

## SOUTH CANTERBURY.

SIR,—

29th May, 1882.

I have the honor to submit my general report on the work of inspection for the year 1881.

Thirty-five schools were in operation during the year, being an increase of six on the number at work in 1880. With the exception of North Orari, which has been closed for the greater part of the year, all the schools have been examined in standards, and in a few cases, where the results were unsatisfactory, a supplementary standard examination was held at the close of the year. Three small schools received no intermediate visit of inspection, but the larger proportion have been visited several times.

The following table shows the general results of the standard examinations in the several schools, giving the attendance, the classification of the scholars after examination, and the percentage of passes:—

Roll at December, 1881	...	...	3,531	Roll at December, 1881	...	...	3,531
Percentage of roll number presented	...	...	51·6	Presented in standards	...	...	1,833
Passed—percentage of number presented	...	...	73·4	Passed as presented	...	...	1,346
Percentage of roll number passed—				Percentage of number presented in each			
Standard VI.	...	...	·9	Standard VI.	...	...	53·6
"    V.	...	...	1·3	"    V.	...	...	39·6
"    IV.	...	...	4·5	"    IV.	...	...	54·5
"    III.	...	...	9·0	"    III.	...	...	72·6
"    II.	...	...	11·5	"    II.	...	...	85·8
"    I.	...	...	9·0	"    I.	...	...	76·8
Total percentage	...	...	36·2	Total percentage of passes	...	...	73·4

The following table compares the number and percentage passed in each standard for the past three years:—

	1879.		1880.		1881.	
	Number.	Percentage.	Number.	Percentage.	Number.	Percentage.
Passed Standard VI.	8	·3	12	·4	40	1·4
"    "    V.	57	2·6	101	3·5	73	2·5
"    "    IV.	133	6·2	168	5·9	235	8·2
"    "    III.	221	10·0	390	13·8	455	16·0
"    "    II.	468	21·3	546	19·3	529	18·5
"    "    I.	394	17·9	521	18·4	420	14·7
Below Standard I.	907	41·3	1,095	38·6	1,107	38·7
	2,193	...	2,833	...	2,859	...

A further comparison gives the number and percentage in the three main divisions into which all the scholars may be suitably divided:—

	1879.		1880.		1881.	
	Number.	Percentage.	Number.	Percentage.	Number.	Percentage.
Passed in Stands. VI., V., IV.	203	9·0	281	9·9	348	12·2
"    "    III., II., I.	1,083	50·0	1,457	51·4	1,404	49·1
Failed to reach Standard I.	907	41·0	1,095	38·7	1,107	38·7
	2,193	...	2,833	...	2,859	...

And further, in 1879 1,159 out of 1,397, or 84·3 per cent., passed their standards as presented; in 1880, 1,538 out of 1,790, or 85·9 per cent.; and in 1881, 1,346 out of 1,833, or 73·4 per cent.

Viewing these comparisons it will be seen (1) that the number of scholars present at examination (2,859) was about the same as last year; (2) that the average standard of attainment, as shown by the classification after examination, has slightly improved, there being a larger proportion of scholars in the higher standards; (3) that the year's work compares unfavourably with that of last year, the percentage of scholars who passed their standards being 73·4 as against 85·9 for 1880. This low percentage of passes is undoubtedly the result of loss of time caused by the prevalence of sickness. An epidemic of measles visited the whole district, and most of the schools were closed for several weeks and greatly disorganized. Many of the examinations were of necessity held immediately before or too soon after the schools were closed to admit of the results being taken as fairly representing the school work. In one case, where I had every confidence in the ability and zeal of the master, the work was defective and the oral answering slow and inaccurate; but it was evident that the desire to be present at the examination had brought a considerable number of children to school who were unfit to leave their homes. The following day so many of the scholars were absent on account of measles that the school was closed.