

THE DISTRICT HIGH SCHOOLS.—The extra work done at the district high schools was examined at the end of the year. The attendance at the extra branches has, I understand, been more or less affected by the pressure of the hard times. It is worth remarking that the addition of history and science to the former subjects in Standards V. and VI. has had the effect of curtailing somewhat the time available for taking extra branches. It appears to me that a good deal of misconception prevails as to what may fairly be expected of the district high schools. It must be remembered that they are in all respects public schools, and that whatever extra work is done at them is done in addition to the entire work of the Fifth or Sixth Standards, as the case may be. The district high schools are thus very heavily handicapped to begin with, and cannot be expected to do so much advanced work as is done in the endowed high schools and private schools, where there is no wide and definite compulsory standard work. As a matter of fact, nearly all the pupils who took extra subjects at the district high schools have this year had to pass the ordinary Fifth or Sixth Standard examination. If pupils remain at a district high school after they have passed the Sixth Standard, they can then devote their entire time and attention to the higher branches, and should make corresponding progress. At Tokomairiro several pupils have been in this position, and they have done a great amount of work, and done it well. Another disadvantage under which the district high schools labour arises from the insufficiency of the staff, only a portion, and sometimes a small one, of a headmaster's time being available for teaching the extra standard branches. The difficulty just noticed is intensified by the variety of extra branches in which instruction is desired. From this recital I believe it will be manifest that a district high school is a mongrel institution that can with difficulty do the upper standard work as efficiently as an ordinary public school, and cannot possibly do the extra work as well as any of the endowed high schools. Their present constitution and organization are at variance with their pretentious designation, and are manifestly of a temporary and makeshift character. To take the place in a system of graded schools they were originally designed to fill they will have to be greatly modified both in their constitution and in the relation they bear to the ordinary public schools.

The following is the substance of my reports on the extra work of the year:—

PORT CHALMERS DISTRICT HIGH SCHOOL.—Examined, 1st and 2nd December, 1879. The following statement shows the number of classes, the number of pupils in each class, and the work done:—

Subject.	Class.	No. of Pupils.	Work done.
English	I.	9	"Merchant of Venice," in Nelson's Shakespeare
	II.	7	Reader.
Latin	I.	2	Cæsar, Book II.
	II.	3	Principia Latina, Part I.
	III.	7	Begun Principia Latina, Part I.
Geometry	I.	2	Euclid, Books I. and II.
	II.	7	Book I.
	III.	3	Begun Book I.
Algebra	I.	1	To easy quadratics.
	II.	4	To end of simple equations.
	III.	7	Begun the subject.

Remarks.—*English*: The higher division made an average of 60 per cent., and four of the papers were very good; the lower division had gone over the work once, and hurriedly, and only one in it reached 50 per cent. of the marks. In several papers, otherwise good, the division of sentences and the punctuation were faulty. Individual words were accurately and clearly explained, but selected passages of two or three lines were much less satisfactorily dealt with. The explanations were in most cases partial, and failed to bring out the force of the passage, or adduce the circumstances under which it was spoken, and which were in several instances essential to an intelligent explanation. One or two, however, gave the meaning of the passages proposed very well.—*Latin*: The papers of Class I. were very satisfactorily answered; the translation was done accurately and into good English, and the syntax and accidence were creditable for beginners. The second class did not answer so well, and their knowledge of the inflections of nouns and verbs was less complete than might be expected at this stage.—*Geometry*: Class I. has gained a very thorough knowledge of the work gone over, and Class II. answered very fairly on Book I.—*Algebra*: Both classes answered very well. The subject has been taught with very considerable care and skill. At this school English and Latin were taught by the headmaster, and geometry and algebra by the first assistant.

OAMARU DISTRICT HIGH SCHOOL.—(Examined 3rd and 4th December, 1879.)—The following statement shows the subjects studied, the numbers of pupils and classes, and the work done:—

Subject.	Class.	No. of Pupils.	Work done.
Latin	I.	1	Principia Latina, Part II.; and Cæsar, 20 chaps.
	II.	16	Principia Latina, Part I., to verb sum.
French	I.	1	"Coin du Feu," 60 pages.
	II.	19	Ahn, Part I. to Ex. 90.
Geometry	I.	4	Euclid, first three books.
	II.	2	Book I., 20 props.
Algebra	I.	1	To simultaneous equations.
	II.	3	Todhunter, to Ex. 14.
	III.	8	Simple rules and factors.