

children examined in standards this year is greater by nearly 200 than it was last year, and, of these 171 are in the four higher standards. In addition to the work of the standards, as defined in Regulation 7, the following schools have this year included in their curricula the subjects set opposite their respective names:—Greymouth: Elementary science and drill. Hokitika: Elementary science, vocal music. Kumara: Elementary science, vocal music, drawing, and drill. Ross: Elementary science, vocal music, drawing, and drill. Stafford: Elementary science, vocal music, and drill. Goldsborough: Geikie's "Physical Geography," and Buckton's "Health in the House." Kanieri: Elementary science, drawing, and drill. Brunnerton: Elementary science and drawing. Cobden: Elementary science. Blue Spur: Elementary science and drawing. Donoghue's: Drawing. Upper Crossing: Drawing. Ahaura: Vocal music.

At two schools that took up elementary science at a late period of last year the Sixth Standards were presented again in the same branch. Of course, fresh sets of questions covering a wider range of the subjects were prepared for the schools alluded to, namely, Hokitika and Kumara. The teacher of the Goldsborough School presented his Fifth Standard for examination in physical geography, and although this is not included in the elementary science as defined by the regulations, yet, as the teacher had devoted considerable time to it, I thought it only fair to allow the class, consisting of one boy, the benefit of any marks he could obtain in this subject, and examined him therein accordingly. The percentage of marks throughout the district is necessarily lower this year than last, firstly, because (in the case of girls) no marks for sewing have been added; and, secondly, because, while only about a dozen of the schools have introduced subjects not included in Regulation 7, all of them have been debited with the marks for those subjects, in order that they might be more easily compared. Of course, the provisions of Regulation 9, with respect to passing a standard, have been observed. The quality of the work in elementary science was, on the whole, good in the Sixth and Fifth Standards, but, as a rule, of very little value in the Fourth; and I am compelled to admit that in the majority of cases the introduction of this subject into the Fourth Standard has been followed by a perceptible deterioration in the quality of the ordinary work; the percentage of marks having fallen considerably in all but three of the schools referred to. There is also a falling-off in the percentage of marks in the two upper standards of most of these schools, but not to the same extent, and in most cases not more than can be fairly accounted for. In the Fourth Standard some ludicrous mistakes occurred in the science papers, which showed that more attention should be directed to written exercises on these subjects. The following are a few examples: "The lungs give out carbohic acid," also "carbonate acid." Amongst the bones composing the human skeleton were the "nepan," "inchstep," "parental bone," and the "outstep," and one lad described the right auricle as "west" of the left auricle, and "north of the right ventricle."

OBJECT-LESSONS.—So far as I can see at present the object-lessons have not been productive of much advantage to the recipients. The scholars in the Third Standard were required to give, in writing, an account of some one object selected from the syllabus furnished by their teachers. Objects somewhat similar, such as cotton and flax, were hopelessly confused, and even the bee and the silkworm, sponge and coral, bat and owl, &c., whilst very erroneous ideas are apparently entertained upon some subjects. Several described salt as fusible "because it will burn," and as many stated that the same substance is used "for building houses where there is no wood or stone." The bat was described as "very useful to farmers by killing mice," and as not laying eggs "like other birds." Sponge is "a mineral," and paper "grows in the United States." There is, however, one school where the bulk of the third class exhibit a very good general knowledge of the subjects upon which they were examined, and that is at Ross. The object-lesson papers at this school, considering the age of the scholars, are admirable as regards the subject-matter, the method of treatment, and the neatness of writing and arrangement. The following table shows the total number of children presented and passed in standards, with their average age, &c. :—

			Average Age.	Presented.	Passed.	Per Cent.
Standard VI.	...	...	14 yrs. 4 mos.	63	62	98
" V.	...	...	13 " 3 "	100	95	95
" IV.	...	...	12 " 7 "	219	191	87
" III.	...	...	11 " 2 "	325	287	88
" II.	...	...	9 " 7 "	437	425	97
" I.	...	...	8 " 2 "	377	375	99

If it be granted that the method of examination adopted here is as fair a test of the efficiency of schools as those which obtain in other parts of New Zealand, it must be admitted that the foregoing table shows the results of this district, as a whole, to be very satisfactory. Comparing the above with a similar table, given in the last report of a neighbouring district, it will be seen that, in a portion of that district containing 63 schools, some of them very large, out of 3,499 scholars presented in standards, only 19 were presented in the Sixth, and of these only 8 passed. In all the other standards, although the numbers, as compared with Westland, are increasingly larger as we descend to the First, the percentages of passes are from 3 to 8 per cent. lower there than they are here. In comparing the results in this district with those of other parts of the colony, another circumstance should be taken into consideration. In the other districts the teachers present in each standard those scholars only who are almost certain to pass. In Westland, however, it has been the custom ever since the Board established and organized its schools to present every scholar in a standard higher than that which he passed at the previous examination, and, although the present regulations do not insist upon this, the practice is still maintained, and with very few exceptions every scholar presented this year had passed (or even, in a few cases, failed in) the previous standard at the last examination. It must not be supposed from the foregoing remarks that I wish to claim for Westland a superiority over any other district whatever; my only object is to convince the sceptical that we are not in any degree behind our neighbours as regards the efficiency of the majority of our public schools.