

such schools, I strongly advise the Board to build small cottages, and, as vacancies arise in the future, to invite applications from female teachers, who perhaps might be induced to accept such appointments, if suitable residences were provided in addition to the salaries which such schools afford. Possibly these schools might supply an outlet for the pupil-teachers who, at the expiration of the present year, will have completed their term of service.

In the regulations relating to the examination of schools under the Act it is provided that all scholars in "fair attendance" shall be expected to pass at least one standard every year. In the absence of any more definite instructions I have assumed an attendance of 75 per cent. of the possible number to be a "fair attendance," and all scholars who failed at the late examination, and whose attendance fell below that amount, have been excluded from the table attached to this report. The number of children so excluded in the case of each school is recorded in another part of the report.

Upon taking a general view of the present condition of elementary education in Westland, I am satisfied that, on the whole, there is much that is gratifying in the prospect. Notwithstanding the departure of many excellent teachers, and the temporary arrest of progress which every change of teachers necessarily involves, the majority of the schools have done remarkably well at the recent examination. In nearly all cases where the results are unsatisfactory it can be shown that the want of efficiency is mainly due to circumstances beyond the control of the present teachers. Thus, at Stafford, the failures in the Sixth and Fifth Standards are owing to the fact of the late headmaster's promoting nearly all the children after the last examination, although instructed to retain them in the same standards in consequence of the change of programme. I have therefore entered opposite each school, under the head of "Remarks," a statement of any circumstances that have come to my knowledge which have acted unfavourably upon its progress.

The complaint made in my last report, and which, indeed, runs more or less through all reports of the same nature, respecting irregularity of attendance, might be repeated in nearly the same words on this occasion. The average number of half-day attendances for each pupil in the district (exclusive of those schools which have been working as half-time schools) is 319, or about three-fourths of the total number possible. In other words, considerably less than half of the civil year has been employed in school work, the remainder having been absorbed in Sundays, holidays, and absence. It is worthy of remark that the best attendance in the district is at the Greenstone, which has been under the 88th clause all the year.

The number of children examined this year up to the present time is 2,378, which is 253 less than the number examined in 1878. This difference is caused partly by the closing of five schools since the last report, partly by the absence of a greater number of children on the day of examination, and partly by the exclusion of 46 children from the return, who, not having been in "fair attendance," failed at the examination. The average attendance for the December quarter shows a considerable increase on the corresponding quarter of 1878 in all schools excepting four.

The following table shows the numbers presented and passed in the various standards for the years 1878 and 1879. I have included the return for 1878 in order to facilitate comparison, and also to give me an opportunity of correcting an error which crept into my last report, and which was not discovered until after its publication:—

Table showing Number of Scholars presented and passed in the various Standards.

Standards.	1878.		1879.		Percentage of Passes in each Standard.		Percentage of Passes to total number examined.	
	Presented.	Passed.	Presented.	Passed.	1878.	1879.	1878.	1879.
VI.	34	33	26	22	97·05	84·61	1·25	·93
V.	130	116	95	81	89·23	85·26	4·40	3·43
IV.	247	193	167	152	78·13	91·01	7·33	6·44
III.	310	243	275	245	78·38	89·09	9·23	10·38
II.	375	303	375	366	88·53	97·60	12·61	15·51
I.	387	362	420	411	93·54	97·85	13·75	17·42
Below Standard I.	1,148	1,148	1,001	1,001	100·00	100·00	43·63	42·43
Totals	2,631	2,398	2,359	2,278			92·20	96·54

Scholars not in "Fair Attendance," excluded from above Table.

SCHOOLS.	Standard VI.	Standard V.	Standard IV.	Standard III.	Standard II.	Standard I.	Totals.
Stafford	1	2	...	3	...	...	6
Goldsborough	1	5	2	...	...	8
Kumara	1	...	2	...	3
Greymouth	1	...	...	1
Hokitika	2	1	...	...	3
Kanieri	4	...	...	4
Upper Crossing	1	1	...	...	2
Brunnerton	6	1	7
Ross	2	1	...	...	3
Donoghue's	1	...	1
Hatter's Terrace	1	1
Ahaura	2	1	3	1	7
Totals	1	3	13	14	12	3	46