

cheerless and bare. The mistress stated that even the schoolroom was better than her own accommodation, and that in bad weather she was compelled to retire early to bed in order to keep warm.

Mention has only been made of school deficiencies along the East Coast, but there are places, including Gisborne, Te Karaka, Hampden, Waipatiki, and Dannevirke South, where an increase in the school accommodation is required.

In the districts where full school provision has taken place, the buildings, including residences, are mostly in good repair, and externally present a neat and tidy appearance. The internal condition is not so satisfactory. For a number of years little or nothing has been done to paint or beautify the rooms in any way, and a fairly large expenditure is now necessary to provide for this important work.

The School Committees in many districts pay considerable attention to the wants of the schools. There is a growing watchfulness among members and a desire to keep things in good working condition. Improved sanitation, a proper water-supply, and neat grounds are matters that receive increasing attention in the larger districts, and it is seldom that any complaint is called for in consequence of neglect on the part of Committees and teachers. Considering that so much has been done in making suitable school provision in all the older settled districts, efficiency can only be maintained by School Committees supporting and carrying on the good work that the Board have attempted. The schoolhouse and residence, with the ground attached, should present to the people of a district a standard of neatness and tidiness that is worthy of imitation. Children are imitators by nature, and if they have presented to them at school good surroundings, so as to cultivate their taste and influence habit, the foundation of a good character will be laid. The busy life of a settler is apt to overlook or undervalue these aspects of school training. Imagine, for example, my surprise a few days ago when accosted by a settler: "Mr. Hill, that house is too good for a teacher; why does the Board waste money on such a building?" My reply was, "The house will help to make the teacher comfortable, and therefore more capable of teaching; further, it will show the children that a nice home is worth striving for." To the settler the mere teaching to read and write and cipher embraced all the teacher was capable of conveying to children, and, unfortunately, a similar idea prevails in many districts to-day. The school has to carry the higher ideals among the people, and true education will advance just in proportion to the supply of proper school buildings, where the children of the colony can be trained to realise that knowledge and character in combination make up the successful citizen, for without character knowledge will be of little avail.

The following summary shows the number of children in the schools of the district who were returned as attending school during the progress of my examination last year, it being examined for classification purposes only. The results of the examinations for the previous year are given by way of comparison.

Classes.	Number on Roll.		Present at Annual Visit.		Absent.		Failed.		Passed.		Percentage of Passes in		Average Ages of Pupils in each Class.	
	1902.	1901.	1902.	1901.	1902.	1901.	1902.	1901.	1902.	1901.	1902.	1901.	1902.	1901.
Standard VII.	111	79	96	...	15	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	Yrs. mos.	Yrs. mos.
" VI.	503	464	493	446	10	18	192	121	301	325	61.0	72.8	14 7	...
" V.	772	734	757	719	15	15	152	147	605	572	79.9	79.5	13 0	13 1
" IV.	928	937	901	926	27	11	150	138	751	788	83.3	85.1	12 1	12 2
" III.	1,145	1,019	1,109	1,005	36	14	156	141	953	864	85.9	86.0	10 10	11 1
" II.	1,024	1,066	987	1,054	37	12	104	114	883	940	89.4	89.2	9 9	10 0
" I.	1,075	1,082	1,044	1,067	31	15	91	110	953	957	91.2	89.7	8 7	8 8
Preparatory	2,672	2,675	2,364	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
	8,230	8,056	7,751	5,217	171	85	845	771	4,446	4,446	84.0	87.1	11 10*	11 3*

* Mean of average age.

In the Catholic schools examined there were 781 on the roll; 526 were present at my examination. Eighteen of those in standard classes were absent; 170 failed, and 356 passed. There were also 236 in the preparatory class, and one in Standard VII.

The increase in the number of children whose names are entered on the school roll as attending school is 174 for the year. Those examined in standards increased by 258, whilst the number of passes or promotions in the standard classes was exactly the same in 1902 as in 1901.

As remarked by me in a previous report, the pass results, with the exception of Standard VI., are based solely upon the examinations held by the teachers. At the time fixed for the annual visit of an Inspector the examination of the large majority of children in a school has taken place, and it merely rests with the Inspector to see whether the promotions that are made or are recommended are justified and represent a fair standard of efficiency when compared with the requirements as set forth in the regulations of the Government.

A reference to the table shows there was a falling-off during the year in the percentage of promotions from standard to standard, the most noticeable being in Standard VI., where there is shown a difference of over 11 per cent. in the proportion of passes compared with the previous year. In Standards IV. and III. there is also a falling-off in the promotions, but the difference is small, and bears no comparison with the marked lowness of the passes in Standard VI. This decline in the results of the highest class is the outcome, I fear, of allowing promotions in Standard V. on too