teachers, and to the difficulty in obtaining promptly a supply of the necessary material. A visit of an Inspector appointed under the Manual and Technical Instruction Act has so far prepared the way as to excite the interest of the teachers, and to impress upon them some of the principles upon which the instruction is based. During the present year it is expected that a course of handwork will be instituted in at least the lower classes of a majority of the schools.

An important requirement of the standard regulations is that a record of the nature and results of the teachers' periodic examinations must be preserved and presented to the Inspector at his next visit. It is necessary in every school that such a record shall be kept in such a form as to supply an indication of the progress of each pupil, and this necessity has, during the past year, been overlooked in a number of cases. Some of the most successful teachers find it advisable to hold examinations two or three times during each quarter, and the absence of such tests in other schools has led the teachers to form a false estimate of the effect of the instruction given. Suitable record-books have been supplied by the Board, and it should be understood that these are to be used regularly and intelligently.

During the year the teachers have received from the Education Department increases to their salaries sufficient to place their remuneration on an equality with that received in similar positions in other parts of the colony. The temporary relief thus granted has been made permanent by the passing of the Public-school Teachers' Salaries Act. The Board in its report to the Hon. Minister of Education has acknowledged the indebtedness of the teachers and of all interested in education to those who took part in effecting this desired reform. It is therefore sufficient here to note that the provision of more adequate remuneration and the removal of a continual source of complaint will result in increased efficiency in the teaching staff. Teachers will have less reason for discontent and for a sense of injustice, and will be encouraged to carry out their duties with cheerfulness and enthusiasm, qualities very essential to the achievement of complete success in the training of the young.

In the five Catholic schools in the district the staffs are numerically strong and the majority produce results in many respects commendable. In all, however, the attention of the teachers is confined too much to the pass-subjects. While these are often well prepared, the average result in the class-subjects is in no case satisfactory. The promotion of the pupils is left in the hands of the Inspector, and the task is rendered at times difficult, owing to weakness in branches outside the pass group. Of a total of 162 in standards 146 passed, and this result would be a matter of congratulation to the teachers if the instruction in some of the extra subjects had been more successful.

I have, &c.,

The Chairman, Westland Education Board. A. J. MORTON, B.A., Inspector.

NORTH CANTERBURY.

SIR,— Christchurch, 29th January, 1902.

We have the honour to present our annual inspection report on the schools of the North Canterbury District for the year 1901.

The usual course of inspection and examination was followed during the year, the time and attention given to each department of work not differing materially from the practice immediately preceding the recent modifications in the regulations. In the summary of results for the district the roll-number recorded in the 205 schools examined is 19,842. This, when compared with the corresponding total of 1900, shows a drop of 176. As the loss for the two previous years was 462 and 410 respectively, we may in the present figures find some consolation in so far as they indicate a diminution in the downward trend which has been more or less noticeable during the past five years. It is remarkable that during the same time the infant departments show no corresponding signs of falling off. The present number enrolled in this part of the school is the highest since 1893, and the intervening years present a very close parallel in the steady maintenance of practically identical numbers. The fact has some significance; but too much weight

must not be given to its bearing, since there are other indications that teachers, in view of the prospective broadening of the course of instruction, are disposed to keep the children longer at this stage. The average age, for example, in the First Standard has gone up, approximately, by two months, and the number of children eight years of age and over retained in the preparatory divisions has risen from 832 in 1897, the last year for which a record was kept, to 981 in the present year.

In examination we have in nearly all instances been in a position to approve the teachers' judgments. The approval has invariably been based on a complete examination of the subjects made independently of the teachers' tests. In the larger schools the method pursued is by way of "sample," one-half of the class being taken to form an estimate of the whole. In the smaller schools—roughly speaking, those under one hundred in attendance—this method offers so little convenience or certainty that it has only on rare occasions been resorted to. In determining the status of their pupils the teachers, with a second year's experience of their privileges and responsibilities in the matter, have now arrived at a fairly uniform common understanding, which, though consistent with a good deal of latitude in the standard adopted, requires a pupil to qualify in four out of the five subjects of individual examination. They have too lively a sense of the difficulties to be met with in the upper classes to take full advantage of the option given to adopt a more limited basis. In most of the schools a few doubtful cases are left for the Inspector to determine, and in some—small single-handed schools chiefly—he is asked to take the whole business into his own hands. In general the teachers highly appreciate the privilege of making their own standard classification, and as a whole the system works well. On the day of the Inspector's annual visit teacher and children feel easier in their minds; to the Inspector himself it is a great relief to have the teacher's judgments before him, the chances of strained relations are diminished, and with a faithful adherence to the practice of strict verification the terms of qualification are not in much danger. Whether in the future we shall ever be in a position to abandon the process of examination altogether so far as the Inspector is concerned, relying solely on the observation of methods and the general character of the school in judging of its efficiency, we are unable to say; but we remain of opinion that under ordinary forms of control examination in one shape or another furnishes the only safe course, and, in spite of inevitable defects, we are quite satisfied that it exercises a much healthier influence on the conditions of school life than its opponents are disposed to admit.

Manual training as a means of education is the question of the day, and if we can contribute anything to the general stock of information on the matter, or help in any way to guide the teachers' efforts in a profitable direction, it will be our excuse for dealing with the topic at some length. Notwithstanding all that has many times been said on the subject, we find a vast amount of misunderstanding still existing. We are afraid the common attitude is that of the simple countryman, who, in talking of the new departure, remarks that, in his opinion, it will be a very good thing, for carpenters in the country are hard to get, and boys are often required to mend gates and the like. It cannot be too often or too strongly insisted on that the object of the instruction is not to produce amateur carpenters—not to produce anything, in fact, but a better pupil, better trained in observation, discrimination, judgment, better fitted mentally to deal with the ordinary subjects of instruction, and through the habits of care, attention, and concentration, cultivated under circumstances calculated to awaken more interest than mere abstract teaching, better fitted to fill afterwards any position in life. At the same time, as a secondary purpose, the intention is to develop a general manual dexterity applicable to any trade, and incidentally to give the pupil's mind a bent in the direction of some manual occupation as a means of living. If the exercises do not cultivate "carefulness, self-reliance, accuracy, patience, perseverance, and other points of character," and, moreover, bring these to bear on the ordinary subjects of the school course, they fail in their object and are better omitted. As mere exercises, it is aptly pointed out, they have many better competitors for the interest of the boys. School games, for example, which have the advantage of being played in the open air, develop the boys' will in a far freer fashion, and cultivate presence of mind and some very desirable social qualities. The main problem is one of establishing an organic connection between the exercises contemplated and the ordinary subjects of the school course. This is no easy problem. The most we can do is to establish, at all events, the external relation as far as means will allow, and rely on the personality of the teacher to do the rest. Hitherto the difference between the methods of the trained and the untrained teacher has lain in the comparative use made of visual impressions in the formation of concepts. "Make more use of your blackboard," has been the constant injunction. "Draw everything you can, and let the children see for themselves." "Let them see an experiment performed, and the result will be a vastly deeper and clearer impression than any description can possibly produce." The conception of the newer education adds "do" to "see," brings in the hand on every possible occasion to aid the eye, and thus assimilates the education of the school-room to the education of life. Of the value of the conception there can be no question, the difficulty is wholly in the application. The hand has ever obtained the fullest recognition as one of the most potent instruments of civilisation. "The hand," says Herbert, "has its place of honour, side by side with language, to raise man above the beasts." Even our ideas of space are largely dependent on the hand. What, then, can be more natural than the idea of calling in the hand to aid the eye in the education of the young? When we come to apply the principle, however, we find ourselves in a rather troubled sea. First and foremost comes the question of expense in various forms, for there is no doubt that the newer education is vastly expensive—in the apparatus required, the conditions of space involved, the school organization that must be provided, and the degree of skill demanded from the instructor. Then comes that troublesome question of the "organic" relation between special manual exercises and ordinary subjects of the school code. "For the establishment of an inner organic relation between the workshop and the school," says a recent writer, "it is not sufficient that the workshop

is within the school building, or that use of it is confined to one school, or that one of the teachers gives the instruction, or that the staff are favourably disposed to such instruction for boys. All this cannot replace the inner psychological adjustment of manual instruction to the curriculum."

The problem in all its aspects is much simplified if we can get rid of the workshop, and without the workshop there spreads out a truly extensive field of effort which our teachers are invited to study. So wide is the field, indeed, and so important are the possible developments, that we are tempted to postpone the workshop, for a time at least, to a later stage of education, and rely wholly on the many varied applications that are independent of its aid. Let us indicate some of the more promising forms of development lying ready to the teacher's hand, and involving little expense, and then pass on to the consideration of some applications of manual methods to ordinary subjects through which our schools may profitably seek to establish the desirable organic connection. But first we will premise that the choice of any particular occupation must be determined by the teacher's own individuality, by his own judgment of what he can do best, and the working-out of any scheme must be left largely to his own invention or other resources.

In the development of clay modelling in our schools we see the greatest promise. Of all the manual occupations this appeals to us as in every way the most educative and fruitful, not merely in the lower classes, where it already has a place, but throughout the school. In no other form of manual work do there seem to be such opportunities of making the educational aim the "predominant partner" in the union of purposes for which manual occupations are undertaken. "Free modelling in clay," we are prepared to believe, "is the truest manual occupation, far more so than carpentry, cardboard, or metal work," for these "can be carried on without the hand, as in a factory," while "a factory producing all free forms is inconceivable." For clearing and visualising the ideas sought to be conveyed by the teacher no finer instrument can exist, and its possible applications are exceptionally numerous.

Another form of exercise conveniently undertaken and already holding a certain position in our schools is brushwork, which may be used either to supplement the ordinary drawing or as a partial substitute for it. This exercise, in conjunction with free-arm chalk drawing and geometrical drawing, has, in one of the London Board Schools, proved so fruitful in development, and the testimony in its favour given by the headmaster and competent outside observers is so impressive, that we venture to dwell a little on the example. The school referred to is the Alma Road School, an ordinary Board school of 300 boys, with the customary staff. Fuller information on the subject will be found in a paper by Mr. Seth Coward, the headmaster, in Vol. i. of the "Special Reports on Educational Subjects," issued by the English Education Department, and in the exhaustive report on manual and technical instruction prepared some two years ago by Mr. Riley, of Wellington, who includes in his report a number of illustrations. Mr. Coward's scheme is based on the "alternative syllabus in drawing" of the English code, the essential feature of which is the formation of "patterns and repeats," using the natural forms of plants and animals broadly treated "as motives of ornament," and employing the designs "to fill spaces used in decoration." To this is added a course of geometrical drawing for all the standards, the geometrical forms being "utilised and regarded as the foundation for ornamental arrangements of natural objects, animals, plants, and the like." The object is "to form a habit of accurately observing form and colour; to develop the faculty of forming new combinations; to obtain such a control of the hand that these conceptions can be freely and accurately reproduced with chalk and brush." "In other words," says Mr. Coward, "it is a scheme for teaching design." The new departure (made in 1896) has been attended with marvellous success, and the most interesting part of the marvel is that the result is achieved in classes of fifty to seventy pupils on no more than two hours' instruction weekly. "One of the most important effects of the system," Mr. Coward declares, "is that it opens the eyes of the boys to the world of colour in which they live. . . . It has cultivated a habit of observation and the desire to reproduce what they see. Some carry note-books in which they sketch a leaf or anything which they can embody in their designs. Not a lesson is given in school which is not again studied at home. . . . This work appeals to the dullest as well as the brightest. Some boys who for years showed scarcely any signs of intelligence have developed rapidly and have produced designs which compare favourably with the best work of their class. The geometrical drawing is also done with a zest, intelligence, and skill which were never known before. . . . Nor has the effect of this work been confined to the drawing: the consciousness of power which a boy obtains in producing a good design overflows into all his other work. Some timid, hesitating lads have been simply transformed intellectually under its influence. . . . It affords what has been lacking in our elementary system of education, an effective means of cultivating the imagination, both artistic and scientific. It trains the eye to behold beauty, the mind to conceive beauty, and the hand to produce it."

Another form of manual occupation of convenient type at the choice of teachers is the cardboard modelling, which is admitted to furnish a very suitable employment for children in Standards III. and IV., and which has been used by one or more of our teachers in all the upper classes with good effect. On this form of occupation and its applications we trust to have the opportunity of soon hearing a set of demonstrations from one of the Education Department's officers who has made this feature his special study.

In chip carving several schools have already a considerable amount of work to show, and, if the practice is connected with geometrical drawing and used to cultivate design, this must also prove an educational instrument of some value.

All this (and probably much more), without any specially fitted workshop or laboratory, is within the means of our teachers under existing conditions. But it is also within their power, under similar conditions, though not without a considerable extension of the apparatus at their disposal, to make great strides on other lines in applying the manual principle to the illustration and enforcement of lessons in ordinary subjects. In science, for instance, it has hitherto been

found to be a ground of commendation if the lessons have been illustrated experimentally by the teacher. In the newer education that is no longer a sufficing ideal. The pupils must work out the exercises themselves, making their own measurements, adjustments, and experiments with simple apparatus supplied them by the school for the purpose. "The pupil must be introduced to the objects of nature not only through the intellect, but also actively." In this connection we recommend to teachers the admirable scheme of scientific instruction issued by the School Board for London, and carried out by the specially appointed science demonstrator in conjunction with he ordinary teachers.

Again, in arithmetic and mensuration many applications of the principle must suggest themselves. In geography the clay modelling may enforce the instruction most efficiently to gain not only elementary ideas of islands, mountains, &c., but to fix in the children's minds in the most permanent fashion the vertical configuration of the immediate neighbourhood and the main physical features of their own and other countries. In some European schools it is quite a common practice for the boys to learn their geography after this method under the happiest auspices. They are taken by their teacher on repeated excursions round the neighbourhood. On one occasion they note the direction and the length of the streets or roads, measuring distances for themselves with the tape-line; on another they note the inclination of the ground, the hills, and valleys, learning the names of prominent objects in the landscape; on still another the observation is directed to trees and other natural objects, buildings, and so on. The following lesson in each case consists of a revision in the playground, in which the boys describe what they have seen, stepping out distances on an appropriate scale, and reproduce the physical features learnt by utilising a heap of sand in the corner to form a rough model. Maps to scale on the playground, on a horizontally laid blackboard, and finally in exercise-books, complete the instruction. "Geography," it is claimed, "is thus made not a dry study, or a dry naming of countries, rivers, boundaries, towns, but a subject of which the boy recognises the usefulness and necessity. A map is thereafter to him a picture representing something resembling his own home, with mountains, trees, meadows, birds, animals, men, factories, &c. After such a course of lessons he has learnt fewer facts of geography than the English boy, but he is incomparably better trained in observation; . . . and, above all, this power has been gained with the accompaniment of an eager interest in the lessons."

Again, in history we find the manual method employed in one Continental scheme to illustrate the civilisation of ancient Egypt, reproducing in clay the Pyramid of Cheops, the Egyptian temple pillars without ornament, the conventional lotus-flower, the papyrus-blossom, &c. In another case the ancient pile dwellings, and in another the arms and utensils of the Homeric period, were discussed and modelled. These may be far-away things for the elementary schools of New Zealand, but it is easy to obtain from them some useful hints in the illustration, for example, of architectural features of different periods or in the reproduction of a battlefield.

Further still, in connection with geometry and drawing we may have the manual method applied to the study of simple geometrical forms—sphere, cylinder, cone, cube, prism, pyramid—first discussed, then moulded in plasticine, compared with the original, and then drawn from different points of view. Or we may have the process in a different order, the object being first drawn and then moulded in the solid.

School gardening furnishes still another development of high educational value within the lines of the existing school organization. It may be considered simply as the necessary manual complement of the "agricultural science" now professed in so many schools. Specially suitable as an educational employment in the great majority of instances, and from the character and variety of its tasks equally adapted for both boys and girls, it requires only a competent and enthusiastic teacher to make it a success. This single requirement is indeed hard to fulfil, but there must be a certain amount of latent talent in this direction among our teachers, and the ideal which would turn a portion of the ground of every country school into a manual workshop for half the year is entitled to every encouragement. "Gardening," it is said with manifest truth, "builds up in the most powerful way the child's world of ideas. It enlarges his knowledge of nature, and gives him valuable opportunities for observing the interdependence of all natural objects. Important chapters in the theory of the nourishment of plants, the physics, chemistry, and mineralogy of the soil, botany and natural history, and weather-lore can be treated in quite elementary fashion, and from direct observation."

So far the course of development on one or more of the lines indicated, according to the taste and special abilities of the teacher, presents no insuperable obstacle. But we have yet to consider the harder parts of our problem—the occupations that require "special and appropriate provision" to be made for them at a heavy cost both in money and time, workshop practice in woodwork for boys, and cooking practice for girls. Both are essential to any complete scheme, but on account of the sacrifices involved require to be approached with special care. A wrong decision here may mean the useless expenditure of thousands of pounds, or introduce without adequate benefit a grave interference with the ordinary school organization. The questions primarily to be decided are: (1.) Who shall be the instructors—skilled artisans and the like, or ordinary trained teachers who have acquired the requisite skill? (2.) If the latter, are the teachers to belong to the ordinary school staff or to be specially employed for the purpose? (3.) If they belong to the ordinary school staff, in what way is an organization intended to provide a certificated teacher for fifty to seventy scholars in an upper class to be adapted for the special purpose to practice lessons demanding the service of such a teacher for the maximum attendance of twenty or twenty-four pupils? (4.) Is the "special and appropriate provision" to be made at certain centres for groups of schools or to be attached to each separate school? (5.) In the latter case what limit of attendance is to be fixed? (6.) What provision is to be made for schools below the limit?

The answer to question (1) is comparatively easy. There should be no real doubt at this stage

of our knowledge that the trained teacher (and not the artisan or cook) is the proper person to give the instruction. "If manual instruction is a part of education it must be in the hands of the educator. Experience has proved it easier for a teacher to acquire the necessary technical skill than for the artisan to become a teacher." In the training of our teachers in woodwork the classes established at the Normal School during the past few years have already done good service, while in cooking the School of Domestic Instruction has for some time been preparing the lady teachers, no fewer than five classes, with a total of seventy attendants, being in operation during the last few months. These should be sufficient to provide at short notice the necessary instructors.

The second and third questions contain the real crux of the situation, and provide ground for endless discussion. It is manifest that the maintenance of a true organic relation between the manual practice and the ordinary school work demands not only that the teacher shall belong to the ordinary school staff, but that he shall be the ordinary teacher of the class to be provided for. That is theoretically unassailable; but at what sacrifice must the theory be applied, if, indeed, it could in every case be applied at all! We take, for instance, the senior assistants in charge of the Fifth Standard in one of our Christchurch schools, and we require them to take their pupils in groups of not more than twenty-four or twenty at a time for a two-hours practice in the workshop or kitchen. Now, the teachers' ordinary class is a class of sixty or seventy pupils. What is to be done with the bulk of their charges while they are so engaged? Or how can such a school, on the boys' and girls' sides respectively, afford to give the time of its senior assistant for the purpose? And, again, what becomes of the theory where, as in a suburban school, similar conditions are reproduced, with this complication: that the classes are mixed, and either the boys or girls must be taken by a teacher not their own, or where the only teacher possessing the necessary skill is ordinarily engaged in some other part of the schoool? These are questions that we have to answer for ourselves, and after a good deal of consideration of the bearing of the theory in several types of schools we are driven to the conclusion that for general application the game gives little promise of being worth the candle.

Questions (4), (5), and (6) depend partly for their answer on the decision of question (2), but are mainly to be decided from the economical standpoint. "Special and appropriate provision" in both departments of work for fourteen of our largest schools, ranging in attendance from three to twelve hundred, would require probably an initial expenditure of not less than £6,000 or £7,000, leaving upwards of a hundred and eighty schools without provision. Assuming that the Education Department is prepared to furnish the necessary sum for this purpose, we have only the question of the instructors to settle and the provision to be made for smaller schools. From the comments already made it is obvious that for large numbers of pupils our views are decidedly in favour of the employment of qualified certificated teachers as special instructors. These might receive a fixed remuneration, to be recouped to the Board from the capitation payable, and might be assisted in most cases by some qualified member of the staff whose services could be spared for the necessary time. For smaller schools we would differentiate between the claims of woodwork and cooking. The cooking we would confine to practical demonstration lessons such as could be conducted in an ordinary class-room provided with a fireplace furnishing the usual cooking facilities of a small household, and with the necessary utensils. For such work no capitation would be payable under the present regulations; but we are quite sure that such lessons might be made to possess a very substantial value, and the advantages to be derived are sufficiently great to warrant some special allowance to cover the cost. All schools with a mistress on the staff competent to teach the subject should be so provided. As to the woodwork, in schools with a number of boys not exceeding twenty-four in Classes V. and VI., or, if under a hundred in average, in Classes IV., V., VI., but large enough to provide a separate teacher for Standards II. and III., the workshop practice by the teacher is not open to the objections urged, and special provision may be made accordingly where the master is duly qualified and desirous of taking up the subject. There must, however, be no compulsion in the matter. Unless the master believes in the value of the work as an instrument of education he had better let it alone. This is emphatically the opinion of Herr Salomon, the originator of the famous Swedish system, and it is indorsed by the report of the Irish Commission on Manual and Practical Instruction, which recommends, further, that "care should be taken to hinder the work from being taken up by any but really competent teachers."

Personally, on the matter of finance we think that to make "special and appropriate provision" for these subjects in every one of the larger schools involves a needless expense. Christchurch and suburbs might well be served, for instance, on the north and south sides respectively by centres, which could be much better equipped than any separate school. At present, and for some time past, some seven or eight schools have been sending classes of girls to a central institution not under the Board's control, and, though the distance in some cases is rather great, the result in the great interest taken in the lessons by pupils and teachers and their practical value are found eminently satisfactory. The only difficulties met with concern the time-table, from the reluctance of schools to send their pupils in the mornings, and the adequacy of the capitation to cover the cost under the conditions required.

The suggestions hitherto made have in view the primary schools only, but before concluding we are anxious to put on record our conviction of the need of better provision for continuation studies in intimate connection with the primary-school system. A central school in Christchurch, modelled somewhat after the fashion of the day polytechnic schools of London or the upper primary schools of France, is one essential requirement. This would serve as an elementary technical school, taking pupils at the close of their elementary-school course, and providing two or three years' further instruction largely on technical lines. Such a school could not, of course, be conducted without considerable cost, which might or might not be covered by the grants earned under the Manual and Technical Instruction Act, but there can be little question of its utility in the community.

The school might be open in the mornings from 9 to 12.30 for boys and girls conjointly, during which time a series of classes would be held in drawing, some branches of science, shorthand, book-keeping, commercial arithmetic, commercial correspondence, and geography, with some further English study. The afternoon would be devoted to practice in woodwork, laboratory practice, cooking, laundrywork, &c. In the evenings the school would provide facilities for continuation classes for those engaged elsewhere during the day.

For the country districts similar facilities might be afforded in three or four centres by attaching an upper department with a technical bias to the ordinary primary school.

In the value and ultimate success of the central school we have a firm belief. In the country districts the development on these lines would be a more doubtful experiment, and, in the financial entanglements of a grant system not favourable to experiments, would haply, without special local resources, enjoy fewer prospects of a long and prosperous life.

We have, &c.,

L. B. Wood, M.A.,
W. J. Anderson, LL.D., } Inspectors.
Thos. Ritchie, B.A.,

The Chairman, Education Board, Christchurch.

Summary of Results for the District.

Classes.	Presented.	Present.	Passed.	Average Age of those that passed.
				Yrs. mos.
Above Standard VI.	317	193	...	...
Standard VI.	1,483	1,412	1,161	13 9
" V.	2,201	2,069	1,622	12 10
" IV.	2,577	2,414	1,946	11 11
" III.	2,693	2,578	2,129	10 11
" II.	2,364	2,288	2,096	9 9
" I.	2,150	2,092	2,022	8 8
Preparatory...	6,057	5,305	...	...
Totals	19,842	18,351	10,976	11 4*

* Mean of average age.

SOUTH CANTERBURY.

Sir,— Education Office, Timaru, 6th March, 1902.

We have the honour to present the following report for the year 1901:—

At the close of the year seventy schools were in operation, being three more than in the previous year. Two of the new schools were not examined, as they were opened after the examinations of the neighbouring schools, from which they drew most of their scholars, had been concluded. The sixty-eight schools which were in operation throughout the year were examined, and visits of inspection were paid to nearly all. In May we examined the five Roman Catholic schools, which, with a roll-number of 682, had 454 examined in standards, of whom 394 passed. The annual examination of pupil-teachers was carried out in the middle of the year, and the scholarship examination was held, as usual, in the month of December.

The following is a summary of examination results for the whole district:—

Classes.	Presented.	Present.	Passed.	Average Age of Pupils in each Class.
				Yrs. mos.
Above Standard VI.	153	...	...	...
Standard VI.	436	416	291	13 8
" V.	595	568	457	12 10
" IV.	681	668	559	11 8
" III.	628	614	541	10 8
" II.	570	558	523	9 8
" I.	567	562	537	8 9
Preparatory	1,394	...	...	...
Totals	5,024	3,386	2,908	11 2*

* Mean of average age.

These results are compiled from the separate school reports entered on forms supplied by the Education Department. In the first column is given the number presented in each class—that is, the number on the roll; in the second the number "present" is the number present at the teacher's examination in Standards I. to V., and at the Inspector's examination in Standard VI. In the second column of the form showing the summary of results for the whole district the Department has substituted the heading "Present at the Inspector's Annual Visit" for the single word "Present" appearing in the report forms used throughout the year for each separate school. This puts a different interpretation on the word "present" from that we had given to it in making up our examination reports, and we do not feel called upon to go back on all our reports and alter our entries to suit this new form of summary. At the same time we heartily approve of this new form for future use. It is just carrying out for the colony as a whole what we did in our own district for 1900.

The roll-number is 5,024, a decrease of 135 from last year. Every class contributes to this decrease except Standards I. and VI.; the increase in the latter is forty-five, the number on the roll in Standard VI. being 436, as against 391 for last year. The number passed in one or other of the standards is 2,908, out of 3,386 present at examination. As was the case last year, the head teachers awarded the passes in Standards I. to V. In one school it was found necessary to substitute our results for the head teacher's, and in several the final award of a pass was determined after consultation with the Inspector. Notwithstanding their experience of last year, a considerable number of teachers have taken a much more favourable view of the fitness of their pupils for obtaining pass certificates than the attainments of the pupils, as observed by us at our annual visit, would warrant. This has been most noticeable in Standards IV. and V. In most cases the teachers who have shown want of judgment in this respect give other evidence of weakness in the management and teaching of their schools, and we are inclined to believe that with most of them the passes were awarded in good faith; the few that resort to indiscriminate giving of passes as a means of cloaking inferior work are placing on the children the burden of a hopeless struggle with tasks for which they are unprepared, and laying up for themselves a store of troubles. Notwithstanding these strictures, it would be unfair to the teachers as a body if we did not declare most emphatically that in the overwhelming majority of cases the award of passes has been made to our entire satisfaction. Were the periodical examinations, which have always been a feature of our best schools, conducted with the requisite care and skill the teacher's difficulty of determining passes would be reduced to a minimum. Since the duty of classifying the pupils in Standards I. to V. was laid on the teachers there has been an appreciable lightening of our labours in the large schools in the matter of assessing the value of the written examination work; but the large schools are few, and, on the whole, the time taken and the work involved in examining a school are much the same as under the old regulations.

In 1901 436 pupils were on the roll in Standard VI.; 416 were present at our examinations, and 291 passed, a percentage of almost 70, as against 69 for last year. In view of the standard of proficiency we look for in this class and the number of subjects involved, we consider this on the whole a satisfactory result, a result, however, that leaves plenty of room for improvement. We are pleased to know that the Department has under consideration a scheme by which those that pass the Sixth Standard are to have the privilege of continuing their education without paying fees, not only at the district high schools, but also at the high schools of the colony. This year our district high schools give promise of doubling the number of pupils in their secondary department owing to the concession of free tuition already granted, and this increase will be greater as soon as free railway-passes for children attending the secondary classes of the district high schools are available. The scheme, as outlined in the Inspector-General's report on secondary education, by which those that have passed the Sixth Standard in places remote from district high schools and in centres like Timaru, where high schools are already established, are to have something like equality of opportunity of continuing their secondary course with those within reach of district high schools, is one that commends itself to a large section of the community, and the coming into operation of the suggestions contained in that report is eagerly waited for.

With regard to the methods of teaching as observed by us on our visits to the schools, we find ourselves generally in a position to report favourably. As in previous reports, we again take this opportunity of exhorting teachers to keep themselves abreast of the times in their professional work. Not content to go on from day to day on the old lines, they should be ever on the outlook for fresh suggestions as to methods and aims in education; and they should welcome these suggestions whether they find them set forth in formal manuals of school method, in journals devoted to school matters, or in articles from time to time appearing in the newspapers and magazines of the day. We might here point out how inadequate is the provision made by the State for the professional training of young teachers. For the most part they serve an apprenticeship as pupil-teachers, and, having obtained their certificates from the Department, they at once begin their work as assistants or are placed in charge of small schools. It is true there are training-colleges for teachers in Dunedin and Christchurch under the control of the Education Boards of Otago and North Canterbury respectively; but there should be established by the Department at least two training-colleges for each Island, and the attendance thereat of young teachers should be encouraged by a system of scholarships or by monetary aid granted to those compelled by distance to reside away from home during the period of their training.

As failure in reading now debars a pupil from obtaining a pass certificate in his standard, teachers have given even more attention than formerly to this subject, and improvement has to be recorded, particularly in the reading of the lower classes. A wider course of reading has been adopted; children are encouraged to read at sight matter well within their power, and there is less dependence placed on "pattern reading" of every phrase, sentence and paragraph, which in some cases was carried to such an absurd extent that pupils who could read their prepared books

with the greatest fluency and an exaggerated emphasis and modulation were helpless when brought face to face with a new lesson, even when that lesson was much simpler in character than those they had been so glibly reading, or, we might rather say, repeating, for with books shut they would proceed as readily as with them open.

We seldom have to complain of the want of preparation of spelling as tested in the formal spelling and dictation exercises. If this is bad it may be taken as an indication of indifference or laziness on the part of the teachers. Simple words of every-day use are frequently misspelt in composition and grammar exercises. It would not be too much to expect all the teachers to do what many of them now do to prevent the recurrence of these mistakes—namely, to keep a note-book in which to enter mistakes that are general, and to use the lists so formed as the ground for special spelling-lessons. It would save much trouble with regard to one group of words if every boy and girl would remember the following little rule :—

The form with *double e* should go
Together with *suc*, *ex*, and *pro*;
But do not spell *procedure* so.

Some of our schools have earned a reputation for good writing, and as a general rule we are able to give credit to the teachers for the attention paid to this subject. Legibility and a pleasing degree of neatness are seldom wanting in the writing of a school, even where there is room for criticism as to the correctness of the form of the letters when closely compared with the copies set for reproduction, and to the sit-as-you-please attitude of the writers. Writing is not an exercise that may be left to take care of itself. Systematic teaching and close supervision are always well repaid.

Both in the methods adopted by the teachers in their treatment of composition and in the attainments of the children improvement is shown. If teachers would realise how much can be done in the lower classes in the right treatment of oral answering as an aid to the formal lessons in composition, there would be less neglect of this means of preparing their pupils for what, to most of them, is the most difficult subject of the school course.

In arithmetic we have not been able to detect any signs that denote a marked difference of attainment in the work of the standard classes from that of past years. During our visits we very frequently found pupils failing to satisfy the requirements of their standard about whose attainments in this subject the teachers had apparently entertained no doubt, and we fear there is a general tendency among teachers to overestimate the proficiency of their scholars in arithmetic. Still, we have good grounds for looking forward to improvement in the higher classes, because of the undoubted advance that has been made in the training of the lower classes in quickness and accuracy in dealing with numbers.

Among the class-subjects geography receives much the same treatment as when it was a pass-subject; freehand drawing shows some degree of improvement on the lines recommended in our last report; grammar is good in only a few schools; history receives a fair share of attention; science and object-lessons, though not taught with much success in the majority of our schools, have a really educative value as treated by an increasing number of our teachers; and recitation, while not generally displaying on the part of the pupils any high degree of elocutionary skill, is carefully prepared, and the pieces professed are repeated in a pleasant and fairly expressive manner. A summary of the degree of proficiency shown in class-subjects is as follows: Good in twenty schools, satisfactory in twenty-eight, fair in eighteen, and moderate in two. As the corresponding numbers last year were nine, forty, sixteen, and two, it will be seen that the results this year show a gratifying improvement.

The additional subjects include singing, needlework, and drill. We regret to report that from various causes singing is not taught in twenty-one schools. In all our large schools and in some of our smaller ones singing is well taught, and it is a pleasure to listen to the part-singing of the upper classes. Needlework, which is omitted from the school course in six schools, is generally very well taught. In only one school, and that the smallest but one in the district, was there no attempt to teach drill and exercises. The competitions so successfully carried out at the great gathering of school-children at the sports of the South Canterbury Schools Athletic Association have been the means of arousing a keen interest in military drill and physical exercises with wands, clubs, and dumb-bells, and both in large and in small schools some excellent work has been done. A summary of results in additional subjects is as follows: Excellent in one school, good in eighteen, satisfactory in thirty-nine, fair in six, and moderate in four.

So far the introduction of handwork in our schools has not been general; indeed, until a revision of the present standard syllabus has been made we do not think it would be wise to do much more than has been done. As it is, various kindergarten occupations have been taken up for the first time by the infant classes and Standard I. in some schools; and in the Timaru Main School and one or two others that have been doing good work in this direction for years past the instruction continues to be given with success. We are pleased to report that the teachers have been doing something to prepare themselves for taking up the work of instruction required for school classes under the Manual and Technical Instruction Act. During the last term of the year classes for the instruction of teachers were held in Timaru on Friday evenings and on Saturdays. The woodwork class for men was attended by forty-two teachers. The course extended to twelve lessons of two hours each, and the average number of hours attended was nineteen out of twenty-four. A class for instruction in kindergarten occupations, which included paper-folding, brick-laying, modelling in carbon, mat-weaving, and cane-weaving, was conducted by Miss Avison, and was attended by eighty female teachers, the course being one of twelve lessons of one hour each, the average number of hours attended being almost ten. A course of twelve lessons of one hour each in brushwork and modelling in plasticine was given by Mr. William Greene. This was for teachers of both sexes, and was attended by 126 teachers. The class was so large that it was

taken in two divisions, the lesson for each division lasting one hour, and the average time attended by each student was nine hours and a half. Teachers had the privilege of attending the classes free of charge, and were allowed free railway travelling. Needless to say, the institution of these classes was hailed with delight, and the work, which was new to most of the teachers, was entered on with an enthusiasm that was well maintained throughout the course.

In accordance with the provisions of the Manual and Technical Instruction Act, the Timaru Technical Association was formed, with the Education Board as controlling authority; and, though it was so late in the year that there was time for only one term of lessons, evening classes were established and successfully conducted by the association. We hope to find this association appreciated by the townspeople, and so loyally supported that at no distant date a fully equipped technical school may be established in our town.

So far as the teachers are concerned, the most important event of the year was the passing of the Public-school Teachers' Salaries Act. As a result of the passing of this Act, the salaries of the great majority of the teachers in this district have been very substantially increased; and we are sure that, working under happier conditions, the teachers will carry out their arduous duties with no less faithfulness than has characterized their efforts in the past, and perhaps with greater buoyancy and cheerfulness.

We have, &c.,
JAS. GIBSON GOW, M.A.,
A. BELL, M.A.,
Inspectors.

The Chairman, Education Board, Timaru.

SUMMARY OF RESULTS FOR ROMAN CATHOLIC SCHOOLS.

Classes.	Presented.	Present.	Passed.	Average Age of Pupils in each Class.
				Yrs. mos.
Above Standard VI.	11	...	..	...
Standard VI.	62	60	37	14 3
" V.	70	66	56	13 5
" IV.	83	80	68	12 5
" III.	87	82	77	11 4
" II.	81	79	76	10 0
" I.	91	87	80	8 11
Preparatory	197	...	...	...
Totals	682	454	394	11 9*

* Mean of average age.

OTAGO.

SIR,— Education Office, Dunedin, 8th February, 1902.

We have the honour to present our general report for the year 1901.

The schools at the following places were closed before their examination time came round: Catlin's, Glenledi, Kaihiku, Nenthorn, Romareka, and Wanaka Road. Owing to the destruction of the building by fire, Waihemo was without a school for a large part of the year, and the children were therefore not examined. Whare Flat and Ahuriri Flat Schools were not examined, the former because it was closed for a considerable time before its examination time came round, and the latter because it was not opened till near the end of the year.

EFFICIENCY OF THE SCHOOLS IN TERMS OF STANDARD PASSES.

Classes.	Presented.	Present.	Passed.	Average Age of those that passed.
				Yrs. mos.
Above Standard VI.	481	...	...	...
Standard VI.	1,453	1,399	1,099	13 10
" V.	2,171	2,094	1,764	12 9
" IV.	2,491	2,414	2,047	11 4
" III.	2,548	2,493	2,145	10 10
" II.	2,439	2,384	2,204	9 10
" I.	2,157	2,127	2,039	8 8
Preparatory...	6,451	...	...	...
Totals	20,191	12,911	11,298	11 2·5*

* Mean of average age.

This table, a troublesome one to compile, is of no great worth, for it is a very inadequate expression of the actual condition of the schools. When it was proposed to hand over to the teachers the classification of their own schools we expected to see this return disappear; but, for some reason known neither by the teachers nor by ourselves, the Department has considered it wise to retain the standard pass. It has simply taken it (Standard VI. excepted) from the Inspectors and passed it on to the teachers, who are entirely opposed to the change. Their attitude to it is expressed in the following resolution, which was passed at their last annual meeting: "That, in the opinion of this Council, the retention of the annual pass examination and the issue of pass certificates for standards tend to prevent that freedom of classification which is the aim and object of the new regulations." We may say that we are in sympathy with the resolution.

In our reports on the several schools we have generally been able to say that the headmasters' passes were justified; but to bring some of them within this description we had to exercise pressure, many of the passes assigned by the teacher seeming to us to have been given too easily. A large number of teachers took advantage of the regulation that allows them to pass pupils that fail in two subjects. We are convinced that this regulation makes a pass too easy. Arithmetic and composition are the subjects in which our marking most frequently differed from that of the teacher, and in the latter subject his marking was, we are bound to say, not infrequently very faulty. We assured ourselves of this by reading the papers on which the pupils had been passed. Under the present regulations the efficiency of a school should in great measure be judged by the work of the Sixth Standard, the finished product of the school; but unless teachers insist upon good work in the standards below it they must look in vain for good work in it. Our chief aim should be to educate the children, not to pass them through the standards.

Efficiency-marks in Subjects.

Pass-subjects.—Reading, satisfactory; spelling, good; writing, satisfactory; arithmetic, satisfactory; composition, fair; geography, fair; drawing, good; mean result, satisfactory.

Class-subjects.—Grammar, fair; history, fair; object-lessons and science, fair; recitation, satisfactory; mean result, fair.

Additional Subjects.—Drill and exercises, good; singing, fair; needlework, very good; mean result, good.

In the pass and additional subjects the marks are the same as those of last year; but in the class-subjects there is a decline in history and object-lessons and science, and this has caused a drop in the mean result, which is this year only fair. The lower marks are, no doubt, owing in some measure to the circumstance that the Dunedin and suburban and some other large schools are unrepresented in these results; but we cannot help thinking that there is a casual connection between them and the very short working year of the schools. According to returns furnished by the teachers themselves, the average length of the working year in the schools represented is only 193 days. Exclusive of Saturdays and Sundays, the common year consists of 261 days. Allowing for a holiday of forty days, or eight weeks, we have a working year of 221 days—an excess of twenty-eight days, or nearly six weeks, over the time worked by the schools now under consideration. We leave it to others to translate this into terms of loss to the children in mental equipment and to the colony in money. Whatever the cause of the too short working year, it is plain that the time given to actual work is insufficient for the achievement of solid educational results; and in future the Board should, we think, call for an explanation in every case in which the school has not been open a certain minimum number of days during the year. It would, we feel sure, be a mistake to be niggardly in respect of holidays; but forty out of 260 days could not well be called niggardly. By most people it would undoubtedly be considered liberal, and few would regard themselves as overpressed by a working year of 220 days. The average child's school life is a short one—about eight years—and if he loses six weeks a year he loses in the aggregate a whole year of schooling, besides suffering morally and intellectually from frequent and prolonged breaks in his studies. These are surely very important considerations.

Of the subjects named above, six are described as "fair" and four as "satisfactory." We are dissatisfied with "fair" and not wholly satisfied with "satisfactory," for it means only that in the subjects so characterized the schools gained from 60 to 67 per cent. of the marks attainable, while "fair" represents a good deal of inferior work.

Indistinctness of utterance is still a prevalent fault in the reading of a large proportion of our schools, and it is a fault that will remain with us until teachers realise the necessity for training their pupils to use their vocal mechanism correctly, and for insisting on distinct utterance in all oral answering. The foundation of clear enunciation in reading is clear speaking, and it is foolish to attempt to teach reading without first laying the foundation on which it rests. To remedy a defect one must first realise it, and the defect of which we are writing is, we fear, not realised by many teachers, and it is certainly not realised by the pupils. In most country schools too little time is given to reading. It appears to be assumed that in this subject children can do little or nothing useful without working with their teacher. The teacher of a country school can devote to the reading of each class only about twenty minutes a day, and accordingly that is the daily time allotted to the most important subject of the school course. The assumption is as unwarranted as the time is inadequate; for children, when they have been intelligently started in reading, can help themselves with surprisingly little aid from others, a fact attested by hundreds of homes. They are taught the elements by their mother; they have books placed in their way; they ask for and receive help now and again from one or other member of the household; and in a year or two they can read easy books with ease and fluency; and, moreover, they have learned to enjoy the exercise. If young children can do for themselves in this way, cannot older ones? We hold that they can, and should. Of course, they need guidance and assistance, both of which should be given with the view to impart to the pupils power to help themselves more and more as they move upwards

through the school. How to interpret and voice accentuation marks and utilise the other aids now given in all reading-books, how to phrase, how to determine the emphatic word of a phrase group, how to use a dictionary—these are some of the things in which they must be soundly instructed to render them capable of helping themselves to the fullest extent. It is our opinion that the children of the standard classes should have an hour's reading a day; and, in schools with but one teacher, the hour might, in the middle and senior classes, be utilised approximately as follows: (*a*) Twenty-five minutes in the study of the language and content of the lesson to be afterwards read to the teacher; (*b*) fifteen minutes in preparing the phrasing and emphasis; (*c*) the rest of the hour in reading and explaining in class to the teacher. If an hour is considered too long for children to work continuously at the subject, work of another kind might be interposed between either (*a*) and (*b*) or (*b*) and (*c*).

Some such arrangement of study would put this important subject on a level with arithmetic, which now absorbs too much time—sometimes four or five times as much as reading and the study of the language and content of the reading-lessons. At bottom arithmetic involves but two operations—addition and subtraction, and the solution of a problem depends upon ability to determine which of these operations to apply to this or that step of the solution; and this ability is simply power to interpret the language in which the problem is stated. Outside the mechanical operations, arithmetic is only a question of interpretation of language; and hence a child's success in the study of it is largely conditioned by his knowledge of language. It is, we think, certain that a wider and deeper study of the language and content of the reading-lessons would greatly aid the child in his arithmetic, and also greatly increase his power of doing other kinds of intellectual work.

The children work up very thoroughly the spelling of the words of their reading-books, but above Class P they receive very little sympathetic teaching in it. Such rules as there are should be thoroughly taught; but, above all, we should see to it that the children know the meanings of the words the forms of which they are to learn. Words are but symbols, mere representatives of things and ideas; they are of value only because of what they represent, and, if we learn the symbol without the thing symbolised, we exalt the shadow above the substance, the husk above its content. The richest possession of a word is its meaning, and until we have possessed ourselves of this we have no use for the symbol, and find it difficult to learn and still more difficult to remember. Content and form should go together.

The mark for writing is lower than it ought to be. Examination of the copy and exercise books not infrequently reveals absence of care in the pupils and of correction by the teacher, the same errors in slope, in spacing, and in form of letter occurring page after page without any indication that they have been seen and criticized by the teacher. In a large proportion of schools, however, writing is well taught, and the results achieved are very creditable. Slovenly slatework is responsible for a good deal of inferior penmanship. We should be glad to see the slate banished from the senior classes.

We have little to add to what we have said in previous reports on the teaching of arithmetic. So far as blackboard demonstration is concerned, the proofs and setting of the work are generally excellent; but neither proof nor setting appeals to a mind unprovided, or inadequately provided, with accurate concepts based upon sense experience. We are sure that in the lower and middle classes there is too little concrete work done for the formation of accurate concepts of arithmetic; and hence the pupils pass on to the upper classes with minds inadequately equipped to follow intelligently the well-ordered reasoning of their teachers. We must again call attention to the following facts:—

1. That in the upper classes insufficient provision is made for exercise in long tots and cross tots, and in rapid multiplication and division of large numbers. Five minutes a day given to this class of work would be ample.

2. There is too little memorising of verbal statements of important principles: what the teacher teaches is not made articulate in his pupils.

3. The pupils are set to work exercises in weights and measures without having seen and handled the weights and measures themselves. It is obvious that actual weighing and measuring should precede abstract exercises in the tables.

4. The pupils are not trained to interpret and apply the explanations of their text-books. In other words, they are not trained so to use a text-book as to acquire power to help themselves when they leave school. No treatment of a subject is satisfactory that does not tend to develop in the pupils power to go alone.

The low mark gained in composition is due partly to the inherent difficulty of the subject, but much more, we think, to the following circumstances: (1.) Except when writing a formal composition exercise, the pupils of many schools pay little attention to the form of their answers. That, they seem to think, is a matter of indifference, for they are not composing when they are answering questions. Once or twice a week they have to brace themselves to the ordeal of composition, and then they do their best; but a best that is attempted so seldom is apt to be, and often is, a very poor affair. (2.) The teacher's ideal of composition is often too low. He is too often satisfied with the mere absence of errors in concord and government. Thought content, arrangement of the words, phrases, and clauses of the sentences, punctuation, coherent arrangement of the sentences of the paragraph, these, though the very things upon which both the disciplinary and the utilitarian value of the exercise depend, are the things we find least considered. (3.) In the senior classes the knowledge of grammar possessed by the pupils is generally inadequate to the requirements of clear connected discourse covering about a page of foolscap. By "knowledge of grammar" we mean not mere capacity to parse and analyse, though this has its value, but such knowledge of literary form as will enable the pupil to judge the right and the wrong in speech, to speak and write with due observance of the rules of concord and government, to place the parts of his

sentences in effective setting, and to connect his sentences in orderly sequence. If made to bear on the whole mechanism of sentence building and sentence connection, grammar is a fine exercise in observation and sound thinking; and we may add that no other subject affords a finer test of a man's capacity to teach. It is necessary to say that punctuation is a department not of elocution, but of grammar.

We are not satisfied with the results achieved in geography and history. In these subjects too little is done by the teachers to establish points of contact between what their pupils see around them and what they read about in their books, between what lies within their experience and what lies beyond it and is brought before them through the medium of another's mind. In and around the children lie their own samples of nature and experience. The samples of nature and experience that lie beyond their own horizon are very like those that lie within it; but unless they know their own well they cannot imagine those of the rest of the world. It is here that our teaching often fails; it does not find in the seen and known points of contact for the unseen and unknown.

Drawing is good of its kind, but much of it is of the wrong kind—work from the flat, not from objects. With the introduction of handwork we expect to see great improvement in this respect.

It has been said that Englishmen see with their ears, and we are frequently reminded of the force of the observation. It is, of course, obvious to every one that we ought, when it is possible, to gain our knowledge of things from a study of the things themselves; nevertheless, we not infrequently act as if the ears, not the eyes, were the doorways of the mind. We are glad, however, to be able to record improvement in object-lessons and experimental science teaching. In the former the object is generally present in the teacher's hand if not in the pupils, and in the latter there is a fair amount of experimentation. The object ought, if possible, to be in every child's hand, and it is important that in every experiment the following stages should be observed: (1) An accurate description of what is done; (2) an accurate statement of what results from what is done; (3) an accurate statement of what is inferred from the result. And here we would caution young teachers against a too common fault, the fault of allowing their pupils to regard as valid an inference drawn from one or two experiments. Besides the habit of exact observation and statement, the children ought to learn from their science-lessons something of the nature of valid induction. Instead of elementary experimental science, the teachers of country schools naturally take up the subject of greatest interest to rural children—namely, the "elements of agricultural knowledge." Elementary botany (classification omitted) is the basis of the instruction prescribed by the Department of Education, and this is precisely the science for the teaching of which we have not made adequate provision in the training-college. The result is that young teachers go to the country with little practical knowledge of the subject that is of special interest and value to their pupils. Than botany of the kind prescribed no other science furnishes finer material for training in observation and inference, and no other science is capable of being made so interesting to children. Its materials are clean, they are beautiful, they lie at hand everywhere; but, unfortunately, few teachers have sufficient first-hand knowledge of them to be able to make their teaching alive and inspiring, and therefore they fail to awake in their pupils that interest in their surroundings which it is one of the aims of science teaching to awake.

Physical culture is, we are glad to say, receiving more and more attention in our schools, especially in those of large centres. The aim of education is the formation of good habits; and habits are the product not of occasional but of frequent practice in this or in that physical or mental exercise. Physical culture should, therefore, be an affair of daily, not of weekly, concern. No day should pass without some practice in well-directed physical exercises, nor should any pass without some singing. We do not regard as satisfactory any arrangement of work that does not provide for physical exercises and singing several times a day in the changes from subject to subject. A few exercises or a verse or two of a song taken in the changes of lessons would add immensely to the working capacity of the children. We must again call attention to the ungraceful attitudes in which pupils are allowed to sit while working in the desks. Many teachers seem not to realise the importance of training their pupils to hold pen and reading-book in accordance with the directions of the experts.

In the large schools military drill continues to be very creditable to the boys and their teachers. We now have in the district a large number of cadet corps, and we think the time has come for affiliating them to a battalion and furnishing them with rifles suited to the strength of the boys. We object to the dummy rifle, which only fools the boys and does not provide them with the means for learning to shoot. It is a national duty to have our boys trained not only to handle a rifle, but also to shoot with it. If they were provided with suitable weapons they might proceed to the butts for practice in shooting while the girls are at cookery work.

The needlework of our schools continues to reflect great credit upon both teachers and pupils. Under the new scheme of salaries the Department has not, we regret to say, made provision for the teaching of this important branch of handwork in schools of thirty to forty taught by a male teacher.

The singing of a large number of schools is wanting in sweetness, and the recitation in expression.

Some teachers and Committees are less careful of the Board's property than they should be. There is one thing that ought, we think, to be forbidden—namely, the use of the school-rooms for dancing, except in connection with the annual entertainment given for the purpose of raising funds for the school. In some of them weekly or fortnightly dancing parties are held during the winter months, greatly to the detriment of the rooms and their furniture, and to the inconvenience of the teachers.

Many of the schools and out-offices are not kept so clean as they should be. We have frequently to complain of the insanitary condition of the latter. The Board attends well to the

painting of the exterior of the buildings, and the Committees are supposed to attend to the painting or the distempering of the interior; but this they seldom do, and the result is that many of the buildings are very dirty within. It is possible that their dirty condition is not without casual connection with the epidemics from which we have suffered so much during recent years. We suggest that, when the painters are sent out to paint the buildings, they should be instructed to paint both the interior and the exterior of them. The men being on the spot, the additional cost would not be great; but even if it were that should not be set against the health of the children. It is mockery to teach the laws of health while in practice we infringe them all.

CLASSIFICATION OF THE CLASSES ABOVE STANDARD VI. ACCORDING TO THEIR GENERAL EFFICIENCY MARKS.

Weak, eight schools; fair, eighteen schools; satisfactory, twelve schools; good or very good, twenty-three schools.

The schools represented are all country schools. As you are aware, more than twenty of our best schools were not examined in any department except Standard VI.

In former reports we have discussed the question of providing more advanced education for those of our pupils who wish to proceed beyond Standard VI., but who either have no desire to enter upon the study of secondary work or live too remote from secondary schools to be able to attend them; and, as little has been done to supply what we consider a serious defect in our education system, we feel it our duty to return to it. What have we done, and what remains for us to do? We have increased the number of district high schools and made them all free. In every village in which an average attendance of not less than twelve ex-Standard VI. pupils can be maintained we have made provision for free higher primary and free secondary education; but, oddly enough, we have done nothing to provide similar free education for centres where scores and even hundreds of such pupils have equal claims to it and the same need for it. What has been done for the dozens in country villages cannot, we think, fairly be denied to the hundreds in Dunedin. We therefore urge upon the Board and the Department the claims of Dunedin to a school that shall provide for its children what is now provided for those of the smaller towns and larger villages of the district.

Special schools established in Dunedin and the larger villages can, however, do the educational work of the district only to a very limited extent, for they are inaccessible to the people who are the very backbone of the land—namely, those who are occupied in taming the wilderness and in compelling rock and river to yield up their treasure, and without whose labour the towns could not exist. In former reports we have set out with sufficient detail what, in our opinion, should be done to supply their needs, and we shall not repeat here what we have said there. If we wait till we can supply what is ideally excellent we shall have to wait a long time. Except under the influence of an inspiring teacher, it is no doubt true that when a boy has reached the top of his school he has reached a point where the stimulus of work is apt to be too feeble to be highly educative, and that when this point is reached he should be sent to a school in which higher aims would be set before him, and in which he would have to compete with pupils whose attainments and ability are equal to or greater than his own. But how if this is impracticable? Is more advanced education to be denied to the child because his circumstances make it impracticable for him to attend a school specially staffed for advanced instruction? It would, we hold, be saner policy to make the best of circumstances and do what is done elsewhere—namely, provide for advanced instruction in every school in which there is a demand for it, and make it worth the teacher's while to encourage his pupils to enter upon it. To the hungry child half a loaf is better than no bread at all.

In the majority of our schools a large amount of highly creditable work is done; and, if in this report we have dealt more with defects than with merits, it is because we feel that, if we mean to maintain a place in the van of the school world, we must keep a keen eye on defects, be unsatisfied with present attainment, and ever strive to make our reach exceed our grasp.

We have, &c.,

P. GOYEN,
W. S. FITZGERALD,
C. R. RICHARDSON,
C. R. BOSSENCE,
} Inspectors.

The Secretary, Otago Education Board.

SOUTHLAND.

SIR,— Education Office, Invercargill, 31st March, 1902.

We have the honour to present our report for the year ended the 31st December, 1901.

By way of introduction we may be allowed to make some remarks of a more or less general character on the work of primary education as carried on in this district. In casting up the elements of gain and loss, we believe that the balance inclines to the credit side. Good work continues to be done in the majority of the schools. The appointments made to the vacancies that occurred in the teaching staff during the year are in themselves a guarantee of a certain amount of progress in a definite direction. The ranks of the pupil-teachers, too, have been filled by young persons of proved capacity. The usefulness and attractiveness of a number of the schools have been enhanced, on the one hand by grants for appliances and apparatus, and on the other by an extension of the new subject of handwork. Improvements have been made in some of the school-grounds. In the school garden, however, we find an item that must be put to the negative side of the account, for at all except a very few schools—notably, Gibbston and Invercargill South—gardening appears to be a lost art.

We have now seen the completion of a second year of school work under the conditions and regulations prescribed by the revised syllabus, and accordingly speak with some assurance as to their effects and their adaptability to the needs of the children and the district. So far as the every-day work of the schools is concerned, this latest form of syllabus has wrought no very noticeable change. As to the examination of pupils for promotion, on the other hand, we have noted great diversity of opinion and procedure. In the majority of cases we were entirely satisfied with the teachers' classification of the pupils. There were not wanting cases, however, in which the classification had been arrived at apparently without appeal to the dictates of common-sense or of good conscience. Between these two extremes an indefinite variety of views on the subject was entertained. Some teachers thought that they were acting in accordance with the letter and spirit of the regulations in granting a certificate to pupils who, though doing satisfactory work in the majority of subjects, were disgracefully backward in one—say, spelling, writing, or arithmetic. In the milder of such cases we did not always object to the promotion; but, for the reputation of the school and the district, we distinctly objected to the issue of a standard certificate. Some teachers, again, either did not promote their pupils in arithmetic, or turned them back in a wholesale manner during the course of the year to the work of the standard for which they already held a certificate of proficiency. As we pointed out last year, we take it that the intention of the syllabus is to provide for the cases of exceptionally backward pupils, not merely to simplify the work and organization of the school. In yet other cases teachers promoted pupils in Standards III. to V., indicating at the same time the pupil's degree of proficiency in reading by a query, though the syllabus clearly implies that weakness in reading is to be regarded as an absolute bar to the issue of a standard certificate. We found it necessary, therefore, in order to secure something like uniformity in the standard of promotion, to modify the teachers' classification at some schools, and at others to take the work of classification entirely into our own hands.

From the tenor of the last paragraph it will be seen that in a considerable number of schools there are as many standards of promotion as there are teachers. "*Quot homines, tot sententiæ.*" Nor is this altogether a matter for surprise when the disturbing factors in the process of classification are taken into account. There is the motive, strong but happily weakening, to secure for the school the talismanic formula—90 per cent. of passes. There are the desire to conciliate parents and the desire to get over an unpleasant duty in the pleasantest possible manner. There is the vague, but usually vain, hope that pupils promoted on slender grounds will make good their position during the year that is to come.

It might be expected, in view of the state of affairs indicated, that we should advocate the reimposition of the individual test by the Inspector. We have come to a conclusion the exact opposite of this. We advocate the total abolition of the standard pass, with all its unsavoury associations. Examinations there must be, but examination as understood for the last thirty years, or, say, since the discovery of the School Inspector, has been, it is to be feared, only too often an institution for the making of bricks without straw. If the teaching be faithful and skilful and the tone of the school good, we need not fear the issue. There always will be in the economy of school-keeping a place for examinations, which, however, could be so far rationalised as to become distinctly educative factors. Meanwhile, we would advise any teachers to whom this matter may present difficulties to carry out their formal examinations according to certain definite principles. Examinations should not be frequent, and they should cover definite sections of a programme of work outlined at the beginning of the year; the questions set should be within the comprehension of the average pupil of the class, and, as far as they go, the tests should be absolutely thorough; above all, pupils should be led to see that there is no virtue in doing well at examinations except in so far as the well-doing is the result of loving and faithful work. So will our young people come to see in examinations not a series of systematic checks intended to discover how much is unknown, but times thoughtfully set apart for their encouragement by finding out how much they know and how much they can do.

We will now give some impressions on the teaching of the different subjects, premising that these impressions were gathered partly at our visits of inspection, when the work of teaching is as a rule carried on conjointly by the teachers and the Inspector, and partly at the annual visit, when the teacher and the pupils are supposed to render an account of their year's labours.

As usual, we will begin with reading. We believe that the progress noted in our last year's report was maintained, if not continued in an even increasing ratio. None but the teacher has any conception of the difficulties in the way of giving successful instruction in this subject—the patient drudgery, the hope deferred, and the weary waiting till at last in too many cases the pupils slip through the teacher's fingers, fruit and harvest barely in sight. The mistresses in the larger schools—and, indeed, in nearly all the schools—take infinite pains in teaching the initial and more mechanical steps of the subject. For their encouragement, and for the encouragement of all who in the upper classes of our schools endeavour to instil into the minds of their pupils a love of the mother-tongue in its infinite richness and variety, we take the liberty of quoting an often-quoted passage from Lowell's "Books and Libraries": "Reading is the key which admits us to the whole world of thought, fancy, and imagination, to the company of the saint and the sage, of the wisest and wittiest at their wisest and wittiest moments. It enables us to see with the keenest eyes, hear with the finest ears, and listen to the sweetest voices of all time. It annihilates time and space for us, and revives the age of wonder without a miracle. We often hear of people who will descend to any servility, submit to any insult, for the sake of getting themselves and their children into good society. Did it ever occur to them that there is a select society of all the centuries to which they and theirs can be admitted for the asking—a society, too, which will not involve them in a ruinous waste of time and health and faculties?"

Our experiences with regard to the subject of spelling were distinctly varied in character.

In all but the strongest schools there has been a falling-away from accuracy in various degrees. Several reasons accounting for this suggest themselves. The reading-books are harder than those to which the children have hitherto been accustomed. The attendance during the year was, on the whole, unsteady. But there is another and more potent reason. This is to be found in the provision of the syllabus whereby a pupil may be promoted to a higher class even if he is weak in spelling, provided that his weakness does not fall below the degree of strength required in the standard below that in which he is placed. It is not difficult to see what this provision leads to in some cases: it simply puts a premium upon a "let-it-slide" policy. The horse may stumble at the first hurdle; but, never mind, he has another chance at a hurdle smaller by an indefinite extent. We do not say this represents the attitude of many of the teachers, but in the light of our experience we have no doubt whatever of its application in some cases. With regard to the difficulty presented by the books, we may say that we have always advised teachers not to attempt too much, but to make sure that what is done is well done—*i.e.*, that it is educative and thorough. To make instruction in spelling educative some attempt must be made to teach even the shreds of principles applicable, and some attempt to carry on systematic word-building; to make instruction thorough there should be constant use of the blackboard—for a knowledge of spelling does come by observation—frequent revision, and the keeping of a record of errors made, not a slavish entry of each error as it occurs, but the logical method of eliminating and recording the errors common to a class.

The general tenor of the remarks just made regarding spelling applies very largely to writing also. In this connection we recall a statement made in our last year's report, to the effect that what is bad writing in one class would be considered bad writing in the class below. There should accordingly be no trusting to the chance that a pupil's work will at least be equal to something with which it is totally incomparable. Our requirements in this subject are few but sufficiently comprehensive; the pupil's work should be uniform and legible. We may add that in this district the result of the battle of the methods has been a compromise, the style of handwriting now taught in nearly all our schools combining the physical advantages of the upright method with the characteristic grace and flow of the sloping.

Coming to the last of the English group of subjects, we note that in the majority of the schools much time and care are bestowed on the teaching of composition, with the result that we often find pupils able to express themselves in writing clearly, rapidly, and fully. There is, however, in some cases a tendency to seek absolute accuracy at the expense of varied and flowing thought. Children receive imperative instructions to say only one thing at a time—in its place an unimpeachable maxim. But it is hardly necessary to remind teachers that the art of composition lies not in the putting together of things like so many sticks in a row. It lies in a varied, thoughtful, and melodious combination of ideas, and the sooner the children cast aside the single statement shackle the better for the cause of composition. In this subject the outstanding difficulty, in country schools especially, is the lack of ideas. We have on many occasions invited the upper classes of schools to choose their own subject and proceed to talk about it. Failing this, the pupils were invited to make as many statements as possible about the subject; but no amount of questioning of the most persuasive kind could awaken any responsive chord in their minds. In such cases the teachers are largely to blame. They know the pupil's poverty of language and ideas, and yet by no determined effort make good the defects. But the making good of defects is just their duty and their privilege, and they should not shirk the one nor esteem lightly the other because of ugly difficulties besetting the path of progress. The remedies, we would remind the teachers, are oral composition from the first day a child enters school, by which we mean that the child should give a complete answer to every question asked in connection with the English subjects. Then there are the conversational lessons at the blackboard, the driving home of the few principles involved; and last, but by no means least, independent effort on the part of the pupil.

In arithmetic we regret to have to chronicle an unfortunate falling-off in the various forms of mental work. The great difficulty here, especially in single-handed schools, is to find sufficient time. We recognise the difficulty, but we must also recognise the fact that, generally speaking, what can be done in one school can be done in another. Mental arithmetic is absolutely indispensable in the primary school. It is indispensable in the teaching of new principles, in mind-training, and in bread-winning. For these reasons we cannot blink the fact that it has in too many cases been overlooked, and we feel that it will be incumbent upon us hereafter to call pointed attention to cases of neglect. With respect to the teaching of arithmetic generally, we may say that on the whole it continues to be good, though we are every now and then impressed with the idea that in some schools there appears to be no adequate return for the time spent on it. Inexperienced teachers cannot be too often reminded that the true way to success here is to make absolutely sure of the ground-work. Till the pupils are perfect in tables, and quick and accurate at the simple rules, there can be no progress in the more advanced parts of the subject. It is creditable to our infant-mistresses that, as a rule, they do this part of their work so well. Of all school subjects arithmetic can be most readily turned to practical account; but the neglect to do this is, we fear, responsible for the helplessness of many pupils when they reach the more intricate stages. In a fair number of schools arithmetic is taught in such a way as to become a valuable training in method and abstract reasoning, and where it is thus taught as a science pupils will find little difficulty with the art. Teachers for the most part have their eye rather upon the art than upon the science. Nor is this altogether matter for surprise, seeing that so many of our pupils must be doing for themselves before they are well into their teens.

Referring to the class-subjects, we are glad to say that new and better methods are gaining ground in the treatment of the subject of geography. This subject, which to the young mind is perhaps the most delightful of all school studies, is at length being raised out of the region of cram. There is, however, still much to be desired in the treatment of physical and mathe-

matical geography. It is too often taken for granted that, if the pupils know by rote the scrappy notes in their text-books, they know all that is knowable of the subject. But just here is found one of the steps of a pupil's progress at which the teacher could with advantage go beyond the beggarly elements and put him in the way of thinking for himself. For pupils beginning to think about physical geography there is but one right starting-point, and that is in their own homes—a precept this more honoured in the breach than the observance.

The teaching of English grammar is in a most unsatisfactory condition in a great many of our schools. Judged by Inspectors' reports the subject appears to fare little better in other districts. In all but the best schools here the study of formal grammar is virtually abandoned. Where analysis, sentence structure, and correct forms of expression are studied we do not greatly complain, but when, as happens in not a few schools, neither the one side nor the other of the subject is taken up we are forced to the conclusion that there is something wrong either with the subject or with the teachers. It is high time that some definite scheme of instruction, such as that proposed at the Inspectors' Conference over twelve months ago, were put into the hands of the teachers.

In a great many of our schools history fares indifferently. We are by no means sure that the method of treatment prescribed by the syllabus is conducive to the mental growth of the pupils; indeed, we are sure that it is not. The story method is all very well for beginners, but for upper classes it appears to us to make impossible much of the teaching that gives an introduction to the study of history any claim to appear in a primary-school curriculum. History through the medium of reading-books would be in every respect preferable to history through the medium of indifferently digested notes.

As to elementary science, the less said the better. Where there are material and apparatus good work may be done. Where there is neither time spent over the subject is merely wasted. There is a splendid opportunity for the Department to rescue this subject from total inanity by supplying each unsupplied school with the minimum of apparatus needful for instruction of young people in the first steps of scientific knowledge. Teachers might themselves do much to make good the deficiency, but they will not. By-and-by, when the teacher becomes a handy man as well as a learned man, we shall have more effort in this direction. As it is we find even such a subject as agricultural science taught without a single specimen for the purpose of illustration, though the necessary material might perhaps be found no further away than the school door. The infinitesimal text-book is the source and font from which information filters through the teacher's mind into that of the pupil, where, in most cases, it is anything but a desirable possession. An excellent little pamphlet on French methods of teaching agriculture was issued by the Department some time ago, but we cannot say that the methods there suggested have been consistently carried out at any of our schools.

Making mention of the additional subjects, we may say that the fashion in school songs appears to be changing, not always for the better, we think. The ideal school song is such that its words and music will be cherished for a lifetime, and that can only be where the former are literature and the latter worthily wed to the former. As examples we cite at random "Tom Bowling," "The Minstrel Boy," "Auld Lang Syne," and "Duncan Gray." We should greatly like to see more attention paid to musical theory and elementary voice-training. There are certain very important secondary results flowing from an efficient training in singing. It is our experience, for instance, that good reading, good recitation, and good singing go hand-in-hand. Then, there is the enrichment of the pupil's mind consequent upon the development of the sense of hearing, not to mention the hygienic consideration of increased lung-capacity.

We may perhaps sum up the result of our observations on the actual working of the schools thus: In the greater number thorough and educative work is being done. In a small but unhappily increasing number there is a tendency for the work to become neither thorough nor educative. We do not altogether blame the teachers; for, in the first place, the regulations bearing upon the promotion of pupils tend to discount the quality of thoroughness, and, in the second place, the syllabus is overloaded to such an extent that educative teaching becomes well-nigh impossible. In the long run it is quality that tells, but from the very conditions laid down by the present syllabus the quantitative aspect of a child's schooling must be the overmastering idea in the teacher's mind. Various remedies have been suggested. One which has much to commend it is that pupils should be thoroughly grounded in the essentials before being allowed to take up side subjects. There can be no doubt that the endeavour to ground pupils in the essentials and at the same time to add a varied assortment of ornamentals, though having about it an air of liberality, is mere pretence, and cannot but end in disaster. Less radical, but in some measure effective, is the proposal to curtail the requirements in certain subjects; and the further proposal to limit the number of class-subjects required according to the staff and circumstances of a school. It appears to be futile to suggest any saving of time by reform in spelling and arithmetic. Anglo-Saxon Conservatism is apparently not yet willing to abandon the mysteriousness and crookedness of its native-born methods of calculation in favour of the simplicity and symmetry of the metric system, even though the abandonment would save little Celts and Saxons many tears, some stripes, and perhaps a year of precious time.

As teachers and as Inspectors we cannot forget that there are certain general principles underlying the work of teaching, and that in times of transition and of difficulty it is proper to appeal to them for guidance. Because it has direct bearing on much that has been said, we refer here to the principle known as the correlation of studies, which is, or should be, operative throughout the whole realm of educational work. In this connection the merits and demerits of what is known as teaching by subjects are being greatly canvassed by educationists at the present time. It is said, on the one hand, that the elevation of any given subjects on to separate pedestals, so that they may be separately taught, examined, and reported on, is a

beggarly ideal. It is an attempt to disarticulate where there are no joints, to isolate where there are no barriers. On the other hand, it is contended that a straining after correlation and unification of subjects lands the pupil in an atmosphere of mental haze. It appears, then, that in the work of practical teaching if we escape the Scylla of one-sidedness we become a prey to the Charybdis of many-sidedness. This is no mere abstract question; it is exemplified in concrete form in our schools every day. In some we have subject-worship with its attendant thoroughness; in others a thoughtful co-ordination of subjects with many awakenings of the slumbering powers of the young mind. In others, again, we have neither thoroughness nor comprehension, and we have grades unclassifiable, some leaning in the one direction and some in the other. A word of practical advice may be desirable here, even if it be culled from the commonplaces of school method. In the first place, teachers should bear in mind that every subject without exception should consciously and constantly be made a vehicle of instruction in the accurate use of the mother-tongue. Accuracy in spelling, for instance, should be insisted on, not as a means of satisfying an examiner, but as a means of ready and correct expression. Arithmetic, again, should not be regarded solely as the correct casting up of sums, but as a taking part by anticipation in the every-day concerns of life. So, too, instruction in elementary science that does not entail an occasional arithmetical calculation, a geographical reference here, and a practical application there is little else than a vain show. A reading-lesson that fails to give a new tone and tendency to a pupil's mind is absolutely poverty-stricken. Thoughtful teachers, however, will not rest content with a few empirical hints on a matter so vital to their profession. To such we recommend a little book on the Herbartian Psychology, by Adams, which goes straight to the heart of the problem. In this book, apart from its charming style, teachers will find, in addition to a clear statement of the principles underlying the question in hand, matter that may well afford inspiration for a lifetime.

It remains to say something of the new subject of handwork. As is usual with new school subjects, handwork to the enthusiast is a panacea, to the sceptic a nostrum. The subject has for many years occupied an important place in our infant departments in the form of kindergarten exercises. It is now taking definite shape in the upper classes also. During the past year there were taken up, in addition to the usual kindergarten, paper cutting and mounting, modelling in plasticine and (in one school) brushwork. The visit of the Department's technical Inspectors in June, and the special grant, with the consequent establishment of classes for the instruction of teachers, have tended to win for handwork a still more prominent position in our primary-school course. We are, indeed, within measurable distance of the time when such instruction will be universal. The theoretical justification for the new step is to be found in the growing recognition of the educational principle that, if the hand is to respond quickly, accurately, and delicately to visual impressions in the brain, practice in making the necessary co-ordinations must begin early. The economic justification is neatly put thus: "Instruction is productive when it increases the mental capacity, the intelligence, the powers of observation and of reasoning of every unit in the body politic." Handwork satisfies the required conditions, hence its inclusion in the primary-school curriculum. But, while our schools should throw open wide their doors to improvements suggested by new economic conceptions, we must be watchful lest the swing of the pendulum carry us to the point where too great an inroad will be made on the proved and potent qualities of a sound general education. We estimate that the absolute limit to the usefulness of this new subject will be attained by two hours' instruction per week. That would give something like five hundred lessons of an hour's duration to an average school course. The objection to our present course is its remoteness from practice; but, while handwork brings us one step nearer, it does not, and cannot, take the place of practice itself. In support of this statement we can quote testimony of the highest worth. Sir William Arrol, for instance, engineer of the Forth Bridge, speaking of technical education—and handwork is technical education in a generalised form—said recently that it is only when technical training and practical training run hand-in-hand that the former is of any use. His experience is not favourable to technical colleges. He had had dozens of students from such colleges, and not six of the lot had proved able to work for their wages. On the other hand, his greatest undertakings had been carried through by men who had never been inside a technical college. The ideal training for an industrial career, according to Sir William Arrol—and this is what we wish to emphasize—is a sound general training till the age of fifteen, thereafter apprenticeship to a trade, with attendance at an evening school or technical institute *pari passu*.

There is pressing need for a revision of the regulations affecting the pupil-teachers, those in force being totally out of keeping with many of the conditions now obtaining in our schools. If the educational standing of the district is to be maintained, this is a matter that will brook no delay. Now that the staffing of the schools has been so materially strengthened, it would be manifestly unwise and unfair to expect pupil-teachers to do as much actual teaching as has hitherto been required of them. The course of study, too, is in several respects out of harmony with the practical needs of the school; and there is the further consideration that hereafter no fees are to be paid for the instruction of pupil-teachers. In brief, in the interest of the pupil-teachers, in the interest of education, and in the interest of the community, the system needs revision through and through.

Mention of the pupil-teachers raises the larger issue as to the want of adequate provision in our district for the training of teachers. It appears to us that in fairness to the district one or other of two things should be done: the Department should either institute a system of scholarships by which our future teachers would be enabled to attend a training-college, or it should make a small grant towards the maintenance of training-classes which might very well be worked in connection with the local primary, secondary, and technical schools. This is a question that demands a speedy and equitable solution.

An immediate fillip might be given to two very important branches of education in this district by the establishment of special classes for the instruction of teachers in physical exercises and in blackboard drawing. We understand that a portion of last year's grant yet remains. We cannot conceive of any better use to which the money could be put.

The district high schools will presently be in full working order. While we express the hope that they will prove entirely successful, we cannot help feeling that the plan of giving any school not within easy distance of a secondary school a special grant for solid work in the more advanced subjects would have met the needs of this district better than the establishment of district high schools. This idea was mooted by the Otago Inspectors in their last year's report, and it has our warmest sympathy.

As a final word, we may say that we expect much from the Act embodying the new scale and staff, which, though bringing in its train cases of individual hardship, and cases, too, of questionable benefit to education, will, we are assured, be entirely beneficent in its general drift and tendency.

Appended you will find a schedule giving a summary of results for the whole district.

We are, &c.,

JAMES HENDRY,
GEO. D. BRAIK, } Inspectors.

The Chairman, Education Board, Invercargill.

SUMMARY OF RESULTS FOR THE WHOLE DISTRICT (exclusive of Roman Catholic Schools).

Classes.	Number on Roll.	Present at Inspector's Annual Visit.	Passed.	Average Age of those presented.
				Yrs. mos.
Above Standard VI.	202	178	...	14 6
Standard VI.	680	666	542	13 10
" V.	1,003	967	818	12 9
" IV.	1,180	1,145	953	11 10
" III.	1,236	1,201	1,042	10 11
" II.	1,097	1,059	980	9 10
" I.	1,062	1,034	982	8 9
Preparatory	2,934	2,763	...	6 9
Totals	9,394	9,013	5,316	11 1·75*

* Mean of average age.

Roman Catholic Schools.—Number on roll, 520; present in standard classes, 317; passed, 278.

Approximate Cost of Paper.—Preparation not given; printing (3,375 copies), £41 14s.

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