

SUMMARY showing the AVERAGE AGE at which the several Standards have been passed throughout the Nelson District during 1880.

Standard I.	Yrs. mos.	8	2	Standard IV.	Yrs. mos.	12	2
" II.	9	10	" V.	13	7		
" III.	11	0	" VI.	14	3		

RECORD of TOTAL PASSES in STANDARDS DURING 1880.

Number on roll on examination day ...	3,937	Standard I...	Presented.	565	Passed.	464
Present at examination ...	3,355	" II...	648	555		
Presented in standards ...	2,402	" III...	552	428		
Passed ...	1,924	" IV...	366	274		
Percentage of passes ...	80	" V...	190	134		
		" VI...	81	69		

NORTH CANTERBURY.

1. MR. RESTELL'S REPORT.

SIR,—

Education Office, Christchurch, March, 1881.

I have the honor to submit herewith, as required by the gazetted regulations, a return showing the number of children who have passed from a lower to a higher standard during the year 1880 in my district. I have also added some further particulars illustrative of the same return. The total number inspected and examined in my special district has amounted to 6,725; the number presented and examined in standards, 4,288, of whom 3,053 have passed from a lower to a higher standard; generally, of schools examined more than once, the result of the later examination has comprised all who passed. The percentage of scholars who passed, as presented is 71·2, a result comparing not unfavourably with those of former years; for although last year the percentage was 89, that result, as then explained, included the passing again of many scholars the same grade as in the previous year. It has now become the custom, judiciously classing the scholars according to their fitness, to withhold from examination, *i.e.*, "not to present," unfit scholars for the next higher standard than that last passed. Sufficient reasons for scholars being withheld are sometimes given; these are, "bad attendance," "inattention to study," "idleness," "incapacity for more advanced work." I have, however, been surprised at the large numbers withheld in some schools of higher organization, and, in some instances, even then at the only moderate percentage of success. This has led me to institute a comparison; and I find in some schools no scholars withheld, and, nevertheless, very creditable results attained. In other schools very few of those who passed in the previous year are withheld. It seems to be obvious that it cannot but be a confession of inefficiency if a large proportion of scholars of fair average age for their next higher standard are "not presented." On the other hand, I think that school the best in which, the largest proportion of scholars being presented, the standards are passed fully at the lowest average age. The percentage of passes is often mistaken to be the sole mark of efficiency; but it must be considered with reference to other data, among which are "the percentage presented." I have, therefore, included this item in my return, which shows that only 63·75 per cent., or less than two-thirds, were presented in standards, of whom, as before stated, 71·2 per cent. pass. This still leaves again the large proportion of 2,452, or more than one-third of the whole attendance, unable to pass the lowest standard. This number, however, is swollen by the attendance of many infants below five years of age, whose admission often permits also of the attendance of some older child otherwise kept at home in charge of the younger ones. The following tables show a summary of this year's result in comparison with those of the two previous years:—

				Presented in Standards.	Passed as Presented.	Percentage of Success.			
1880	...	...	...	4,288	3,053	71·2			
1879	...	...	...	3,761	3,368	89			
1878	...	...	...	3,984	2,841	71			

	STANDARDS PASSED.						AVERAGE AGE PER STANDARD PASSED.						
	VI.	V.	IV.	III.	II.	I.	O.	VI.	V.	IV.	III.	II.	I.
1880	24	113	230	529	1,211	947	2,452	13·8	13·4	12·5	11·6	10·1	8·4
1879	37	99	300	786	1,084	1,503	2,326	13·8	13·1	12·8	11·8	10·4	9·0
1878	61	178	321	641	867	969	3,116	13·2	12·5	11·9	10·6	9·5	8·1

This year's results would at first sight seem to compare unfavourably with those of 1879; but a sufficient reason for the difference has already been stated. Some of the low results, apparent in the return of scholars passed, relate to exceptional or classification examinations, as on the opening of a new school, or on a new teacher taking charge. The only new schools opened in my special district during the year 1880 are Aylesbury and North Loburn; the others in which examinations have been held for classification, or after a short interval, are Eyreton, the Kaiapoi Island Schools, Kowai Bush, North Kowai (Amberley), Oxford East, Saltwater Creek, Stoke, Sumner, Waiau. The examination of these schools has been a preliminary classification of the scholars, as a record of their proficiency at the time of the new teacher taking charge, and a standard by which to compare future progress. The low results, in such cases, do not reflect on the new teacher, nor, generally, on his predecessor. Among the apparent causes for dissatisfaction are the many failures in the higher standards, and the backwardness at their age of several scholars who never reach them.

The Sixth and Fifth Standards comprise far too much work for many of the scholars to be able to overtake in one year; and much time is also occupied, in some instances very profitably, in several extra subjects required to be taught, but not essential to passing. Such subjects are chemistry, botany, electricity or elementary science generally, music, drawing, drill, needlework, domestic economy. The