

of attendances per month, or even per quarter, could be insisted on, the difficulty would be considerably reduced, though even then some pressure would perhaps be necessary to induce local Committees to undertake the unpleasant and unpopular duty of enforcing the Act. The exemptions provided for in clause 90 are sufficiently liberal to guard against any real hardships arising from such an alteration as the one proposed.

Allowing eight weeks out of the year for holidays, there remain 220 school days per annum. The following list shows how many children have failed to attend on 100 days during the year. No doubt some of these represent children leaving or entering the schools during the year, but, as the list does not include children below the First Standard, it will probably nearly represent the number of children in the district whose parents are liable to prosecution for insufficient attendance; and there still remain the children who have not attended any school during the year:—Number of children who have attended school on less than 100 days during the past year: Stafford, 1; Goldsborough, 2; Callaghan's, 1; Kumara, 33; Greymouth, 26; Hokitika, 44; Paroa, 5; Wallsend, 7; Woodstock, 4; Kanieri, 6; Blue Spur, 5; Upper Crossing, 3; Arahura Road, 5; Marsden, 2; Dunganville, 2; Greenstone, 1; Ross, 8; Donoghue's, 1; Cobden, 16; Brunnerton, 5; Hatter's, 2; Ahaura, 2; Orwell Creek, 1: total, 182.

The total number of children examined at the schools named in Table No. 1, attached, was 2,434; and the numbers and percentages of passes in each standard are given below.

Standard.	Number of Passes.	Percentage of Total Number examined.
VII.	7	·28
VI.	33	1·35
V.	116	4·76
IV.	193	7·93
III.	243	10·00
II.	332	13·64
I.	362	14·87
Below Standard I.	1,148	47·17
Total ... ..	2,434	100·00

In comparing the results obtained at the various schools, as shown in the table, it must be remembered that the large schools, with from three to five adults, and from three to six pupil-teachers, have an immense advantage over the small schools, each conducted by a single teacher, yet containing nearly as many classes as the largest. In the first case each teacher has one or at the most two classes to manage, and that in a room by himself; whilst in the second the whole work falls upon one, and that, too, under other unfavourable conditions. It would therefore be most unfair to expect as good results from the small or third-class schools as may be looked for in a school of the first class. Second-class schools, such as Kanieri, Stafford, and Goldsborough also labour under similar disadvantages, though not to the same extent. I have not thought it necessary on this occasion to give a separate report upon each school, as the table of results will speak pretty distinctly as to their relative efficiency; but, in forming an opinion on the matter, the remarks made above respecting the small schools must be borne in mind, and before comparing any two schools it must be ascertained whether they are working under similar conditions as regards attendance, staff, class-room, &c. In order to facilitate such comparison, I have grouped together schools that somewhat resemble each other in these respects:—(a.) Hokitika and Greymouth. (b.) Kumara and Ross. (These schools are about the same size, but Ross has hitherto had a staff considerably less than that of Kumara.) (c.) Stafford, Goldsborough, Kanieri, Cobden, and Brunnerton. (The two last are at a disadvantage in having only recently commenced to work under the Westland system, and in having no adult female assistant.) (d.) Woodstock, Blue Spur, Donoghue's, and Arahura Road. (Allowance must be made for the two last, which have been open only a year.) (e.) Greeks, Callaghan's, Maori Gully, Paroa, Wallsend, Upper Crossing, Dunganville, Greenstone, and Marsden. (f.) No Town, Hatter's, Ahaura, Totara Flat, Orwell Creek. (g.) Waipuna and Granville (half-time schools). This arrangement has reference only to the present examination. Next year the conditions will be considerably varied, as several schools will become half-time schools, and probably a few will be carried on under the 88th clause of the Act. It is perhaps almost unnecessary to remark that a difference of 2 or 3 per cent. does not warrant the conclusion that one school is better or worse than another with regard to efficiency; such a difference may easily arise from purely accidental circumstances.

In my last annual report, in speaking of the Greymouth School, after giving due prominence to the fact of its having been very successful at the Christmas examination, I expressed a doubt as to whether the progress made was really as great as it appeared to be. This misgiving arose from a recollection of the fact that the 4th and 5th classes had done badly in two or three subjects at the previous June examination; and, as there had been no opportunity of testing the pupils who then failed, in the same standards, I considered that I was perfectly justified in expressing those doubts. At the last midwinter examination the Greymouth School was first on the list, and did so well that I admitted that the results went far to remove from my mind the doubts I had expressed six months before. More than this I could not conscientiously say, since the schools were examined then in the same standards that they had passed in the previous December. Now, however, another examination has taken place, and the Greymouth School has again placed itself at the head of the list; and on this occasion I consider that I am in possession of sufficient evidence to warrant my stating decidedly that the pupils of this school have not suffered in the slightest degree from the action taken by the head-