

TABLE XII.—DISTRICT HIGH SCHOOL EXAMINATION RESULTS

Qualified for Board's Junior, and Junior National Scholarship.	Qualified for Board's Senior Scholarship.	Passed Civil Service.	Passed Senior Free Place.	Passed Civil Service Senior.	Passed Matriculation.	Qualified for Senior National.
28	14	34	9	..	6	..

[Tables XIII and XIII A, giving details of scholarship examination results, not reprinted.]

INSTRUCTION.—The subjects of our primary-school course may be divided into four groups: (1) English and arithmetic; (2) geography, history, and elementary science; (3) handwork; (4) singing and physical training. With respect to group 1, it is safe to say that considerable progress has been made. Rational methods of instruction are steadily gaining ground in the infant departments, though, with respect to the applications of the principles of phonics, a great deal yet remains to be done. In the upper classes much improvement was evident in the more formal phases of composition, and in reading, which was in all cases tested by the use of books that the pupils had not previously seen. In some schools the “nasal twang” and other perversions of standard English speech were all too much in evidence. It is to our teachers, more than to any one else, that we must look to preserve in their purity the noble sounds of the Mother-tongue. The best teacher of English is he who sets a good example to the pupils, who will then set a good example to each other. Though the criticism contained in the reports of recent years has not been altogether unheeded, shortcomings in the teaching of handwriting continue to be too frequently noted. With respect to arithmetic, the other member of group 1, we may note that, though the schools are not losing ground, they are not making the headway that might reasonably be expected. Intelligent methods certainly prevail in the infant classes, but the value of the methods is often lost for lack of judicious memorizing. Numbers are carefully analysed by the use of objects, but the results of the analysis are practically thrown to the winds, not having found permanent lodgment in the minds of the pupils. In very few schools is the apparatus supplied by the Board for the teaching of this subject really well used. It is sometimes put to unexpected uses. The measures of capacity have been used as drinking-vessels and as flower-pots, while the scales and weights have sometimes to be produced from the recesses of the residence kitchen. Regarding group 2—geography, history, and elementary science—we note that the schools are holding their own in the matter of geography by observation, a method of study that binds the pupils down to actual conditions, so affording a solid basis for further study. Both political geography and history have fallen on evil days in our schools, though the *School Journal* does much to keep interest in them alive. Separate reports on elementary agriculture and elementary dairy science are presented by the Supervisors, Messrs. Grant and Browne, the value of whose services we cordially recognize. In town schools the science subject is elementary physical measurements, dealing with which a study-scheme was sent to the teachers early in the year for the purpose of securing uniformity and efficiency of instruction. Handwork (group 3), in one or more of its forms, is taken in all our schools, and its value, as the material substratum of much of our primary-school work, is duly appreciated. Drawing, the most important of the handwork subjects, has gained somewhat in quality, but much better work could be done if the teachers of the larger schools were to respond more readily to the Board's invitation to the Saturday classes, classes taught by men of the standing of Messrs. Seaward, Watkin, and Elliott. The last group (4), singing and physical training, need not detain us long. With some brilliant exceptions, the quality of the singing is still at a low ebb. In this subject, as in drawing, the Board offers free tuition on Saturdays at four centres, but it seems as if the fruits of the instruction will not appear till our younger teachers return from the Training College. In most of our larger schools physical training is good; in some it is excellent. What the Defence Department is going to do for us is not yet apparent, but provision for the physical training of girls as a part of the ordinary school course has still to be made by the teachers.

ADMINISTRATION.—If the work of teaching requires knowledge, skill, system, and enthusiasm, the work of organization requires wisdom, tact, restraint, and a lofty conception of duty. That our head teachers possess these attributes in liberal measure may be inferred from the absence of friction in circumstances where friction is peculiarly liable to arise. But notwithstanding inevitable conflict of interests, relations of a uniformly pleasant nature exist between the head teachers, the children, the parents, and the Board's officials. There are, however, one or two administrative shortcomings that seem to call for notice. The first is the treatment that the bright pupil sometimes receives. He is recognized but not encouraged, admired but not given his due. If the administration of the school fails to provide exceptional facilities for exceptional merit it fails in a very serious respect. An idea has gained currency that the free-place system relieves teachers of all responsibility in this matter, and a very poor type of idea it is. The school should not be sacrificed in the interest of one or two promising pupils, but the head teacher who, in the interest of such pupils, cannot make some little self-sacrifice does not act in the best interests of his school. The Alf. Bayley and Taranaki Scholarships are cases in point. What has the northern part of our district done to secure its due share of honour in the matter of these scholarships? Another point of administration to which we must call attention has reference to the school schemes. During the year striking improvement was made in the methods of keeping these indispensable adjuncts