

1882.

NEW ZEALAND.

EDUCATION.

REPORTS OF INSPECTORS OF SCHOOLS.

[In Continuation of E.—1B, 1881.]

Presented to both Houses of the General Assembly by Command of His Excellency.

[It has not been thought necessary to print in all cases the tables and those portions of the reports that relate only to particular schools.]

TARANAKI.

SIR,—

New Plymouth, 31st December, 1881.

I have the honor to transmit my annual report of the Board's schools for the year ending this day, together with record of passes.

A summary of the detailed record of passes shows the following results (omitting presentations in preparatory standards): Number of pupils on the rolls, 30th September last, 1,643; working average, 30th September last, 1,170; presented for examination, 818; passed into higher standards, 539; percentage on the whole, 65. Presented in Standard I., 215; passed, 151: in Standard II., 219; passed, 163: in Standard III., 216; passed, 126: in Standard IV., 71; passed, 49: in Standard V., 41; passed, 24: in Standard VI., 6; passed, 2.

These results are by no means satisfactory, nor what I hoped for. The causes are not far to seek—viz., the neglect of parents; great irregularity of attendance; the continual changes in the individuals in the school; the admission of a large proportion of children who have never been classed in any public school; as regards the town of New Plymouth, the want of police surveillance of the streets during school hours; and the pressing necessity for child-labour in the bush districts.

A large proportion of your teachers have been working conscientiously during the past year.

I must refer you to my last year's report as to the cause of the low state of the Lower Egmont and Smart Road Schools. If it were possible to stamp out the discordance which exists in the Kent Road and Albert Road Districts, and the settlers would combine for the common good, most beneficial results would ensue. The state of the Norfolk Road, Midhirst, and Stratford Schools has been most unsatisfactory: I hope, however, that the new arrangements and an active Committee will restore them to order. I regret that some suggestions contained in my last report for the guidance of the teachers have been unheeded, simply because the Inspectors' Reports have only recently been circulated.

Notwithstanding the time I have been compelled to devote to the re-arrangement of the town schools and those in the eleventh district, I have been able to visit all the schools twice in the year prior to the examinations, and am glad to report that, with a few exceptions, the discipline, order, and condition of the schools are satisfactory. Reading is improving, but I have in some cases remarked strongly on the very objectionable practice of letting the pupils read books quite beyond their comprehension; consequently their reading was mere sound, without an idea attached. The study of the reading-lesson beforehand has rarely been enforced as it should have been, and, though the writing from dictation was generally good, I found the meanings of the words unknown in some cases. A somewhat similar fault is to be found in the teaching of arithmetic. In some schools I found pupils pushed on into the higher rules, but, when tested by examination, I found great deficiency in a knowledge of numeration and notation, and power of thinking out a question even in the simpler rules. Writing has improved generally throughout the schools, but is still far from being what I wish. Geography is in a far more satisfactory state in all the schools. The copies of maps and those drawn from memory were often very good. Drawing (free-hand) is taught by those teachers who have learnt it; otherwise it is confined, especially in the half-time schools, to drawing maps. Music is taught on the Tonic Sol-Fa system by those teachers who have learnt it. In other schools it is taught by the ear only. The little that is taught has done great good in improving the quality of tone in reading and recitation. Gruff rusticity of voice is slowly disappearing.

Desk-drill has been carried out in almost all the schools very satisfactorily; it has only failed in one or two of the schools in the eleventh district. The Courtenay Street School is a model which all the teachers might copy with advantage in their schools. The drill of the boys in the play-ground or unfrequented streets in town has been well carried out, so far that their manners, language, and conduct appear to me to be improved.

The Chairman of the Board of Education.

WM. M. CROMPTON,

Inspector.

WANGANUI.

SIR,—

Wanganui, 28th February, 1882.

I have the honor to present to you my third general and detailed report on the schools examined by me for the year ending the 31st December, 1881.

At the outset I remark—(1.) That between the 1st of March and the 5th of September, in addition to official work connected with the annual examination of the pupil-teachers and the scholarships examination, I made “surprise visits” to all the schools under inspection in my district. These visits are of the first importance, as they enable the Inspector to see the schools in their everyday dress and working capacity, and afford an excellent opportunity of forming a judgment of the organization, methods, and discipline by which the teachers work their several schools. At these periodical visits the pupil-teachers (where employed) are required to teach a class before the Inspector to enable him to judge of their teaching power, and bearing, and other collateral matters. The teachers, too, avail themselves of the privilege accorded to them of considering educational matters with their Inspector. (2.) That between the 5th of September and the 23rd of December, by dint of excessive hard work, and working on for a week into the time set apart for the Christmas holidays, I managed to complete without hitch the examination of all the schools within the year. The work involved in the examination has gone on steadily increasing, not so much from the addition of new schools as from the large increase of children presented, especially in Standards IV., V., and VI. (3.) That in my report of last year I stated that throughout the examinations I had gone more literally by the standard requirements than I felt warranted in doing in 1879. This year I have taken them in their entirety. And, as last year, the examinations in Standards I., II., and III. were for the most part conducted orally, and those in Standards IV., V., and VI. by means of written papers, which I received, revised, and valued after school hours. The number of written leaves of foolscap given in was 3,990, and the time devoted to their revisal 180 hours. (4.) That, as far as it was practicable to do so, I took the papers, after they had been examined and valued, to the several schools, so that the teachers and the scholars might see the weak points and the strong ones. I have no doubt this will be found more effective in improving the work done than a lengthy notice in my report that such and such a subject was unsatisfactory, and that it should have been done in such and such a way. It will also be specially valuable in doing away with much of the looseness which prevails in some of the schools in setting down the work. (5.) That, as a basis in forming a judgment of the character of the work done in the several schools, I took into account not only the individual test, but also as most important factors the discipline, order, and moral tone of the classes. (6.) That shortly after the examination of each school I furnished the Chairman, as I did last year, with the schedules containing the names of those children who had passed the several standards, so that standard certificates might be issued in accordance with Order in Council of the 24th of September, 1878, subsection 3. In this report I purpose to confine myself principally to the results of the work of the past year, and to a few remarks upon them.

SCHOOLS AND STAFF.—The number of public schools in my district is 57. These are officered by 40 certificated teachers (32 male and 8 female); 35 uncertificated teachers (16 male and 19 female); 34 pupil-teachers (7 male and 27 female); and 8 unpaid cadets (5 male and 3 female): total, 117.

TEACHERS AND PUPIL-TEACHERS.—I have pleasure in reporting that the teachers in connection with the Board are, as a rule, well qualified for their work, and that they have not relaxed their efforts nor declined in efficiency. On the contrary, in most of the schools the work is energetically and laudably performed with evenness and equality of progress. In general the pupil-teachers are attentive, anxious, and painstaking. The bulk of their written papers at the annual examination are distinguished by fulness and intelligence. Their conduct too is highly commendable, and many of them make an excellent appearance in teaching a class before the Inspector, on the occasion of his “surprise visits.” This is due in a large measure to their having got careful training in the art of teaching and in class management. And both as to acquirements and teaching-power they will, I think, compare favourably with pupil-teachers in any other part of the colony.

STATISTICS OF INDIVIDUAL EXAMINATION.—Following the course adopted in my former report I have drawn out the subjoined tables, which embrace the following particulars: (1.) The number of children on the roll in each school and in each county on the days of examination. (2.) The strict working average for the past year. (3.) The number present. (4.) The number presented for a formal pass in the several standards. (5.) The number that rose to a pass. (6.) The number that failed to rise. (7.) The number that were raised from a lower to a higher standard in the course of the year. (8.) The percentage raised. (9.) The number that passed in reading, spelling, writing, arithmetic, grammar, geography, history, and sewing. (10.) The average age of the children in the several standards. (11.) The number of children examined from one or other of the standard classes, but who, from faulty classification or from other satisfactory reasons, were not presented for a formal pass, and of children not sufficiently advanced to be presented in Standard I. (12.) The whole number examined.

PATEA COUNTY.—In this county there are 11 schools under inspection. These are officered by 8 certificated teachers (7 male and 1 female); 6 uncertificated teachers (1 male and 5 female); 7 pupil-teachers (2 male and 5 female): total, 21. The number of children on the roll on the days of examination was 462 boys and 407 girls: total, 869. The strict working average for the year was 348 boys and 300 girls: total, 648. The number present was 387 boys and 348 girls: total, 735. Of these, 141 were presented for a formal pass in Standard I.; 129 in II.; 130 in III.; 31 in IV.; 13 in V.; and 7 in VI.: total, 451. Of these, 131 rose to a pass in Standard I.; in II., 120; in III., 114; in IV., 27; in V., 12; in VI., 7: total, 411. And there failed to rise in Standard I. 10; in II., 9; in III., 16; in IV., 4; in V., 1; and in VI., 0: total, 40. The number that rose from a lower to a higher standard in the course of the year was 142 boys and 117 girls: total, 259. Percentage raised, 83.1. There passed in reading, 433; in spelling, 394; in writing, 441; in arithmetic, 363; in grammar, 146; in geography, 261; in history, 143; in sewing, 151. The total number of passes in these subjects was 2,332. The average age of the children presented for a formal pass in Standard I. was 8.7 years; in II., 9.6 years; in III., 11.5 years; in IV., 12.5 years; in V., 13.2 years; in VI., 13.7 years. The

number of the children examined from one or other of the standard classes, but who, from faulty classification, or from other satisfactory reasons, were not presented for a formal pass, and of children not sufficiently advanced to be presented in Standard I., was 284. The whole number examined was 735. These results are an increase over the previous year of 119 on the roll; 71 on those present; 27 on those presented; 103 on those raised; a decrease of 76 on those who failed to rise; an increase of 74 on those raised from a lower to a higher standard; 12.9 per cent. on standard passes; 515 on subject passes; 44 on those outside the standards; and 71 on the whole number examined.

WANGANUI COUNTY.—In this county there are 17 schools under inspection. These are officered by 10 certificated teachers (7 male and 3 female); 12 uncertificated teachers (7 male and 5 female); 12 pupil-teachers (3 male and 9 female); 3 unpaid cadets (2 male and 1 female): total, 37. The number of children on the roll on the days of the examination was 676 boys and 666 girls: total, 1,342. The strict working average for the year was 542 boys and 519 girls: total, 1,061. The number present was 589 boys and 574 girls: total, 1,163. Of these, 192 were presented for a formal pass in Standard I.; in II., 193; in III., 194; in IV., 117; in V., 39; in VI., 21: total, 756. Of these, 172 rose to a pass in Standard I.; 153 in II.; 159 in III.; 101 in IV.; 34 in V.; and 20 in VI.: total, 644. And there failed to rise in Standard I. 20; in II., 35; in III., 35; in IV., 16; in V., 5; and in VI., 1: total, 112. The number that rose from a lower to a higher standard, in the course of the year, was 227 boys and 222 girls: total, 449. Percentage raised, 76. There passed in reading 723; in spelling, 622; in writing, 730; in arithmetic, 575; in grammar, 317; in geography, 454; in history, 273; in sewing, 270. The total number of passes in these subjects was 3,964. The average age of the children presented for a formal pass in Standard I. was 8.4 years; in II., 9.4 years; in III., 11.5 years; in IV., 13 years; in V., 13.4 years; in VI., 14.1 years. The number of children examined from one or other of the standard classes, but who, from faulty classification or from other satisfactory reasons, were not presented for a formal pass, and of children not sufficiently advanced to be presented in Standard I., was 399. The whole number examined was (1,155 + 8) 1,163. These results exhibit an increase above the previous year of 14 on those presented for a formal pass; 90 on those raised; a decrease of 76 on those who failed to rise; an increase of 136 on those raised from a lower to a higher standard; 4.3 per cent. on standard passes; 362 on subject passes; and a decrease of 149 on those outside the standards; but they show a falling-off on the roll of 136 (owing principally to children under five years of age being struck out, and the tendency of parents at present to migrate northwards), 133 on those presented, and 135 on those examined.

RANGITIKEI COUNTY.—In this county there are 14 schools under inspection. These are officered by 11 certificated teachers (7 male and 4 female); 6 uncertificated teachers (2 male and 4 female); 4 pupil-teachers (1 male and 3 female); 2 unpaid cadets (1 male and 1 female): total, 23. The number of children on the roll on the days of examination was 419 boys and 367 girls: total, 786. The strict working average for the year was 318 boys and 283 girls: total, 601. The number present was 383 boys and 336 girls: total, 719. Of these, 109 were presented for a formal pass in Standard I.; 126 in II.; 127 in III.; 72 in IV.; 20 in V.; 6 in VI.: total, 460. Of these, 79 rose to a pass in Standard I.; 82 in II.; 77 in III.; 41 in IV.; 18 in V.; 6 in VI.: total, 303. And there failed to rise in Standard I. 30; in II., 44; in III., 50; in IV., 31; in V., 2; in VI., 0: total, 157. The number that rose from a lower to a higher standard in the course of the year was 118 boys and 103 girls: total, 221. Percentage raised, 76.2. There passed in reading 419; in spelling, 384; in writing, 425; in arithmetic, 290; in grammar, 152; in geography, 234; in history, 154; in sewing, 133. The total number of passes in these subjects was 2,191. The average age of the children presented for a formal pass in Standard I. was 8.1 years; in II., 9.9 years; in III., 11.7 years; in IV., 12.9 years; in V., 13.7 years; in VI., 14.8 years. The number of the children examined from one or other of the standard classes, but who, from faulty classification or from other satisfactory reasons, were not presented for a formal pass, and of children not sufficiently advanced to be presented in Standard I., was 259. The total number examined was 719. The results in this county, owing to changes in the teaching staff and other untoward circumstances, are less satisfactory than those of the previous year. There is a decrease of 62 on those raised; an increase of 80 on those who failed to rise; a decrease of 17 on those raised from a lower to a higher standard; and 5.6 per cent. on standard passes. However, there is an addition of 8 on the roll; 33 on those present; 20 on the subject passes; and 38 on the whole number examined.

MANAWATU COUNTY.—In this county there are 16 schools under inspection. These are officered by 11 certificated teachers (10 male and 1 female); 9 uncertificated teachers (6 male and 3 female); 11 pupil-teachers (1 male and 10 female); 3 unpaid cadets (2 male and 1 female): total, 34. The number of children on the roll on the days of examination was 770 boys and 695 girls: total, 1,465. The strict working average for the year was 566 boys and 510 girls: total, 1,076. The number present was 687 boys and 614 girls: total, 1,301. Of these, 216 were presented for a formal pass in Standard I.; 218 in II.; 157 in III.; 86 in IV.; 22 in V.; 10 in VI.: total, 709. Of these, 182 rose to a pass in Standard I.; 163 in II.; 123 in III.; 66 in IV.; 21 in V.; 10 in VI.: total, 567. And there failed to rise in Standard I. 34; in II., 53; in III., 34; in IV., 20; in V., 1; in VI., 0: total, 142. The number that rose from a lower to a higher standard in the course of the year was 178 boys and 208 girls: total, 386. Percentage raised, 80.4. There passed in reading 651; in spelling, 564; in writing, 660; in arithmetic, 532; in grammar, 218; in geography, 330; in history, 198; in sewing, 184. The whole number of passes in these subjects was 3,337. The average age of the children presented for a formal pass in Standard I. was 9.2 years; in II., 10.5 years; in III., 11.4 years; in IV., 12.7 years; in V., 13.7 years; in VI., 14.2 years. The number of the children examined from one or other of the standard classes, but who, from faulty classification or from other satisfactory reasons, were not presented for a formal pass, and of children not sufficiently advanced to be presented in Standard I., was 592. The total number examined was 1,301. There has been during the past year in this county an increase of 95 on the roll; 112 on the number present on the days of examination; 110 on the actual number of children presented for a pass; 90 in the actual number of children raised; 111 in the number of those raised from a lower to a higher standard; 4.4 per cent. on the percentage

raised; 568 in the subject passes; 116 in the actual number examined. The number that failed to rise to a higher standard has been slightly increased (30), but that increase is an index not of inferior teaching, but of previous neglect.

SUMMARY.—The gross number of schools under inspection in the four counties is 57, and the staff employed in them is as follows: Certificated teachers, 40; uncertificated teachers, 35; pupil-teachers, 34; unpaid cadets, 8: total, 117. On the days of examination the rolls number was 2,327 boys and 2,135 girls: total, 4,462. The strict working average for the year was 1,774 boys and 1,612 girls: total, 3,386. There were present 2,046 boys and 1,872 girls: total, 3,918. There were entered on the examination schedule, as for a formal pass in the six standards, 2,508; but, of these, 132 had to be struck off as absent on the day of examination. The whole number actually examined for a formal pass was 2,376. Of these, 658 were presented in Standard I.; 666 in II.; 608 in III.; 306 in IV.; 94 in V.; 44 in VI. Of these, 564 rose to a pass in Standard I.; 525 in II.; 473 in III.; 235 in IV.; 85 in V.; 43 in VI.: total, 1,925. And there failed to rise in Standard I. 94; in II., 141; in III., 135; in IV., 71; in V., 9; in VI., 1: total, 451. The number of children that rose from a lower to a higher standard in the course of the year was 665 boys and 650 girls: total, 1,315. The percentage raised was 80.1. The number that passed in reading was 2,226; in spelling, 1,964; in writing, 2,256; in arithmetic, 1,769; in grammar, 833; in geography, 1,279; in history, 768; in sewing, 738. The total number of passes in these subjects was 11,824. The average age of the children presented in Standard I. was 8.5 years; in II., 9.6 years; in III., 11.5 years; in IV., 12.7 years; in V., 13.5 years; in VI., 14.2 years. The number of the children examined from one or other of the standard classes, but who, from faulty classification or from other satisfactory reasons, were not presented for a formal pass, and of children not sufficiently advanced to be presented in Standard I., was 1,534. The whole number of children examined was 3,910+8. Comparing these statistics with those in my former report, I find that there is an increase in the number of children on the roll of 87; in the number present on the days of examination of 88; in the number examined in the standards for a formal pass, of 159; in the number that succeeded in rising to a pass, of 221; a decrease in the number that failed to rise of 42; an increase in the number of those who rose from a lower to a higher standard in the course of the year of 304; in the percentage raised, of 4 per cent.; in the number of passes in the standard subjects, of 1,465; in the number of those examined outside the standarus, a decrease of 83; and in the total number examined, an increase of 90.

REMARKS ON THE FOREGOING RESULTS.—(1.) As compared with those of 1880, the gross results in this district for the past year exhibit an increase in the general percentage of passes in standards to the extent of 4 per cent. In almost all the subjects improvement shows itself. This may be said especially both of arithmetic and of grammar; in the latter subject there has been the improvement for which, as I have again and again pointed out, there was very urgent need. The increase of passes in arithmetic is 9 per cent., and in grammar nearly 56 per cent. This is in itself very satisfactory. But the evidence of increased efficiency is really stronger than it appears to be from the mere number of passes. For, from Table V.,* it will be seen that the number of those presented for a formal pass has improved in a much greater ratio (7 per cent.) than the percentages of standard passes. The important element of increased percentage of presentation must be taken along with the increased percentage of standard passes, if we are to have a fair test of the efficiency of the work done in our schools. (2.) Such favourable results are the more gratifying to me, because it has been frequently asserted that I have adopted a somewhat high standard in judging results. The results are such as might have been expected, seeing that the teachers now are, or should be, thoroughly conversant with the requirements of the standards, and acquainted with my mode of examining.

READING.—The results may be considered satisfactory. Mechanical accuracy and fluency have been reached; but intelligent and expressive reading is still the exception in many of the schools. As an ascertained way of giving style and expression to the reading, I set an especial value on the reciting of select portions of poetry and prose. Recitation in some of the schools is rendered with excellent effect.

SPELLING.—In spelling capacity the First, the Second, and even the Third Standard children betray, as a general rule, a considerable amount of deficiency. This, I am satisfied, would be removed in great measure, did the teachers give a little more attention to the monosyllabic words, and employ a little more of their good common-sense in teaching it. In the upper standards, where spelling appeals more to the eye and less to the ear than in the lower, it claims and gets a large share of the teacher's attention.

WRITING.—Penmanship in most of the schools shows sustained progress. The slate-writing of the Second and Third Standards has been gradually rising in quality. Here there is little room for improvement. The handwriting of the other standards is often very good, but I am unable to speak of it in the same terms of praise. Careless writing in the future will not be so leniently dealt with as it has been in the past.

ARITHMETIC.—As I have already shown, arithmetic, though in it there is a high rate of failure, has participated in the general improvement. I am glad to note that notation and numeration are better understood in the lower standards, and that in the good schools the ability to successfully grapple with what I call my "sense sums" (problems) is better developed in the higher. These facts furnish hopeful evidence of onward progress. Practical teachers know that all true work in arithmetical teaching is really done in the first three standards. Here the foundation of all intuitive methods is laid; here accuracy, facility, and smartness are secured. These elementary processes are the levers by which all arithmetical calculation is worked. And these especially should be indelibly impressed on the minds of the children in the schools, irrespectively of standards. All subsequent teaching is "special and technical" application of what has already been secured.

GRAMMAR.—The grammar results on the lines of the standard demands are, as I have already remarked, very favourable. The advance cannot fail to be gratifying to all parties, for this important

* Not reprinted.

branch of the standard curriculum had hitherto been almost at zero. The shortcoming may be accounted for, in a large measure, by the fact that grammar is the only subject in which rote work is of no avail. The teaching of arithmetic may be conducted in such a way as to involve only mechanical processes, but the laws and rules of grammar will not admit of being mechanically applied. Even the apparently mechanical exercise of selecting from a passage the verbs, and the pronouns used as adjectives, demands thought on the part of the Third Standard child. To parse a simple sentence correctly in the upper standards, the children must think. Grammar in short is the exercise of "awakened intelligence," and when skilfully and progressively taught is a powerful instrument of mental development.

GEOGRAPHY.—The impressing firmly on the memory by drawing of a thorough knowledge of the map is the fundamental idea in teaching geography. Map-drawing from memory should be more constantly practised, and a less portion of the children's time, both in school and at home, taken up by drawing elaborate copies of maps from the atlas. At the same time, it is necessary that attention should be given to topographical detail. When, *e.g.*, one is told that "Turakina, Foxton, Nelson, and Napier" are the four largest towns on the west coast of New Zealand, it is evident that there has been defect somewhere in the teaching imparted. I am glad to say that this subject, though liable at times to run into mere "list-learning," is in general better known than at the date of my last report, and, in consequence, the results have improved.

HISTORY.—The principal facts of the periods embraced in the several standards are now receiving more attention from the teachers, and, in consequence, are more intelligently reproduced by the children when under examination than formerly. Details should be relegated to their proper place, and kept in abeyance. The teachers might vivify the lessons delivered by consulting some larger work, and supplementing the fragmentary and often unconnected events recorded in the text-books in general use in our schools.

SEWING.—Needlework is taught with increasing skill in nearly all the schools where there is a competent schoolmistress. The marks assigned for proficiency in this have in many instances raised girls to a successful standard pass, who would otherwise have failed to rise. The sewed work submitted to me on the days of examination has to be vouched for by the teacher as having been done in school. No value is given to work that is executed at home. The standard passes in one or two schools would have been enhanced had the needlework shown to me been worked in the teacher's presence.

STANDARDS.—*Standard I.*: In this the chief shortcomings are too early presentation, and imperfectly-prepared arithmetic.—*Standard II.*: Notation and numeration are generally weak points in this standard. The most remarkable break-down however is in geography. With the exception of the definitions, as a rule it is not well got up. The natural method of teaching geography, or that of proceeding from the known to the unknown, appears to have been disregarded. Under such circumstances, when examining the children, I invariably showed how the subject should be handled.—*Standard III.*: For this a more accurate knowledge of arithmetical notation, and methods of process, is still a serious desideratum. As in Standard II., geography is a stumbling-block. Natural methods of teaching it seem to be ignored. The simplest question will sometimes puzzle a whole class, if it be put out of the groove to which the children have been accustomed. The presence of failure is felt most in Standards II. and III. In future, passes on the border-line of success or failure will not be granted in them, because success in the upper standards must be conserved.—*Standards IV., V., VI.*: A much larger proportion of presentation was made than in the previous year. The work in the schools, however, is liable to be unduly depreciated because of the comparative fewness of the pupils who reach the Fifth and Sixth Standards. But it should be clearly borne in mind that pupils who have passed well in Standards III. and IV. will have learned what will be most useful to them in their life work; and that it is not better teaching that will raise the numbers in those standards, but better and longer attendance. The arithmetic papers of Standard IV. were not, as a rule, well worked. Those of Standards V. and VI. were on a general level of excellence. The papers, pure and simple, on grammar were not answered correctly enough in Standard IV. The parsing and analysis were uniformly well done in Standards V. and VI. The analysis was generally better done than the parsing. On the whole, I found that a steady progress had been made in this subject, and that a firmer grip had been taken of it. In geography the maps were not by any means so good as they should have been. Quantities of irrelevant matter were too frequently given in answer to book-work questions. With the general results in history I had very little fault to find; but those questions that bore upon facts were not so accurately or adequately answered as they should have been. The Sixth Standard subjects are sufficiently elastic to allow of wide scope in them beyond what is needed for a pass. I would suggest that scholars who pass in this standard, and then attend for another year, might again be examined in it, proportionate advance being expected. Were it only to swell the presentation, they should be scheduled. It seems to me only reasonable that the teachers should be credited with their further advancement, for they are often the best proof of the teacher's ability.

DISCIPLINE.—I notice a gratifying improvement in this all-important subject. Impulsive discipline, though happily of rare occurrence, has not yet entirely vanished. Quiet submission to authority and prompt obedience to orders are dominant in most of the schools. Changes of lesson and dismissal are effected with less noise and less waste of time than prevailed a year ago. The more steady and obedient the scholars are in their behaviour, the less fatiguing in proportion is my task as examiner. The children, as a rule, behave better while under examination, and do not try to copy from one another, or to get or give surreptitious aid. The inculcation of self-respect is the foundation of all honour. Tidiness and politeness are not only characteristic of the schools in the centres of population, but are being successfully fostered in the rural schools as well. I have to acknowledge the unvarying courtesy with which I have been received by the School Committees, and by the teachers of every class.

The Chairman of the Board of Education.

R. FOULIS, F.E.I.S.,

Inspector.

WELLINGTON.

Wellington, 31st March, 1882.

SIR,—

I beg to present my eighth annual report on the condition of primary education in the Wellington District. This report bears on the working results of forty-eight public schools, all of which I have examined in the standards. I had previously visited all but Tenui for the purpose of inspection, and without previous notice being given.

MORAL INSTRUCTION.—I have generally had some special object in view in my accidental visits to schools. Last year the subject of intellectual teaching was dealt with. This year my special mission was to ascertain whether, and to what extent, any definite instruction was imparted in rules of life and action, in moral rectitude, wholesome habits, and generally in such wise counsels as a parent should give to his child. In approaching the subject with the teachers I pointed out that, although the education in the public schools was strictly secular, it was not the intention of the Legislature to exclude moral teaching, and it was clearly the duty of every teacher, as far as he could, to act the part of the parent in the school, and to give as much specific instruction as time would permit in subjects which, perhaps above all others, educate and exalt the mind, and which tend to improve discipline and manners, and to repress the spirit of lawlessness too common in the youth of the colony. I was met by the teachers in a very kindly and sympathizing spirit. They informed me that, when any breach of discipline, any rudeness, or any case of impropriety occurred, they took occasion not only to reprove, but also to point out, as a lesson to others, the gravity of the offence. In some few schools, I found that specific instruction was given regularly in subjects of moral training. In others the subject-matter of the reading-books was so enlarged upon by the teachers that the lesson became practically one bearing on the whole duty of man to man. The reading-books certainly abound in material of the kind, so much so that I think, if the matter of the readers were well expounded in every school, the children would not be lacking in moral precept. Now, although it is in home and out-door life that good manners, good habits, and high principles are mostly acquired, yet it must be an immense gain to the community that the youth of the colony are constantly directed and schooled to what is right. I have, therefore, advised teachers of large schools to make due provision in the time-tables for regular and specific teaching in suitable subjects, for which lessons should be carefully prepared; and, in small schools, I have suggested that the teacher should address all the children collectively, say twice a week, on such subjects as I have indicated to him. On my second visit of examination I was pleased to notice in the time-tables that provision was already made to give moral instruction in small schools, in which the matter had not hitherto received attention; and I think most of the teachers of other schools are giving the subject due consideration. In order to make my meaning clear both to the Board and to the teachers as to what is intended by moral duties to be taught in schools, I have appended to this report a small list of subjects suitable for lessons. I also made an entry in each school log-book asking the teachers to give due attention to this branch.

NUMBERS ATTENDING.—The number of children who came up for examination this year is 5,763, being 275 in excess of last year's number. The total number of children on the books, 6,269, remains about the same. There are six new schools in operation—at Te Aro, Wallace, Kaitoke, Wadestown, Taueru, and Waihakeke; but one small aided school in the Upper Taueru has been closed. During the past year many families have left the district, some for employment in mines or on railways in Australia, and some for new settlement in the Patea country. With an increase of five small schools, there is no appreciable increase in the total number on the rolls. The compulsory Act is in force in only one or two school districts, and there appear to be hundreds of children within easy reach of schools who do not attend. Where a healthy public spirit is manifested in favour of educational progress, indifferent parents are influenced by the popular voice, and the children apparently catch the infection; but in some districts there is no leading spirit among the community, the greatest apathy prevails, and, unless the teacher (as is sometimes the case) is a host in himself, education languishes. I have known the greatest enthusiasm in school matters manifested during the time a new school is being started, and as time goes by popular interest appears to wane and the attendance falls off.

EXAMINATION RESULTS.—Of the actual work done in the schools during the past year I am happy to be able to speak very favourably. The classification in the schools is considerably raised, the percentage number of passes made in the standards is satisfactory, and there is evidence that many children are remaining longer at school than heretofore, and receiving a complete and thorough education. The examination was made a little more difficult in the Third Standard, and perhaps a little less difficult in the fourth. Except in a few schools the work in the two highest standards was particularly good this year. A reference to the table of results attached to this report will show that 3,755 children came up for examination in the standards, and that 2,772 passed, being 73·8 per cent. of those presented. Last year 3,595 came up for examination, and 2,750, being 76·5 per cent., passed. Although there is a falling-off of 2·7 per cent. in the number of passes made, the classification this year shows an increase in all standards except the third, and this arises from the comparatively large number of failures this year in that standard. The increased results in the Fifth Standard have more than made up for the comparative failure in that standard last year. Taken as a whole, the examination results in schools vary directly as the size of the school, the largest schools doing the best work. There are altogether 4,051 children who are over eight years of age attending; and it is satisfactory to find that 3,887, or within 164 of the number qualified by age, are actually classed in some standard.

WELLINGTON CITY SCHOOLS.—There are now in the city six graded schools containing 2,325 pupils, and three infant schools with 1,024 children. I have never known the work of these schools to be so satisfactory, on the whole, as it is this year. All of them appear to be under good management; and, although there were decidedly weak classes in the Mount Cook Girls' School, and rather a large number of failures in the Mount Cook Boys' School, there was nothing which seriously reflected on the management; for the former school has previously ranked high among the city schools, and in the latter the attendance is far from good. In the other schools there was little to find fault with, and much to commend. In all of them the work of the Fifth and Sixth Standards was much improved, and positively good; in most of them the work of the Third Standard proved the weakest. The Thorndon,

Terrace, and Te Aro Schools show a very high classification of the pupils. I am on the whole pleased with the working of the infant schools, as much more attractive and useful information is imparted, and the management is exceedingly creditable. I am of opinion that the simultaneous method of teaching reading is too much resorted to, and that a class should be broken up into small sections for individual practice under spare teachers during the time in which a large gallery-lesson is being given. Simultaneous reading teaches expression; but careless pupils may escape observation, and may pay little attention to the narrative.

DISTRICT TOWN SCHOOLS.—In the list of district town schools I include all schools beyond the city which have not less than one hundred names on the books. There are eight schools in this classification, containing 1,582 children. Of these, the Masterton, Carterton, and Taia Schools are the best. Greytown, Featherston, and Lower Hutt Schools are doing satisfactory work. The Upper Hutt is in an improved condition; but the Kaiwara School, excepting the lowest classes, was weak. The master of the Kaiwara School, who was only a probationer, having since resigned, I have reason to believe that under the present management the work will improve. I shall also hope to see better work done next year at the Upper Hutt. The work in the higher standards at Featherston and Greytown is below the average. The Carterton School is in a high state of efficiency, the Third Standard class alone showing any weakness. The work of the Fifth and Sixth Standards taught by Mr. Samuel himself was, all round, as good as any I have seen—the writing, spelling, and arithmetic being excellent. This school possesses the highest standard classification of the district town schools. The work of the first assistants in the Featherston and Masterton Schools, which last year was weak, is much improved this year. All these eight schools are at present fortunate in having well-qualified, efficient, and experienced teachers, who may, I trust, be relied upon to do good work year by year.

COUNTRY SCHOOLS.—There are twenty-one country schools in operation, each having at least 35 children on the books and less than 100. Of this class the schools which have the best quality of results this year are, in order—Waihinga, Fernridge, Karori, Park Vale, Clareville, Opaki, Johnsonville, and Kaitara. Good work was done at Tawa, Ohariu, Judgeford, Korokoro, Pahautanui, and Gladstone. The highest standard classification is shown in the Tawa and Fernridge Schools; and a high classification is manifested in the Kaitara, Korokoro, Judgeford, and Opaki Schools. The passes made this year at Horokiwi Valley and Matarawa were few, but the classification of the schools is good, and the passes in previous years at the latter school have been much above the average. The Mauriceville and Mungaroa Schools this year were weak, and better work will be expected. Also the Makara School continues weak, the work throughout being of poor quality, and the number of standard passes only 11 out of 34 presented. Of the two new schools, that at Kaitoke was in fair working order; that at Wadestown was under an inefficient teacher, who has since resigned.

RURAL SCHOOLS.—Including three new schools, there are ten schools of this class, each with less than 35 children on the books. The three new schools at Waihakeke, Taueru, and Wallace were fairly started. It is curious to notice how low the results are to begin with, considering that at Waihakeke a few good Carterton pupils bring with them their old classification. Of these schools Kaiwairua has the highest classification. With the exception of a little weakness at Waingawa and Wainuiomata, the general condition of these schools is fairly satisfactory, and there is a decided improvement apparent at Tauherenikau.

ENGLISH, WRITTEN AND SPOKEN.—I have commended the work done this year in the highest standards. I could not fail to notice, however, that less marks were obtained in English grammar and composition than in any other subject. Except in the Carterton and Te Aro Schools, very few candidates obtained more than half marks in these subjects. They were, moreover, the weakest subjects in the strongest schools. Nor did this failure to obtain high marks arise from the nature of the questions, as I carefully framed the papers so that an easy composition alone would carry one-fourth the maximum marks, and the other questions set rather discouraged than courted a very technical knowledge of grammatical accident. Much of the Third Standard failure this year is attributable to an inability on the part of pupils to put together half-a-dozen short sentences on a simple subject named by the Inspector. In the Fifth Standard papers one question set required the candidates to correct a short sentence containing one or two bad grammatical errors. This was corrected by only a few children, whose ears were trained to correct speech. Questions in all standards on the meaning and use of words were seldom well answered; and it was in many instances quite ridiculous to read the sentence constructed by a pupil who was asked to frame one containing such an expression as "to set on foot." All this, to my mind, points to the necessity of giving instruction in English, which is practically useful, and not to waste too much time merely on parsing, analysis of sentences, and the accident of language. A composition exercise appears to me one of the most useful lessons of the day, and it should be an every day's lesson. If well done it is an exercise of good writing, good spelling, and original thought, besides its grammatical value. Some teachers make too much labour of the work, by correcting separately all the exercises of the class. I do not think this is often necessary, if the mistakes of one or two pupils are pointed out, explained on the black-board, and critically examined before the class. I think the understanding of the analysis of simple sentences, and the use of conjunctions, is as much knowledge of analysis as can ordinarily be taught. I find more errors in telling the parts of speech in an ordinary sentence than in the full parsing. All the rules of parsing, all the practice in formal analysis, all the knowledge of the subdivisions of pronouns and adverbs, are of little or no practical value if a pupil cannot construct a sentence showing that he understands the use of a common phrase, if he cannot write a fair letter showing some originality of thought, and if he cannot give a fair explanation in his own simple language of an ordinary passage from his reading-book. Then, again, I doubt whether much will be done in our primary schools to produce good English on paper until something is done to improve the spoken English of the scholars, and I might say of some of the teachers. The influence of good example is here invaluable. I find in class work pupils are seldom encouraged to give an answer at length, or to make anything approaching a short speech. Time would not admit of this being done to any great extent; but, although talking in any form appears to be a bugbear in the eyes of teachers, I think a kind of discussion in class might occasionally be

encouraged with a view to teaching the children to speak in good sentences, and some departure made from the almost monosyllabic utterances in reply to questions often especially framed to be answered in one word. It is a complaint made against public schools that boys learn to speak badly, and I am afraid there is some truth in the objection. In the past year I was visiting a country school and had given a composition exercise to a class, and heard that class read, when a few minutes after all were sent out into the playground. I noticed that one big boy, who had read fairly well, sounding the aspirate, and who had written a tolerably good composition exercise, immediately fell in with others to a game at leap-frog. His first ejaculation was, "Old yer ed down." Another boy said, "Don't never go no further ner the top of the ill." The language of the playgrounds teems with such expressions. If all teachers were to join in the games with the express object of trying to make a reformation in this matter, something might be done. Any errors of speech in the schoolroom should of course be carefully corrected.

EARLIER USE OF THE PEN.—In my late examinations I have given dictation on paper to Standard IV. candidates, and also to Standards V. and VI. candidates. In the two highest standards the grammar and composition have also been done on paper. I find, in Standards III. and IV., that pupils often write very well on a slate and comparatively badly on paper. The use of the pen should begin in Standard III., and much more written work than appears to be done at present should be given in the higher standards. Also greater facility in writing with the pen is required, as the time taken up in the grammar paper by Fifth and Sixth Standard candidates was more than should in future be allowed. I purpose next year giving dictation on paper to Standard III.; arithmetic, dictation, and grammar to Standard IV.; and to examine on paper in all the subjects in the two highest standards, limiting the time allowed for each subject. Pupils will not be expected to do their work on paper without making corrections; but, when a correction is to be made in a word, the whole word should be rewritten plainly. No correction in a letter in a word should be made by alteration of the letter, as the word then becomes difficult to read, and the spelling is rendered uncertain.

SPECIAL SUBJECTS.—Under this heading I include such subjects as do not form part of a standard pass. They are singing, drawing, and science; also, sewing for girls, and drill for boys. These subjects are all taught throughout the city schools, and generally very fairly taught; but I do not think any great amount of success will be achieved until professional teachers are appointed in each subject to visit in each case the whole of the city schools, to direct the teaching, and to report from time to time on the work done. Sewing is satisfactorily taught in most of the city schools; and drill is well in hand at Mount Cook, where a cadet company is formed, and at Newtown, Thorndon, and the Terrace. Cadet companies have recently been formed at Greytown and Masterton. In all the larger schools sewing is fairly taught, drawing is imperfectly taught, and singing with more or less success. Only a few of the country and rural schools are teaching any special subjects, except sewing; and, of the larger schools, the Upper Hutt is most remiss in attention to the special subjects. I observe some falling-off in the teaching of special subjects, particularly in some country schools. I find that the best schools never neglect them, as they make a pleasant change in the curriculum, and are liked by the children.

THE ATTENDANCE QUESTION AS AFFECTING RESULTS.—One of the gravest questions touching the education system is that bearing on the regular attendance of children. The success of a national system, and the efforts of the most painstaking teachers, are largely being sacrificed to the thoughtlessness, cupidity, or dense ignorance of parents. Children are kept away from school because the weather is too hot or too cold, to nurse a baby or pick potatoes, to mind a cow, or to do any trivial thing which might be done out of school hours. No one but those constantly engaged in school work can form the least conception of the indifference of many parents. Unless the State steps in to the rescue of the children from the apathy of parents, much of the public expenditure on education will be wasted. I am almost afraid to quote figures, as so few care to study them. I will, however, analyze some of the schedules showing the attendance during the past year of children who have come up for examination. I will take one or two of the very best schools, a few average schools, and one or two in which the attendance is low. The highest attendance registered is 447 half-days.

SCHOOL.	Number Presented.	Number who have attended 400 Half-days or more.	Over 300 and under 400.	Over 200 and under 300.	Under 200.
Terrace	231	2	137	66	26
Mount Cook Boys'	334	...	215	89	30
Lower Hutt	148	...	42	56	50
Carterton	173	50	79	30	14
Matarawa	31	...	12	9	10
Waihinga	23	12	7	4	...
Waingawa	19	...	5	7	7
Totals	960	64	497	262	137

From this I think it is apparent that the number of very good attendants is small, and that 400 children out of 960 have attended so badly that no teacher could be expected to pass them in their examination. It is also very striking to my mind how wide is the difference in two school districts, such as Carterton and the Lower Hutt. How is it that children attend so well in some districts, and so badly in others? The people themselves have this question to answer. They should know that what is worth doing at all, is worth doing well.

TEACHERS: THEIR SELECTION AND TRAINING.—The Board have, on the whole, been fortunate in the selection of their teachers. The weakness complained of last year in the work of assistants in large schools was met with this year in only one or two instances, and several good new appointments have been made. The cases of chronic weakness are few. I know nothing which contributes so much to educational success as the careful selection and training of teachers. The head teachers of our large schools are in many instances highly certificated and very capable officers, and I have much pleasure in bearing testimony to their devotion to duty, and to their able administration. Cases are not wanting in which the head teacher spends fully two hours a day more in school work than his service requires; and I am sure the present high classification of many schools is mainly due to the enthusiastic and painstaking work of teachers who are anxious to do good work, and conscious of the fact that good work will be duly appreciated. Many of our teachers have now received a good training, some few in training colleges, and some by a course of experience gained by well-earned and well-merited promotion from school to school; and, of the latter class, not a few are in the front rank of the profession. It is, for instance, a matter of congratulation to the service that the new head teacher of the Te Aro School, Willis Street, who has been entirely trained as a teacher in the service, this year produced results inferior to none in the city. The pupil-teachers, who, in many instances, are appointed from probationers who passed the Sixth Standard, are year by year improving in usefulness. The plan pursued during the past year in the tuition of city pupil-teachers is working well, and possesses all the elements of a collegiate course of training, bringing into the work the best and most varied teaching the Board can command, and creating a class emulation impossible to obtain under the old system. Nor do I think the pupil-teachers are overworked; on the contrary, some few are the reverse of energetic.

PRESENTMENT DEFINED.—I have made no return of the children who, having passed a standard last year, were not presented in a higher standard this year. I find the number very few, seldom exceeding a dozen in the largest schools. From very irregular attendance, dullness, or tender age there will be a number of children in many schools who cannot be expected to pass a higher standard. As some teachers are at a loss to know what children may be withheld and what may not, and in order that all schools may be on the same footing in the estimate of standard passes, I will ask teachers to put down all names on the schedule of candidates for any standard, and to allow all to be presented. Then, after the examination is made, if I find that a candidate, who has failed, is more than one year under age for the standard in which he was presented, or if the candidate has made less than 250 half-day attendances in the past year, I shall not look upon that candidate as an expected pass, and I shall cancel his name from the list presented. This, I think, will be perfectly fair to both parents and teachers.

WEAK POINTS.—For the guidance of teachers as well as for the information of the Board, I will briefly point out some of the defects in school work and management which came under my notice during the past year. The simultaneous work in junior classes was generally much too loud, and I should say distressing to the children's voices. Only one class reader is in use in many schools, and consequently the subject-matter is known by heart. All the city schools have two readers. I should prefer three for higher classes, one of which should be a history, to be occasionally used as a reader, and one should be the property of the school. Exercises in English composition should be given more frequently, and the subject should be taught in class on the black-board. A 6-inch globe, now supplied to all schools, should be used in teaching geography to Standards II. and III. Word knowledge in all classes is deficient. Some teachers should be more careful in their enunciation; and even reading lessons may require preparation by junior teachers. I have heard a teacher say, "In a *Lung* division sum, three were right and three were *wrung*;" and another taught a whole class to pronounce the word "*morass*" as if it were written *morras* with the accent on the first syllable. In some schools slate lines for the younger classes are badly scratched by the parents or by the pupils themselves. It should always be carefully done by the teachers. Children in certain country schools are not taught to break easy words into syllables, or to make any effort to find out the pronunciation of a word. Time-tables and public school notices are in many country schools badly mounted. I regret to find also that good new school-buildings are sometimes used by local bodies as drill-sheds, and for other purposes never intended by the Legislature.

THE NORMAL SCHOOL.—In accordance with instructions received from the Board, I inspected and examined the Normal School on the 27th and 28th days of October last. There were present ten students in training as teachers, two holders of Board scholarships, and nine private students. I was very favourably impressed with the system pursued, the arrangement of work, and the ability of the instructors. In the *vivâ voce* work, which consisted of reading, analysis of sentences, word-meaning and derivation, and the sense and force of the passages read, there was evidence of good painstaking teaching. But, in the short papers given in arithmetic, spelling, grammar, and, in the case of private students, in geography and history, the marks gained, except in spelling, were by no means high. I am of opinion that the students, taken as a whole, are too young; and, with the exception of two or three, they are not strong enough in their work to form very good material for the legitimate work of a normal school. The institution, however, is in the first year of its existence, and another year may bring an influx of candidates whose education is more advanced. Ten class lessons were given during my visit, and in all cases the teachers had acquired in a degree a knowledge of their art. One or two of the lessons gave evidence of skill, originality, and force. Mrs. Griffin's lecture on domestic economy was interesting, showed careful preparation, and was well suited to the class. I was also present during a lesson in singing given by Mr. Parker, who is not only an able musician, but also a skilful class teacher. I find that drawing from models has not been taught, the Misses Holmes confining their work to freehand. Mr. Holmes appears a good teacher of practical geometry and perspective, although at present little progress has been made.

I have, &c.,

ROBERT LEE,
Inspector.

The Chairman, Wellington Education Board.

2—E. 1B.

TABLE OF RESULTS OF EXAMINATIONS.

Class of Schools.	No. of Schools.	Average No. on Books.	Total No. on Books.	Total No. present at Examination.	Over 8 years of Age.	No. classed in Standards.	Standards in which Classed.						No. presented in Standards.	No. passed in Standards.
							I.	II.	III.	IV.	V.	VI.		
Wellington City ...	9	372	3,349	3,070	2,132	2,046	467	574	421	307	205	72	1,876	1,447
District Town ...	8	198	1,582	1,441	1,051	1,013	255	288	196	157	84	33	976	746
Country ...	21	51	1,071	1,009	715	677	172	175	167	99	48	16	680	475
Rural ...	10	27	267	243	153	151	46	43	33	16	8	5	153	104
Total this year	48	131	6,269	5,763	4,051	3,887	940	1,080	817	579	345	126	3,755	2,772
„ last year	43	145	6,266	5,488	3,766	3,650	896	1,029	881	551	194	99	3,595	2,750
Increase ...	5	-14	3	275	285	237	44	51	-64	28	151	27	160	22

HAWKE'S BAY.

SIR,—

Napier, 31st January, 1882.

I have the honor to present a report upon the condition of the schools in the Hawke's Bay Education District, and upon their progress during the year ended 31st December, 1881.

No alteration has taken place since my last report in the number of schools under my inspection, the opening of the Wallingford School in January being balanced by the closing of the Tarawera subsidized School, which was brought about by the withdrawal of the Government capitation allowance on children below five years of age.

SCHOOLS.—There are 32 schools in the district, employing 84 teachers, viz., 50 head or assistant teachers and 34 pupil-teachers. The total accommodation in the 38 schoolhouses is sufficient for 3,516 pupils, which is equal to the largest number of children who have at any time been attending the schools; but it should be remembered that eight of the buildings do not belong to the Board.

BUILDINGS.—In most of the districts where schoolhouses have been built within the past three years the accommodation continues to be ample for present requirements. The only schools where the attendance is equal to the full capacities of the buildings are—Gisborne, Wairoa, Hastings, Clive, Port Aburiri, and Ormondville. It will be remembered that an enlargement has only recently been made at the latter place, but the rapid increase in the attendance will soon make another addition necessary. The teachers' residences and schoolhouses which are the property of the Board are in good order and repair, with the exception of the schoolhouses at Ormond and Frasertown, and the teacher's residence at Patangata, which are somewhat dilapidated. The out-offices are generally clean and tidy, and the school grounds, with one or two exceptions, are substantially fenced.

ATTENDANCE.—The increase in the attendance at the schools does not show a very marked advance on that of last year. The average weekly number on the registers was 2,980 in 1880, and 3,164 in 1881, or an increase of 6.1 per cent., and the average attendance was 2,250 in the former year and 2,348 last year, or an increase of 4.3 per cent. It is a strange circumstance that the average weekly number on the registers, and the average attendance in the schools throughout the district, reached their highest point during the first quarter of the year, since which time the average attendance has continued to diminish to a very material extent. In some measure this is to be accounted for by the marked falling-off in the attendance at the Napier and Gisborne Schools, measles and scarlatina having been very prevalent in those districts, but, as the epidemics have been local, they certainly will not account for the great difference between the March and December quarterly attendances. On a perusal of the returns from each district, and a comparison between them and the attendance of pupils as shown in the examination schedules, I am again forced to declaim against the greatest drawback to school progress, viz., "irregular attendance." At Porangahau and Blackburn the attendance has become a mere shadow of what it was eighteen months ago, and at Norsewood and Matawhero the attendance is such as to call for the special interference of the Board. I have no hesitation in stating that the attendance at each of these places ought to be at least double what it has been during the past year. But there is another aspect of this question which, I think, deserves consideration. I have not the tables at hand giving the number of boys and girls in the Hawke's Bay Education District, as shown by the census returns, but I presume that the number of each is nearly the same. The case is very different, however, when seen by the following attendance statistics:—

Quarter.	Total attending School.		Difference between Males and Females.	Percentage Less of Females attending School.	Average Attendance.		Difference in Average Attendance of M. and F.	Percentage Less Average Attendance of Females.
	Males.	Females.			Males.	Females.		
March ...	1,731	1,493	238	13.8	1,364	1,117	247	18.2
June ...	1,692	1,480	212	12.6	1,316	1,070	246	19.9
September ...	1,666	1,426	240	14.5	1,387	1,039	348	25.1
December ...	1,731	1,439	292	16.9	1,214	985	229	18.9
For year ...	1,705	1,459.5	245.5	14.4	1,322.5	1,052.75	267.5	20.5

From this table it will be seen that in the matter of attendance at school the boys predominate over the girls to the extent of 14·4 per cent., and that the difference is further increased to 20·5 per cent. when the regularity of both is taken into account. In order to point out still further the irregularity that prevails in the district, I have obtained returns showing the number of first and second class certificates of attendance gained by pupils from among the 4,609 children who have been present at all during the year ending 31st December, 1881, in accordance with section 79 of the Education Act. From these returns it appears that there were 23 schools where no first class certificates of attendance were gained by pupils; 18 schools where no second class certificates were gained; 15 schools where neither first nor second class certificates were gained; and altogether only 19 certificates of the first class and 50 of the second class were gained throughout the district, and of these the boys gained 43 and the girls 26. Surely such facts as these ought to be sufficient to show that the time has arrived for the introduction of compulsory attendance, pure and simple, as it is clear that irregularity prevails to an enormous extent in this district, and among the girls much more than the boys. Further, it is evident that at least 300 girls of school age are constantly kept at home in the Hawke's Bay District who ought to be attending and receiving instruction at school were not section 89 of the Education Act a dead-letter. These girls, whose influence on another generation will be so much felt, for good or evil, are growing up in ignorance of the commonest elements of instruction, and this in a land where so much of its material prosperity must depend on the intelligence as well as on the energy of its people. Each visit I make to the schools in this district my conviction grows stronger that the School Committees, with their limited means, can do little or nothing to check the growth of irregular attendance, and policemen, whose districts range from fifteen to twenty miles, are unable to aid to any extent those Committees who might desire to enforce the attendance at school of children whose parents appear indifferent and neglectful. I sincerely hope that the question of irregular attendance will be considered by the Board as its importance demands. For the past four years I have made it my business to watch carefully the effect of irregularity upon the results in the schools, and I am convinced that one-half of the teachers' difficulties in school work may be referred solely to the indifference of parents as manifested by the irregularity of their offspring at school.

EXAMINATION.—Passing now to the work of examination, I have to report that all the schools have been examined in accordance with the Government standard regulations. The number presented for examination, the number examined, and the number who passed, will be found in the following tabulations:—

Standards.	1881. Number Presented.				Examined.				Passed.				1880. Passed.			
	M.	F.	T.	Per cent.	M.	F.	T.	Per cent.	M.	F.	T.	Per cent.	M.	F.	T.	Per cent.
I.	301	257	558	17·8	256	208	464	14·9	225	161	386	12·4	199	174	373	12·4
II.	264	240	504	16·4	228	212	440	14·2	202	172	374	12·3	176	158	334	11·1
III.	219	171	390	12·5	182	139	321	10·3	154	117	271	8·7	104	103	207	6·9
IV.	98	76	174	5·5	80	73	153	4·9	69	66	135	4·3	53	40	93	3·1
V.	37	17	54	1·7	35	15	50	1·6	22	15	37	1·2	19	6	25	·83
VI.	11	2	13	·4	11	2	13	·4	10	...	10	·3	...	...	...	...
Totals	930	763	1,693	54·3	792	649	1,441	46·3	682	531	1,213	39·2	551	481	1,032	34·33

The results here given when compared with those of last year show a large increase in the numbers who have passed the standard requirements, and no doubt this increase would have been still larger had all those who were presented on the examination schedules been at school on the day of examination. This increase in the number of passes during 1881 by no means represents the absolute gain for the year. It is in the quality of the work as well as in the quantity that progress has to be measured, and last year stands well in this respect. In 1880, 93 children in Hawke's Bay passed Standard IV., 25 passed Standard V., and none Standard VI.; but last year 140 children passed in Standard IV., 37 in Standard V., and 10 in Standard VI. I would point out that in my standard examinations every boy or girl who has passed the necessary tests has obtained at least 60 per cent. of the marks obtainable in the examination. The number 10 is my standard of excellence in each subject, and, instead of passing or failing a boy in any subject, I merely give a number varying between 1 and 10, which represents my judgment of his qualifications in that subject. The marks are afterwards totalled up, and, if 60 per cent. of the total marks obtainable have been gained, no matter in what subjects, the boy passes the standard examination. By thus estimating the capabilities of children with a number, teachers know in what subjects their pupils have done well or the reverse, and the progress of each pupil in each subject can be traced through a series of years; but, what is of more importance still, individuality as far as possible is promoted—a feature which, I very much regret to say, is rapidly disappearing from our schools. Although there has been a great advance in the work done in the schools, much yet remains to be done. In Table B* appended to this report, which gives a summary of the standard results in each school, it will be seen how very low relatively is the percentage of passes to the number of children attending school. The highest percentage was at Havelock, where 62 per cent. of all the children in the school passed my reading, writing, and arithmetic tests, and the lowest was at Patutahi, where only 19 per cent. of the children passed in those subjects. This will

* Not reprinted.

show how wide still is the gulf which must be bridged before children ignorant of reading, writing, and arithmetic are the exception instead of the rule in this district.

SCHOOL WORK.—Coming now to the character of the work done and to the methods employed by teachers in the preparation of the class subjects, there is reason in many instances to feel satisfied with the work which has been accomplished during the year. The necessary attention paid by School Committees to the welfare and prosperity of the schools I look upon as one of the most favourable omens for the future. At no previous examinations have I seen such interest taken by the Chairmen and members forming the School Committees, and at no time previously have I seen so many signs and marks of progress. School grounds have been cleared, trees and shrubs are beginning to adorn the borders of many of the school grounds, and, best of all, gymnastic apparatus has been provided in some of the larger schools, and all has been done by the self-reliance of the Committees themselves. Men who so work deserve to have good schools, for they inspire their teachers with confidence, and I am convinced that many of the defects in our worst schools would disappear, if only the teachers and Committees of them realized the importance of the duties they are called upon to perform. Wherever reasonable intelligence is brought to bear upon the school and its surroundings, there I find all the elements of a successful school. Go when you will into such schools, there is the busy hum that betokens activity and diligence. There is no need for special preparation to meet the Inspector, no apologies for "small school to-day," no excuse why the lessons being given are not in accordance with the timetable, and no evidence of neglect in and about the school-buildings. Bad habits make bad teachers and bad schools, and Committees indifferent to the welfare of their teachers and children engender the bad habits. Best among the schools in the district are the Napier and Gisborne, closely followed by Havelock, Takapau, Ashley Clinton, Hastings, Taradale, and in a less degree by Woodville, Petane, Ahuriri, Hampden, and Wairoa. In the preparation of the class subjects, I fear that very often failure is brought about by overlooking the necessity of thoroughness in the earlier standard work. It cannot for a single moment be doubted that children close upon nine years of age ought to be fully capable of passing the requirements of Standard I., and yet 16 per cent. of the children presented for examination in this standard, and of the average age of eight years ten months, failed to reach my standard test. In Napier the whole 53 children who were presented passed the examination most efficiently, and in Gisborne 32 out of 33 so passed. But in these schools the young children are taught to read with a certain amount of intelligence before they are drafted from the infants' department to prepare for Standard I., and in this respect teachers in charge of country schools, where infants and adults are worked in the same room, labour under very great disadvantages. Much as I approve and desire the extension of infant training under proper conditions, I believe that the mixing of infants and adults in the same room for teaching purposes is an unmitigated evil, retarding the progress of the latter and injuring the bodies and minds of the former. Further, I am convinced that it would be a great gain from an educational point of view, and therefore from a pecuniary point of view, if the same amount of capitation grant which is now paid for the training of children in country schools between the ages of five and fifteen years were paid on children between seven and fifteen years of age; in other words, that the capitation grant in country schools were so increased that all children below seven years of age could be excluded from attendance at school. Certainly the education given in the country schools would be much better, and the dumb show which the little children are compelled to practise during the progress of important work in the upper classes, though opposed to their nature, would disappear from among the list of educational cruelties still practised in this nineteenth century.

READING.—Of the standard subjects examined, reading is still one of the least satisfactory in its results. I fear some teachers consider that their children are prepared for the standard examination if they can pass through the reading-book at a kind of dog-trot. It is necessary to point out, however, that dull, monotonous, and often inaccurate reading is not sufficient to comply with the standard requirements, which state that children must read with intelligence, and this will never be obtained as long as teachers do not attach more importance to the preparation of this subject. No lesson, in my opinion, requires greater care and preparation than that of reading. Upon it depend spelling and dictation, word-meaning, composition, and grammar, and, if it is indifferently taught, the subjects which hinge upon it must of necessity be imperfect also. I feel sure that the results in this subject would not be so disappointing as they often are if teachers would keep in view the four stages which must be passed through in the mastering of every reading-lesson. These stages are—1. The familiarizing of words already though imperfectly known; 2. The mastering of all new words in the lesson; 3. The explanation of phrases and allusions in the lesson; 4. Practice in style, by which I mean mode of delivery, liveliness, expression, accuracy. I confess much might be urged against some of the reading books in use. As recently stated by Lord Norton in the House of Lords, "In teaching children the art of reading you must give them something to read. The present reading-books are too much in the way of grabbing desultory scraps of science without any sequence." I consider that no school should be without narrative reading-books, such as Scott's "Tales of a Grandfather," Johnson's "Rasselas," and Goldsmith's "Vicar of Wakefield;" and this leads me again, as I did three years ago, to express a hope that School Committees will endeavour to establish school libraries for the benefit of the children in their districts, as, next to physical training, nothing so aids the work of the teacher in the formation of character among his pupils as reading good books.

WRITING.—On the whole writing is fairly taught. The general adoption of Vere Foster's copy-books, and the importance which I attach to clean and well-arranged exercise-books, have given a great impetus to the teaching of this subject, and there are now few schools where the writing is really bad. Care rather than thought is required in teaching the subject, and I must say that some of our teachers exhibit this quality in a marked degree.

SPELLING.—I have little to say on this subject further than I said two years ago. As in reading, if teachers would remember that spelling is a mental test only, and dictation a sight test as well as a mental one, and that the latter test requires the eye to be trained to distinguish in script form words already known to the eye in their printed form, and would act upon this principle, not only would their work become easier, but the results would be far better than they are now.

ARITHMETIC.—The arithmetic has improved somewhat during the year, but even now the failures are more numerous than in reading and writing combined. Napier and Gisborne are the only schools where the subject is taught with real success. The majority of failures occur in Standards II. and III., although in a few schools scarcely a pupil passed in any of the standards.

HISTORY, GEOGRAPHY, AND GRAMMAR.—Last year I referred at length to the teaching of history, geography, and grammar. These subjects are taught in all schools where there are pupils above Standard II. In country schools at least I could wish that they were optional, for certainly the work is so unsatisfactory, and so much time is taken away from other subjects of pressing importance, that the bits of this and bits of that, all indefinite in themselves, which the children manage to scrape together, forcibly reminds one of the lines used by Lord Selborne in a recent address to students against that kind of superficiality which is produced by attempting too many things—

“He could not reap, he could not sow,
Nor was he wise at all,
For very many arts he knew,
But badly knew them all.”

Until history, geography, and grammar are taught so as to encourage and stimulate children to examine for themselves the principles which underlie each of these subjects, and to deduce therefrom general laws relating to change and development, but little good will ensue, and this cannot well be attempted in small schools where at the most four pupils are presented as high as Standard IV., and the teachers are mainly occupied in the preparation of children in the lower standards.

EXTRA SUBJECTS.—Extra subjects, as singing, recitation, and drawing, were attempted in most schools, but in few only are the results of any real merit. Napier, Gisborne, Matawhero, Ormond, and Hastings stand pre-eminent in the teaching of singing, the children in the upper divisions of these schools being able to sing part-songs from music written upon the black-board. In the Napier School political economy and physiology were also taken as special subjects, the former by Standards V. and VI., the latter by Standard IV. The pupils in both cases acquitted themselves well, and I could wish that these subjects were taken up generally in the schools of this district, for their importance as bearing upon the after-lives of the children can hardly be over-estimated.

PUPIL-TEACHERS.—I cannot conclude my report without drawing the attention of the Board to the wants of the pupil-teachers. In 1878 I suggested, as an incentive to promising boys and girls to become pupil-teachers, “that a bonus be offered of £20 or £30 to each pupil-teacher who completed his or her apprenticeship with credit and passed the entrance examination of one of the training colleges in New Zealand.” Several of the pupil-teachers will have completed their full service of four years in July next, and a number of others in the following July, and I think something should be done on their behalf. I should indeed be sorry if their careers as teachers ended at the expiration of their engagements under the Board. They have, without exception, done good work, and I should very much like to see them go forward in the profession they have chosen for themselves. If the Board drew the attention of the Minister of Education to the matter, possibly training college scholarships might be established specially for pupil-teachers in districts where there are no training colleges. That such a plan would greatly benefit this district, as far as the teaching supply is concerned, there is not the least doubt, and certainly it would afford a means of assisting diligent and deserving young persons in pursuing a career which, I fear, will soon be closed to them unless something is done on their behalf in the direction here pointed out.

The Chairman of the Education Board.

I have, &c.

H. HILL, Inspector.

MARLBOROUGH.

SIR,—

12th November, 1881.

I have the honor to submit to you my report on the Marlborough public schools for 1881. I have examined twenty-two schools, the number of scholars present at examination being 1,037. The total number on the rolls at the same date was 1,247, as against 1,122 in 1880. Six hundred and ninety-one scholars were presented for standards; 553 passed, the percentage for the district being 80, or 2 per cent. more than was obtained last year. In addition to the table showing the average age at which the children in each school have passed the several standards, I have prepared a statement showing the number of failures in each subject.*

On the whole, there is now little to find fault with in the teaching of reading, geography, and history. The spelling is not quite so good. Having found it necessary to censure with some severity, in my last year's report, the very general neglect in the art of letter-writing, I have the more pleasure in acknowledging the marked improvement that has been effected in this important subject.

I regret that my strictures on the handwriting have not been followed by any adequate improvement in the copy-books. Here the record of passes and failures is misleading. Although the actual failures amount to only seventeen, it must be explained that many scholars have barely escaped rejection, and that scores of passes may be said to have satisfied only the minimum of requirement. As I do not believe that any natural incapacity for writing tolerably well exists in more than one in a hundred of those who have the full use of their eyes and right hands, I intend trying at my next examination the effect of greater strictness in granting passes for writing. I have a strong suspicion that most of the blots, mis-spellings, and half-formed letters that now so frequently offend the eye are quite avoidable where teachers and scholars are alike in earnest. I believe, further, that the vast majority of boys and girls of, say, twelve years old can, if they choose, write a neat, round, legible hand, the basis of a good current hand. I have only to point to the example of two or three schools in this district—such as Renwick, where slovenly copy-books are unknown—to prove that this can be done where proper pains are taken, and where the master knows his business.

Of the discipline and general tone of the Marlborough schools I can speak in very favourable terms.

* Table and statement not reprinted.

Good humour, combined with ready obedience, prevails everywhere, and it appears to me that most of the teachers have now acquired the difficult art of enforcing strict discipline without resorting to anything like harshness. In one point, however, closely connected with discipline, there is great room for improvement. The attendance on examination-days falls far short of what it ought to be. Although my visits were made, with two or three exceptions, in perfectly fine weather and after ample notice had been given, no less than 210 scholars, more than a sixth of the number on the roll, failed to appear.

To discuss the general merits and defects of the present system of examination by standards would be a pure waste of time. For good or for evil that system has now fairly taken root in this colony. But, without touching on the larger question, I must deplore a growing tendency, not only on the part of the general public but on the part of many teachers who ought to know better, to gauge the success or failure of a school exclusively by the tables of results. The "sweet simplicity" of a list of passes and failures, which make but slight demands upon the time and thought of a reader, appears to obscure if it does not altogether efface the impression made by an Inspector's detailed estimate of each school, which, unfortunately, must deal with troublesome limitations and qualifying circumstances. It is wiser to try to make the best of this apparently inevitable tendency than to complain about it. And although the record of passes and failures, taken alone, can never present a complete picture of the state of a school, some improvement may be effected in this direction by a more rational system of presenting scholars for the several standards than that which now prevails. The two worst faults committed by teachers in this respect are: (1.) The bringing forward for standards of children who have not "attended with reasonable regularity," or who are naturally backward; and, (2.) the presenting of scholars for the First Standard at too early an age—a mistake at the outset, the consequences of which usually extend throughout the rest of the victim's school life. I am constantly being compelled, in spite of my repeated protests, to pass children of little more than six years of age, who, though undeniably able to fulfil the very simple requirements of the First Standard, after a more or less prolonged struggle with the increasing difficulties of the higher standards break down at last, undergoing in the meantime much suffering themselves, besides causing unspeakable annoyance to their teachers and their examiner. There is no conceivable excuse for this oft-repeated act of folly. No stress in this respect is put upon teachers by the Education Department—none, certainly, in this district by the Board or its Inspector. On the contrary, so far as I am concerned, I have steadily discouraged the presenting of scholars who are either of tender years, or who cannot pass with ease. If this canon, which is laid down very distinctly in the regulations as to standards, were universally adhered to, and if no scholar, however precocious, were presented even for the First Standard before he had completed his eighth year, the number of doubtful or partial passes, which fill so large a space in the examination schedules, would be marvellously reduced, and a pass would mean something more than it does at present. It ought not by this time to be necessary to repeat that a teacher need not restrict the work of a class to the bare work of the standard taken up, but that the average of attainment should be considerably in advance of that minimum.

With regard to the amount of irregularity of attendance which would justify a teacher in not presenting a scholar, something more definite seems to be required than the expression used in the regulations, "*reasonable regularity*," if one may judge by the very varying practice of teachers in this respect. I am not unaware of the danger of laying down a hard-and-fast rule, but suggest that it ought not to be incumbent on a teacher to present for a higher standard any scholar whose attendance during the twelvemonths before the examination falls short of 65 per cent. A teacher can hardly be held responsible for the progress of one who has been absent during more than a third of the school year.

I am by no means disposed to underrate the difficulties attendant on the passing of a scholar through a higher standard every year; but these difficulties have been absurdly exaggerated, especially by teachers. Take, for example, the Fourth Standard, which appears to be the chief stumbling-block. I have good reason for believing that the examination papers set in the Nelson and Marlborough Districts are, on the whole, about equal in point of difficulty to those set in other parts of the colony. The two subjects which tax most severely the powers of the scholars—leaving out of account history—are, undoubtedly, grammar (including composition) and arithmetic. But all that a candidate need do to obtain a pass in the latter subject is to work correctly three out of six sums, including a question in practice, another in reduction, and the making-out of a tradesman's account, containing four or five items. In grammar the candidate is required to name the parts of speech in a short sentence, to decline a pronoun, to give the degrees of comparison of half-a-dozen adjectives, and to write a short letter on some familiar subject. Surely a boy in his thirteenth year, who, having probably attended school for six or seven years, cannot manage at a pinch, to do so much as this, is either a hopeless dullard or has been miserably taught.

If this view of the real value of a bare pass be the true one, it follows that the effusive rejoicings of parents and the jubiliations of teachers that usually follow the passing of a large percentage of scholars are altogether out of place. For the teacher voluntarily states, in effect, when entering the names of his scholars on the examination schedule, that they are able, in his opinion, to satisfy the requirements of the several standards, as interpreted by the Inspector. And at this stage there ought to be no doubt as to these. The work does not vary or increase in difficulty, but is just what it was three years ago. If the performance of a large proportion of the candidates falls short of what has been promised on their behalf, this must be set down, I fear, not to the inseparable difficulties of the standards, but to causes for which the teacher has himself only to thank. In many cases he has obviously overrated the attainments of his scholars: frequently he persists in presenting scholars who have attended very badly, and who are, therefore, foredoomed to failure. Sometimes he yields, against his better judgment, to the importunity of parents, who pester him to "push their children on," by which is usually meant the placing them in a higher class than they are fit for. But all this does not affect my proposition that the passing of a large percentage of scholars is not, taken by itself, a fit subject for glorification. To boast of having obtained 90 per cent. of passes is much as if a tradesman

were to plume himself on having paid 19s. in the pound. The best that can be said for either teacher or tradesman (so far as regards the isolated fact in question) is that each has nearly, but not quite, fulfilled his engagements.

I append a brief summary of my opinion as to the present state of each school.

It will be observed that my report on the aided schools is uniformly favourable. It is not easy to over-estimate the good that is being done by these well-taught and well-conducted establishments, in remote spots where the school is almost the only humanizing and refining agent.

The Chairman of the Education Board.

W. C. HODGSON,
Inspector.

NELSON.

SIR,—

22nd December, 1881.

I have the honor to lay before you my report on the public schools in this district for the year 1881. Sixty-nine schools are now at work, 66 of which have been visited twice during the year, my examination being made at the second visit. The number of scholars on the rolls of these schools when they were examined last year was 3,963, the number present being 3,354. These figures correspond very closely to those obtained last year. As the returns for the December quarter will not all be in for some time, I have thought it best to complete my report without waiting for them, especially as they will not differ materially from those sent in at the end of September, which show 4,062 on the roll, and 3,109 in daily average attendance. The proportion of passes for the district is less by 10 per cent. than it was last year. I do not attribute this to any general falling-off in the quality of the teaching, but rather to the fact that many very young children were pushed through the First and Second Standards two years ago, who, as I anticipated, are now found unequal to the work of the higher standards. The penalties for this kind of mistake, in the shape of disappointment and loss of reputation, are so sharp and so certain that I do not think they will be incurred by many of our teachers, after the disagreeable experiences of this year.

AIDED SCHOOLS.—These are becoming an increasingly important feature in our system. Eight are now at work, several more being nearly ready for opening. That they have done good work in remote districts, where no other means are possible of getting the children taught at all, cannot be denied. But they should be regarded only as the pioneers of something better—as makeshifts, in short, until the neighbourhoods in which they are placed are constituted school districts. Nor do the arrangements by which the teachers of aided schools are appointed seem to be quite satisfactory. Looking to the character of the appointments that have been made in some of these schools, I am of opinion that the Board ought not to entirely surrender the power of selecting teachers, as at present, to the parents of the scholars. So long as the school-work is of the most elementary description, the mischief done by the employment of a comparatively ill-educated teacher is not very apparent (though it still exists), but as the children advance their progress must necessarily be arrested by the limited powers of their instructor. And this may well come to pass long before a neighbourhood is populous enough to be made a school district. It is true that a certain check upon gross incompetence is imposed by the knowledge that the grant will be withdrawn if the scholars are not taught to the satisfaction of the Inspector; but prevention would, for many reasons, be preferable to a remedy that, in practice, is found to be slow, and not always easy of application. I suggest that, in future, no one be appointed to an aided school who has not undergone an examination which, without being at all severe, shall at least be a safeguard against absolute incompetence. It is surely not unreasonable to require that a person to whom the instruction of some twenty children is intrusted shall be not inferior, in point of literary attainment, to our probationers.

PROBATIONERS.—A modification of the plan of employing probationers recommended in my last report has been adopted by the Board, and is now getting a fair trial, three appointments having been made in town, two in country schools. The former only have been long enough at work to enable me to form an opinion as the probable success of the scheme. In point of aptitude at learning the practical part of their business, and of ready compliance with the directions of the head-teachers under whose charge they are placed, these girls have fulfilled my expectations. As to another essential part of the scheme—failing which, indeed, the whole fabric falls to the ground—their home preparation for the E examination of teachers at the expirations of the three years' trial, I cannot speak with the same degree of confidence. It is to be hoped that probationers will clearly understand that assiduous study must go hand in hand with increase of skill in the art of teaching, if they are ever to rise above the mere drudgery of the service. The leisure left them by their present occupation is so ample, and the demand made upon their intellectual faculties so slight, that no excuse for unpreparedness at the end of their time ought to be accepted. It would be humiliating if the experiment of voluntary self-improvement were to break down from sheer indolence, and it should become necessary, after all, to resort to the system of enforced study.

POSITION OF TEACHERS—REMOVALS.—After what must have appeared, in several instances, to those more immediately interested, a tedious delay, a change has been made in the teaching staff of the six schools that certainly stood at the bottom of the list in point of efficiency. In three of these—Appley, Collingwood, and Addison's Flat—the good effects of the new appointments are already conspicuous, and there is no reason for anticipating a less favourable result in the remaining three, to which fresh teachers have been only recently appointed. The occasion seems opportune for showing what is the present practice as regards the removal of negligent or incompetent teachers, and for estimating its effects on the welfare of our schools. It is the more necessary to do this because an idea has been industriously disseminated, and has gained pretty general credence, that teachers of public schools are harshly treated, and are at the mercy of the caprices of School Committees. Such a belief, if unchallenged, must have a deterrent effect on persons wishing to enter the service. As a matter of fact, there are few classes of people whose tenure of office is hedged in by so many safeguards, both of

law and public opinion, as that of a teacher of a public school in this colony. Except for gross immorality, no teacher can be dismissed without receiving three months' notice, and then only with the concurrence of his School Committee and the Education Board. But it is rarely indeed that matters get as far as a dismissal. What usually happens is this: After one, or, it may be, two adverse reports from the Inspector, supported, as a rule, by a letter of complaint from the Committee, a teacher is requested to resign, when he frequently contrives to extract from his Committee (only too anxious to get rid of him at any cost) a testimonial. Armed with this, he too often succeeds in inflicting his incapacity on some unsuspecting community far-remote from the scene of his past failure. My own experience as teacher and as Inspector dates back twenty-five years, but I can call to mind scarcely a single case during that period of wrongful, or even of harsh, dismissal. On the contrary, a score of instances occur to me in which teachers have been retained long after their unfitness had become matter of notoriety. It is not unreasonable to ask, how many days' grace would a merchant allow a salesman who failed to make sales? Or for how many hours would a bank clerk retain office who could not make his books balance? I have no hesitation in asserting that an amount of habitual negligence on the part of teachers in the making-out of the simplest returns, and a disregard of the plainest instructions in the matter of examinations, such as would insure the instant dismissal of the delinquents in almost every other path of life, is visited, in this district at least, with no severer penalty than a mild rebuke. The truth is, both parents, Committees, Boards, and Inspectors are only too ready to overlook almost any conceivable defects of temper or conduct in a teacher who will do fairly well the work he is paid to do. But the question has another side. Who is to compensate the unfortunate children for the irrevocable years wasted, for the opportunities lost, for the bad habits formed, that may affect the whole of their future lives? It is an easy matter to win a cheap reputation for good-nature at the expense of justice to that part of the community which is least able to protect itself. Although a prompter and more vigorous action has been taken during the past twelve months than was formerly the case, I believe that the interests of education have suffered, and still suffer, from the apparently almost insuperable difficulties and delays that beset the act of getting rid of a notoriously unprofitable servant. No section of the community is more deeply interested in purging its ranks of unworthy members than teachers of proved capacity. To go no further, the continuance in the service of even a few negligent or incapable persons has a powerful effect in depreciating the general rate of remuneration. Appeals for increase of salary are met, and will continue to be met, however unfairly, by pointing to the black sheep of the flock, who are undeniably overpaid. To reward exceptional merit, in a general system, however simple a matter in theory, in practice is both difficult and invidious. And in teaching, as in many other occupations, it is unfortunately, the worst workman, not the best, who regulates the average scale of pay.

Although I am conscious that the inevitable tendency of the existing system of examination by standards is each year to judge more and more exclusively by the number of passes and failures recorded, I shall not on that account omit my usual short statement of the condition of each school as it appeared to me when I examined. Besides the members of the Board, and those professionally interested in our public schools, there must still be a respectable minority of the reading public who will be at the pains to correct the crude conclusions that the reading of a list of mere passes must lead to, by the perusal of a summary which takes into account some, at least, of the surroundings by which the progress of a school is modified. The undoubting faith with which the majority of mankind will bow down before an idol of their own setting-up is simply astounding. The figures of an Inspector claim to do no more than record how many scholars out of a number that a teacher has thought fit to present have complied with the minimum of requirement. Yet these figures are almost universally accepted as though they gave a mathematical demonstration of the exact status of any given school. On the other hand, the written analysis, the object of which is to show, at least approximately, whether the scholars, on the whole, know as much as they ought, taking into consideration their age, capacity, and length of attendance, is comparatively disregarded. Nor should it be forgotten that the tone and discipline of a school—things worth more than all the subjects in all the standards—find no place in the most elaborate of tabulated statements. It will fare ill with a community that is content to push these weightier matters into the background, in order that the foremost place may be occupied by mere literary smartness.

It has been my custom hitherto to preface my detailed estimate of the state of each school with a statement, in general terms, as to the manner in which each subject is being taught in the district, adding practical suggestions for the guidance of teachers; but a perusal of the reports of my fellow-Inspectors, lately republished by the Education Department, has induced me to discontinue this practice. The conflict of opinion, and the variety of suggestions, are somewhat bewildering. One Inspector condemns in energetic terms the setting of exercises in reproduction, another objects to the present method of teaching grammar and geography, a third sets much store by the learning of little rhymes, to a fourth it seems that without tasteful reading aloud all the rest is naught, a fifth pins his faith to object-lessons; and the mass of technical information thus poured forth upon the teachers has been largely augmented by the pamphlet issued by the Education Department under the title of "The Standards." I shall not, therefore, add to the multitude of counsellors, being conscious that I have myself been needlessly didactic in time past. My pains will probably be better bestowed in explaining to each teacher who seems to require such help, on my visits of inspection, wherein his methods appear to me faulty. It will be found, I fear, that good advice which has no pointed and specific application usually falls flat, each teacher complacently passing it on to his neighbour. It would be unfair to pass over without notice the marked and general improvement that has been effected in composition, a subject in which our schools have hitherto been very deficient. The wretched performances to which I referred in my last report are now the exception, instead of being, as formerly, the rule.

My estimate of the state of each school is as follows:—*

The Chairman of the Education Board.

W. C. HODGSON,
Inspector.

* Not reprinted.

NORTH CANTERBURY.

SIR,—

Christchurch, 20th April, 1882.

I have the honor to submit my general report for the year 1881.

The first six weeks of the year were devoted to the completion of reports on all schools examined during November and December, 1880. From the 10th of February to the 20th April I was engaged in completing the annual report, inspecting schools in Christchurch and its immediate neighbourhood, preparing questions for examination of pupil-teachers, conducting same, and subsequently in perusing, valuing, and reporting on the papers handed in. On the 20th of April I set out on my first round of inspection, and from that date until the end of the year my time was fully occupied in inspecting, preparing standard questions, examining, and reporting on the schools in my district.

The number of schools in operation during the whole or part of the year was 68. Of these, all were examined in standards except two. The two schools not so examined were Le Bon's Bay and Mount Somers, and both had been closed for some considerable portion of the year; and, further, a change of teachers had taken place between my visits. Fifty-nine schools were visited a second time. At the second inspection, except in the case of eight schools re-examined in accordance with the instructions of the Board, the ordinary work of the scholars was not interrupted. The organization, classification, methods of instruction, and general matters in connection with the schools were noticed, and suggestions made for improvement where necessary.

During the year new schools were opened at the Hinds and at Flemington. A small aided school at Broughton was closed, but, as steps are being taken for the erection of a new building in its neighbourhood, the educational requirements of the district will not be long neglected. The material condition of several schools throughout the district has been improved by repairs and additions, and, with very few exceptions, the rooms are suitably furnished, and the supply of teaching appliances is sufficient. In some few cases I regret to have to state that the buildings and grounds are very badly looked after both by Committees and teachers. Fences, outbuildings, gymnastic apparatus suffer for want of a little timely attention. The rooms, too, are not regularly swept, and dust is allowed to accumulate in all directions. Lavatories are provided in all schools of recent construction, but in the majority of cases they are evidently looked upon as ornamental appendages—at least I have seen very few indications of their being regularly used. In the playgrounds connected with the large town schools, and in some of those in the country, due provision is made for the complete separation of the sexes. This very desirable arrangement is not, however, sufficiently general, and in too many instances the boys and girls are allowed to mix in the playgrounds during the recesses without any attempt being made at supervision. Excepting, of course, the time spent in the schoolrooms, the complete separation of the sexes is most desirable. This could easily be effected by providing two playgrounds, with a close fence between, and each having an entrance to the schoolroom. If this were done, I am confident that objections of many parents to sending their children to our public schools would be removed. I have frequently had to listen to complaints on this subject, and I must say that, when in the playgrounds with the children, I have myself both seen and heard a good deal to justify such. The arrangements in connection with the outbuildings of some old-established schools are not quite satisfactory, they being placed too close together, and the entrances to them being unprotected.

The total number of scholars on the registers at the dates of my examination was 7,795, or 52 less than last year. The number present at examination was 6,131, and here also there is a considerable falling off, last year's number being 6,318. The following table shows the enrolments and attendances for the years 1879, 1880, and 1881:—

Year.	Enrolment.	Present at Examination.	Percentage.
1879	7,743	5,883	79
1880	7,847	6,318	80
1881	7,795	6,131	78

The falling-off in the attendance was noticeable chiefly in some schools in the Akaroa and Ashburton Counties, and was due, so the teachers informed me, to the fact that several families had left the various districts. It is difficult to say what should be done in the case of such schools as French Farm, Kyle, Newland, and Longbeach (side). What with teachers' salaries, incidental expenses, cost of repairs, &c., they must be a sad burden on the revenue of the Board. I am convinced that to make them aided schools would be to close them altogether, for the reason that no certificated teachers would take charge of them at the remuneration offered, and there is very little likelihood that the parents of the children attending would augment the salaries. The plan of parents and others meeting together and applying for the establishment of schools has been followed by good results in most instances. In some places, however, people have been inconsiderate enough to ask for the erection of schools which would interfere unduly with the attendance of those already in operation. It has been pointed out to me that the accommodation provided in some schools recently erected is out of all proportion to the number of children that are ever likely to attend them. I think it would be well in future to arrange that the desks in all new buildings should be placed on graded platforms. My own experience as a teacher has proved to me that the arrangement is a good one, and I have rarely heard teachers speak against it. When new rooms, intended for Standard I. and infants, are added to existing buildings, due provision should be made for some desk accommodation. It is a mistake to occupy the whole available floor-space with a gallery.

The following table shows the number presented in each standard, the number passed, the average age at which the scholars pass, the percentage of passes, and the number of schools at which pupils were successfully prepared for the different standards:—

Standards.		No. Presented.	No. Passed.	Average Age.	Percentage.	No. of Schools at which Pupils were successful.
Standard	VI. ...	68	40	Yrs. mos. 14 3	58	15
"	V. ...	215	126	13 4	58	29
"	IV. ...	463	248	12 6	53	36
"	III. ...	962	585	11 7	60	52
"	II. ...	940	665	10 1	70	59
"	I. ...	1,032	934	8 9	90	61
"	Totals ...	3,680	2,598	—	70	—

From the foregoing table it will be seen that, except in the case of the Second Standard, the percentages of passes are somewhat higher than in the preceding year. This is satisfactory, and indicates a steady improvement in the efficiency of the schools and the quality of the instruction; and especially so, as in several schools the teaching had been seriously interrupted by sickness, repairs, and other causes, which tended to lower the quantity of the results. Many teachers in my districts deserve the highest praise for the conscientious and able manner in which they have performed their duties under all difficulties. It cannot, however, be denied that there are some schools where the teachers' inefficiency or want of energy has retarded the progress of the children and kept the standards lower than they would be under fairly competent management. At the same time it would be wrong to infer that the teachers must needs be incompetent when only the lower standards are represented at the annual examinations. The schools at Little Akaloa, Governor's Bay South, Duvauchelle's Bay, Wakanui, Tinwald, and Alford Forest (side) were in a very backward state at the time I examined them, and it is to be hoped that the changes made in the teachers of the last five mentioned will lead to better work being done in the future. The Inspector of the Nelson District in his last annual report makes some very pertinent remarks on the removal of notoriously incompetent teachers, and, on behalf of those children who are unfortunate enough to be intrusted to their charge, he writes as follows: "But the question has another side. Who is to compensate the unfortunate children for the irrevocable years wasted, for the opportunities lost, for the bad habits formed, that may affect the whole of their future lives? It is an easy matter to win a cheap reputation for good nature at the expense of justice to that part of the community which is least able to protect itself."

The permission to re-present children in the standards previously passed was not taken advantage of to any great extent in the schools examined by me. I find, on looking through last year's examination schedules, that 187 scholars were so presented, 64 of these being noted in the columns for remarks as mentally incapable. In making out the table for the results of examination in standards no account was taken of scholars re-presented, their names being included among those not presented for examination in standards. As a rule, the teachers of those schools in which children were presented for re-examination completely ignored the fact that when they are permitted to re-present they are also expected to re-instruct. In my opinion the permission given in the note to section 2 of the regulations is unwise and unnecessary, and will tend to still further complicate the teaching and examining of our schools. It is, in my opinion, ridiculous to give this permission to teachers, and at the same time to expect Inspectors to pay any attention to the recommendation contained in section 8. I am quite sure that there is not an Inspector in New Zealand who would expect children mentally incapable and grossly irregular in their attendance to pass a standard each year. Section 3 of the regulations says: "In all cases the scholars presented for any standard must be prepared to show proficiency in the work also of the lower standards," and this, it seems to me, provides a sufficient safeguard against children being placed in classes with the work of which they are unable to keep pace. My experience has proved to me that it is a simple waste of time to examine children who attend school two days out of five in the work of the standard already passed, or, indeed, in that of any standard. The best plan, as I pointed out in my last report, would be to define the number of attendances necessary to be made in order to entitle a scholar to be presented in a standard higher than that previously passed, it being at the same time optional with the teacher whether he presented any who had not made the required attendances.

The sets of papers prepared by me for the higher standards were designedly made a little easier than in the previous year, but, as in every case greater accuracy was required in order to secure a pass, I think I am justified in stating that the conditions of the examinations were, on the whole, similar to those of 1880. In such schools as Gloucester Street, Sydenham, Ashburton, and Lower Heathcote the examination of all standards above the second was conducted almost wholly on paper. While not claiming for a written examination the property of being the best test of a teacher's methods of instruction, or of a child's attainments, it is, in the case of large schools, the most practicable. With carefully-prepared papers, and proper supervision during examination, it is, I think, quite possible to form in this way a just estimate of the work being done in a school. In the majority of small schools a considerable portion of the time at my disposal was devoted to oral questioning, and in every case I endeavoured to make my questions as practical as possible, and to indicate to the teacher the line that he should take in teaching the different subjects. It may not be unnecessary for me here to state that it has always been my custom to spend some portion of time in examining the classes below Standard I.

Nearly all the essential subjects of instruction have been taught more successfully than in former years. Improvement is most noticeable in dictation, arithmetic, grammar, and geography. Reading, writing, and history continue to be the most unsatisfactory subjects. The writing in most of our schools is indifferent, and in a few it is simply disgraceful; and this is due in a great measure to what I have heard called the "exercise-book mania." It is quite common to see children who scarcely know their letters in possession of exercise-books. I should like to see a regulation made that no child

should be allowed to write in an exercise-book at home before the Second Standard was passed. The bad reading of the lower standards in the large schools is easily traceable to inefficient and unskilful teaching. In very few instances were the children in these schools able to deal intelligently with the meanings of the words occurring in the lessons read. The numerous failures in history are due to the fact that teachers attempt too much. A clear outline of the sequence of great events in English history is as much as can be reasonably expected in most of our schools.

In the large majority of country schools, conducted by two or more teachers, the organization has improved. In the town schools too much of the time and attention of the adult teachers is still given to the higher classes. I am convinced that 30 per cent. of the children attending such schools as Gloucester Street leave before they pass the Fourth Standard, and that during an altogether unreasonable proportion of the time they attend their instruction is intrusted to inexperienced pupil-teachers. I am afraid that a large number of those children who leave school imperfectly educated, and with unformed habits of industry and diligence, find their way into the larrikin classes. Speaking generally, it may be said that the discipline and order are good.

In a former report I took occasion to express my approval of the "standard system of education," and I must say that during the past two years I have neither read nor heard anything to cause me to alter my views. I have, I think, never expressed any opinion for or against the requirements of the New Zealand standards, and I do not intend to do so now. I have considered it my duty to see that the regulations were, as far as possible, carried out in all schools inspected by me. I am strongly averse to continual changes and alterations, and we have certainly had enough of such in the educational history of this district. In all schools where more than one teacher is employed, it is, I think, quite possible, provided that the attendance is regular and the teaching efficient, to successfully cope with the requirements of the standards. In small schools, even under the most favourable circumstances, the teacher's task is a difficult one, and doubly so if he attempts to teach separately every class in the different subjects required for their respective standards.

In some districts the local supervision is reasonably good, but, generally, Committees appear to take but little real interest in the welfare of their schools. Previous to the completion of a new school very considerable enthusiasm is manifested in educational matters; but shortly after its opening this feeling dies out, and it too often happens that the newly-appointed teacher is unable to enrol more than half the children guaranteed to attend.

The usual schedules are attached.* I must apologize for the lateness and incompleteness of this report, but my health during the past two months has been so indifferent that it has been a difficult matter for me either to think or to write.

I have, &c.,

W. L. EDGE, M.A.,

Inspector of Schools.

The Chairman of the Board of Education, Canterbury.

WESTLAND.

SIR,—

Greymouth, 14th February, 1882.

I have the honour to submit my Seventh Annual Report on the condition of elementary education in the District of Westland.

The number of schools in the district is now 35, or one more than the number returned in my last report. Eighteen of these are carried on under the provisions of the 88th clause.

All the schools in the district have received one visit for the purpose of examination; nearly all have also been visited for general inspection without notice, and to many I have paid one or more incidental visits in passing. The only school not examined this year is the smallest in the district, which was closed when I arrived on the morning fixed, some weeks before, for the examination. The No Town school was also closed and without a teacher on my arrival; but thanks to the exertions of the Chairman of the Committee, who took the trouble to muster all the children, I was enabled to hold the examination at the time appointed.

For the first time in the six years and a half during which I have been connected with your Board, I have to announce a general falling-off in the results of the year's work. At the same time I desire to express my firm conviction that in the case of the principal schools in the district, and with a few exceptions, which will be referred to in the confidential report which accompanies this, the inferior results recorded this year are in no way attributable to any diminution of zeal or ability on the part of the teaching staff, but to a variety of circumstances, some of which I will now bring under your notice.

During the latter half of the school year just ended I received numerous communications, through local Committees, from parents complaining that their children were not advanced into higher standards, notwithstanding that they had passed at the last examination. As I reminded you in my last report, it has been the custom in this district to expect that every child who passes any standard shall be presented in the next higher one at the following examination, and under your Board's former programme this was seldom attended by any difficulty: under the present system, however, and with the more extensive requirements of the Government standards, a gradually-increasing strain has been felt in the endeavour to continue the practice of annual promotion in all cases, which, though not positively demanded by the regulations, was nevertheless expected by the public. The difficulty was aggravated by the impossibility of persuading many parents that their children's best interests are often more truly consulted by withholding those who have barely passed at any examination from presentation in a higher standard at the next, and a system of annoyance and interference with the teachers' plans seemed likely to become general and intolerable. Many parents appear to be unable to believe that their children are less gifted by nature than those of their neighbours, or that their continual absence from school can interfere with their progress; and prefer to assume that their inability to keep pace with their class-mates is the result of neglect or of deliberate injustice on the part of the teachers; whereas in several cases that came under my notice the children supposed to have been thus neglected

* Not reprinted.

were found to be amongst the most irregular attendants at their respective schools. Relief, however, was at length afforded by the appearance of the new edition of the standards issued by the department during the past year, which contains what may be regarded as an authoritative interpretation of their true meaning and intention. Encouraged by this, some of the teachers proceeded to do what they had all along felt to be desirable in the true interests of their pupils, and announced their intention of withholding certain children from presentation at the then forthcoming examination. This was the cause of the numerous complaints alluded to above; and although the attention of the aggrieved was directed to the explanatory note affixed to clause 2 of the regulations, and its applicability to most of the cases pointed out, few of them could be prevailed upon to abandon their cherished belief in the injustice and neglect of the teachers.

I have always been of opinion that, if the Government standards are to have a fair and impartial trial, the difficulties inherent in them (according to the belief of many) should not be removed or mitigated by too easy an interpretation of their requirements, but, on the contrary, that the utmost which could be fairly presumed to be intended by the compilers should be required at the annual examinations, so that the defects and difficulties, if any exist, might be the more speedily discovered and remedied. The following quotation from Mr. O'Sullivan's report for 1879 is inserted as giving expression in very forcible terms to a similar opinion: "If the system of standards is to be prevented from becoming an organized hypocrisy, the most demoralizing of all shams, all Inspectors must be instructed to pass only those who can pass with ease in the three higher standards at all events." These opinions are sustained in the notes attached to the standards as recently reissued, which, though containing much that might have been omitted, may yet, as a whole, be regarded as a great assistance and support to those for whose guidance they were intended. Acting, therefore, upon the convictions to which I have given expression above, and believing that the relief afforded, more especially by the interpretation of clause 2 before referred to, would be taken advantage of more generally than appears to have been the case, I purposely made the examination of the upper standards at the larger schools somewhat more difficult than heretofore. The increased difficulty, however, was not great, being confined chiefly to arithmetic and grammar, and was of itself quite insufficient to account for the falling-off which I have this year to report. Other and far more powerful influences have been at work, and to some of these I will now refer.

Irregularity of attendance is perhaps the greatest enemy to school-work with which we have to contend, and, although it has often been referred to in reports, and its evil effects deplored over and over again, yet the persons most immediately interested appear to regard the matter with supreme indifference. Unfortunately the evil is by no means confined to the irregular scholars themselves, but exerts its baleful influence on each and every scholar in the district. It is evident that, when many of the children of a school or class are habitually irregular, the reappearance of absentees compels the teacher to go again and again over old ground, and thus retards the general progress of even the regular scholars. The (working) average attendance for the latter half of the year 1881 amounted to only 75 per cent. of the average weekly roll-number, but this does not convey a correct idea of the effect of irregularity upon the general results in the district. A better view will be obtained by looking at the percentage of the number examined who have been irregular in their attendance at each school, which is shown in the following table:—

Schools.	No. Examined.	No. of Irregular Scholars.	Percentage.	Schools.	No. Examined.	No. of Irregular Scholars.	Percentage.
Greymouth	250	65	26	Marsden	14	2	14
Hokitika	226	146	65	Maori Gully	23	3	13
Kumara	161	69	43	No Town	20	No return	
Ross	160	88	55	Ahaura	10	3	30
Stafford	68	28	41	Orwell Creek	22	3	14
Goldsborough	68	22	32	Totara Flat	22	7	32
Kanieri	52	26	50	Westbrook	6	5	83
Brunnerton	77	40	52	Upper Kokatahi	2	0	0
Cobden	51	13	26	Lower Kokatahi	6	0	0
Paroa	33	6	18	Waitangi	8	0	0
Woodstock	21	3	14	Okarito	14	2	14
Arahura	36	21	58	Gillespie's	19	0	0
Bluespur	30	5	17	Arawata Town	10	0	0
Donoghue's	27	16	59	Arawata Flat	22	0	0
Hatter's Terrace	30	10	33	South Spit	13	0	0
Greenstone	15	5	33	Kynnersley	33	18	35
Upper Crossing	6	5	83				
Dunganville	32	4	12	Totals	1,587	615	38·7

As in past years, I assume that anything under 300 half-days may be regarded as an irregular attendance, so that some notice must be taken of the interval which separates two annual examinations, which varies considerably, from as much as fourteen months in the cases of Waitangi, Okarito, and Gillespie's to ten months in that of Hokitika. It is exceedingly discouraging to notice the steady and alarming increase in the number of these irregular attendants during the last three years. In 1879 the number recorded as "irregular and failed" was nearly 2 per cent. of the number examined, in 1880 the number rose to 4·7 per cent., and in 1881 they reached 11·27 per cent. These figures are exclusive of numbers who, though irregular, yet managed to pass the standards in which they were

presented. In Table A all these are included, and the result shows a total of 38 per cent. of the number examined, while in the first eleven schools on the list the percentage of irregular scholars amounts to 43. This is a matter of serious import, whether viewed with respect to its effects upon the school-work for the year or upon the finances of the Board, and some means must be devised, if possible, for bringing about a more healthy condition of affairs. In August, 1880, I sketched out a few rules, having for their object the discouragement of this irregularity by making a certain percentage of attendance a condition of presentation at the annual examination. These I submitted to a high authority on educational matters, who, however, was of opinion that they were unnecessary. The experience of the two examinations which have since been held convinces me that, in this district at all events, some such limit is necessary; and we have a valuable precedent in the English New Code, in which such a regulation has a place. All authorities on school-management are agreed in pronouncing very irregular attendance to be generally the result of defective administration; but this must not be taken to inculcate only the teachers of the schools. The burden of blame must be distributed over all who have any share in that administration, and a very large portion should be placed on the shoulders of any who, being specially appointed by the people to have the control and management of a school, may do anything either directly or indirectly to weaken the authority of the teacher, and consequently to sap the foundations of good discipline, upon which regularity of attendance to a great extent depends. I have dwelt somewhat at length upon this point, because I am convinced that it is, perhaps without exception, the greatest difficulty with which an earnest and efficient teacher has to contend, and that, of all the annoyances and hindrances to which he is subject in the pursuance of his, too often, thankless task, this is the most vexatious and irritating to himself, and the most mischievous to the progress of his scholars.

The condition of affairs as shown in the above table, however, must be regarded as to a great extent abnormal. The very large percentage of irregular scholars at some schools is to be partly accounted for by the unfortunate prevalence of diphtheria, and the consequent closing of schools for a longer or shorter period. Thus, at Ross, Kanieri, Bluespur, and some others, the schools were closed for several weeks, and this too but a very short time before the examination. Moreover, when the schools were reopened the attendance was very unsatisfactory, owing to the dread of infection which prevailed in consequence of the deaths of several children in each place. So much was this the case that, after reopening their school, the Totara Committee found it necessary to advertise in the local paper that unless the attendance improved the school would again be closed. In Hokitika, although the Committee did not consider it necessary to close the school, yet a great amount of sickness prevailed at various times, which affected considerably the average attendance. The interval between the examinations of 1880 and 1881 was only ten months, and this would tend to lower the general results. The illness of the second master, which necessitated his absence from the school for some weeks, must also be taken into account in connection with the results at this school.

Apart, however, from the circumstances already noticed, a good reason may be shown why the results this year might be expected to be lower than in former years. The first examinations under the new standards took place in 1879, and it will be remembered that most of the children who were then attending the schools had had the advantage of remaining for two years in the same standards on account of the introduction of the Government programme. Nearly all those who were then presented in the three upper standards have now passed through the school, and their places have been taken by those who were then in the three lower standards. The requirements of the First and Second Standards are so simple that, as a reference to the reports for the last two years will show, scarcely any scholars failed to pass; and, as a consequence, they have advanced into the Third and Fourth. In the Third their real difficulties commence, and, taking into consideration the average age of the children who have passed the Second Standard, and the greatly-increased amount of work required in the Third, which includes three entirely new subjects, it is not surprising that many fail, or only barely escape failure, to come to grief in the following year in the Fourth. The falling-off in the results from this cause has already been noticed in a neighbouring district, and I have no doubt that it will be experienced to some extent throughout the colony. To remedy this state of things, and to introduce some improvements in the method of examination at present employed, which are rendered desirable in view of the contemplated reduction in the teaching staffs at the principal schools, I purpose, with your permission, to prepare some notes for the guidance of teachers and Inspector alike in connection with the conduct of the future examinations in this district.

The change of teachers at the Stafford and Ross Schools at a somewhat late period of the year must be taken into consideration in connection with the results at these schools. Such a change is always attended with a temporary cessation of progress, no matter how able the incoming teachers may be. In addition to the circumstances already alluded to there are others connected with particular schools which have contributed largely to render this year's results less satisfactory than usual. These will be referred to in the case of each school in the detailed confidential report; but it may be broadly asserted that anything which tends to lessen the authority of the teacher, or to diminish the respect in which, by virtue of his office, he should be held, not only by the children under his care, but by all the neighbourhood, must at the same time and in the same ratio diminish his powers of usefulness. Next to any gross misconduct or incompetence on the part of a teacher nothing is more productive of mischief in our schools than the existence of an unfriendly feeling between teachers and Committees, and the absence of that constant and cordial support and co-operation which every teacher has a right to expect, and should receive, from those appointed to watch over and promote the cause of education. Local Committees are sometimes too ready to listen to trivial complaints, and to attach undue importance to the *ex parte* statements of children (through their parents), thus inflicting a fatal blow upon the teacher's authority, and injuring more than can be readily imagined the discipline, tone, and, as a consequence, the results of the school. On the other hand (and this has occurred in several cases), local Committees sometimes pursue an exactly opposite course, and do their utmost to screen from detection, and prevent the dismissal of, teachers long after their ill-conduct has become a matter of

public notoriety and scandal, and when their influence upon the young people under their charge has become positively mischievous. Nor can this course of action be defended on the ground that the person so protected has proved himself to be in all other respects well qualified for the teacher's office. The vice to which I am more particularly alluding is one that in districts like this is too often regarded as a very venial offence, but when it makes its way into the school surely the most indulgent Committee should recognize the imperative necessity of at once interfering to protect the young from the influence of so pernicious an example. Two schools in this district have suffered from the cause hinted at above, and in neither case did the Committee take action as promptly or in such a manner as the circumstances demanded; and to this may be fairly attributed the falling-off in the results in one case, and the absence of much-needed improvement in the other.

The table below shows the number of children presented and passed in the several standards; and, in order to show the full extent of the falling-off in the results of the year's work, the percentages of passes for last year are also shown.

Standards.	Average Age.		Presented.	Passed.	Percentage.	
	Yrs.	mos.			1881.	1880.
Standard I. ...	8	0	333	314	94	99
" II. ...	9	5	388	365	94	97
" III. ...	10	7	353	261	74	88
" IV. ...	11	9	196	130	66	87
" V. ...	13	1	91	49	54	95
" VI. ...	14	0	47	43	91	98
Totals ...	...	...	1,408	1,162	83	94

The four upper standards at the eleven schools placed first on the Table of Results* were examined from the set of papers made, for reasons already stated, somewhat more difficult in two subjects than those hitherto given. The questions put to the two lower standards at all schools, and the papers set for the four higher standards at the schools numbered 12 to 35, were of no more than ordinary difficulty. Woodstock was included in the first group because, being a side-school to Kanieri, it had the advantage of the assistance of teachers from that school at stated times every week.

ELEMENTARY SCIENCE.—Several schools took up this subject, and the average percentage of marks obtained in each standard is given in the table below. This year's experience has only confirmed the opinion I expressed last year with regard to the introduction of this subject into Standard IV. The science papers of this class are replete with grammatical errors of the grossest kind, and with mistakes in the spelling of the commonest words, while the amount of scientific knowledge displayed is, generally speaking, of the most meagre description, and quite insufficient (if any amount could be sufficient) to compensate for the defects referred to. The best work in this class was done at the Greymouth school, where, however, strange to say, the Fifth Standard work was far below the average.

Schools.	Standard IV.	Standard V.	Standard VI.	Text-book.
Greymouth ...	37	17	56	Balfour Stewart's Physics.
Hokitika ...	Not presented	52	72	" "
Kumara ...	19	56	78	" "
Ross ...	22	30	38	" "
Stafford ...	Not presented	38	46	" "
Goldsborough ...	30	35	45	{ 4. Buckton's Health in the House. 5 and 6. Lockyer's Astronomy.
Kanieri ...	14	24	68	Forster's Physiology.
Brunnerton ...	16	No. V. Standard	80	" "
Cobden ...	Not presented	53	42	Balfour Stewart's Physics.
Arahura Road ...	23	...	...	" "

Drawing is taught at Ross, Woodstock, Kanieri, and Kumara, although not strictly according to the programme, model drawing and perspective not having yet been attempted. The three lower standards draw on slates, and the three upper ones on paper, from copies enlarged from Hutton's drawing-books. At Donoghue's, Standards III., IV., and V. were presented in drawing, but only worked upon slates. I have to acknowledge the services of Mr. Rae, of the Greymouth School of Art, in preparing the copies and valuing the drawings of the three upper standards. Teachers complain, with justice, of the want of copies, which compels them to devote much time, that could be more profitably employed in teaching, to the setting of copies on the blackboard. I subjoin a table showing the average percentage of marks gained in each class at the several schools.

* Not reprinted.

Schools.	Standard I.		Standard II.		Standard III.		Standard IV.		Standard V.		Standard VI.	
	No. Presented.	Average Percentage of Marks.	No. Presented.	Average Percentage of Marks.	No. Presented.	Average Percentage of Marks.	No. Presented.	Average Percentage of Marks.	No. Presented.	Average Percentage of Marks.	No. Presented.	Average Percentage of Marks.
Kanieri	16	53	8	60	14	40	8	20	4	43	3	85
Kumara	29	53	43	73	32	40	29	56	18	52	7	70
Ross	32	30	31	29	37	33	31	13	18	14	9	32
Woodstock	3	33	10	54	8	37	...	...	...	...	...	...
Donoghue's	On	slates	only	...	10	35	5	54	1	50	...	...

Singing is as usual practised in the infant classes of the principal schools; and vocal music is carefully taught to all classes at Hokitika, Ross, Kumara, Stafford, and Cobden, but necessarily shared in the general depression, and was, in my opinion, less satisfactory throughout than in former years.

SCHOOLS UNDER THE 88TH CLAUSE.—The large proportion of very small schools in this district has long been a cause of financial embarrassment to the Board, but I fear that this is only a minor evil connected with their existence. In some cases at least it may be doubted whether, as at present conducted, they are not worse than useless, since the fact of their children "going to school" more or less regularly beguiles parents into the belief that they are participating in the full advantages of the Government system of education, whereas the education (?) they are actually receiving is of the most meagre kind, and in not a few instances will leave them with much to unlearn, and with very little that will be permanently beneficial to them.

It was presumed, when the provisions of the 88th clause were made to apply to the schools referred to, that they would be, as the Act contemplates, really "aided" schools, and that the inhabitants, for whose benefit they were established, would supplement the amount granted by the Board by local contributions towards the teachers' salaries; but with hardly a single exception they have not only failed to do so for any length of time, but have required and received grants for the purposes of cleaning and warming the school-buildings, and in some cases have even failed to give that amount of support and encouragement which is in their power by causing their children to attend school with regularity and punctuality. It must not, however, be supposed that I attribute the failure of some of these schools solely to the apathy of the inhabitants of the districts concerned. In too many cases I fear there has been want of the power and not of the will to contribute to the maintenance of the school, and that the absence of the indirect support is to be set down, in some cases, to the appointment of persons as teachers entirely unfitted for the position, and perhaps in other respects unable to secure the confidence of the parents. But persons who are moved by such considerations to withhold their children from the school should reflect that by so doing they are adopting the surest way of perpetuating the evils they perhaps justly deplore, as they diminish the resources of the Board, and thus deprive it of the power of making more satisfactory arrangements for their requirements.

It is a question well worthy of the attention of the Legislature whether small schools in isolated situations are not deserving of some special consideration, in view of the by no means trifling service they render towards the settlement of the waste places of the colony. There is no doubt that the establishment of these little schools (when fairly well conducted) does much to reconcile intelligent parents to the undertaking of settlement in places far removed from all the other advantages of civilization. In this district I know of families who are induced to continue their struggle to make for themselves homes in the wilderness partly by the fact of their not being entirely out of the reach of the means of at any rate laying the foundation of their children's education. Indeed, I know of one man who removed with his family to the other side of the Island chiefly because there was no school near enough for his children to attend, but who has since returned in consequence of the establishment of one of these schools in the neighbourhood. If, therefore, the settlement of the remote districts of the colony is considered worthy of encouragement, anything which tends to promote the object is surely entitled to some special recognition from the powers that be. But while the grass is growing the steed is starving, and it therefore behoves us to try what we can do to help ourselves in the meantime.

The one great obstacle to the usefulness of these schools is the utter impossibility of obtaining the services of properly-qualified persons to take charge of them for the miserable pittance which the circumstances of the district compel the Board to dole out to the teachers. The consequence is that in too many cases the services of persons, in other respects very worthy, but quite unfit for the work, are, of necessity, accepted if the schools are to be kept open at all. A partial remedy for this evil might be found in the plan I am now about to propose for your consideration. The Board, having decided to dispense with the services of all the pupil-teachers who have completed their terms of service at the larger schools, can at once provide some of them with situations which, though imposing greater responsibilities upon them, will at all events furnish them with employment at the rate of payment which they would have received if retained as junior assistants in their own schools, and I am confident that, notwithstanding their youth and comparative inexperience, they are, in the majority of cases, capable of far more satisfactory work than are many of the present holders of the positions alluded to.

I am fully alive to the obstacles which stand in the way of the adoption of this plan, the greatest of which, perhaps, is the natural objection with which the friends of these young persons will view their removal from their homes to distant and unknown localities, an objection which may possibly be complicated with pecuniary considerations. Another obstacle to the proposed plan is the want, in most cases, of a suitable dwelling for the teacher; and a third may be found in the prejudice which will

perhaps exist at first in the minds of some of the parents of children attending the schools against the youth of the teachers to whom it is proposed to intrust their education; but, not being able to do what we would, we must do what we can, and I am sure that some, and I believe that most, of these junior assistants will speedily remove such prejudice if they are allowed a fair trial. A glance at the results obtained at some of these schools at the late examination will show that any change in this direction would probably be to the advantage of the children concerned, and I believe that, if it were understood that these positions would be stepping-stones to better situations as soon as the holders of them had proved their fitness for the work and as opportunities should arise, the first obstacle pointed out would probably be removed.

Of course it is essential to the success of this scheme that there should be a cordial understanding between the Board and the local Committees, and in consideration of the difficulties to be surmounted and the advantages to be gained the latter should be prepared to waive to some extent their right to recommend teachers for appointment in such cases. There are now eleven pupil-teachers whose term of service has expired, or is about to do so, and there are as many schools where their services might be made available. The salaries of these young persons at the rates fixed by the Board for junior assistants, would, for the first year, amount to £700; and, taking the December returns for my guide, I find that the amount earned in capitation by these schools is £716 5s. In the second year the Board's regulations provide for an increase of £20 per annum to the salaries of junior assistants. This would increase the expense by £220, but there is reason to hope that by that time the confidence of the parents will have been gained, and the attendance will become more regular, and that some increase of revenue will consequently follow. I also consider that the very least the inhabitants of such districts should be called upon to do towards the maintenance of their schools is to provide for the cleaning and warming of the buildings by local effort, thus relieving the Board of the annual charge for those purposes, which at the lowest estimate amounts to £110 per annum.

Although it will no doubt be found impossible to adopt the foregoing suggestion in its entirety, I think it may be accepted as being the only practicable method of improving the condition of these schools; and so convinced am I of the uselessness of some of them as at present managed that I should almost prefer seeing them closed altogether until junior assistants can be found willing to take charge of them, or until the Board's funds will permit of more liberal provision for their support.

I do not think it necessary to give this year a detailed report upon the manner in which each branch of instruction is imparted at the various schools, but I must remark that in arithmetic there seems to be a want of the practical element. Too much reliance appears to be placed upon the mechanical application of "rules" only, to the neglect of intelligent and independent reasoning. This is especially noticeable in questions usually worked by what Hamblin Smith calls "the unsatisfactory and misleading process called The Rule of Three." For instance, a question beginning "In what time, &c.," was correctly stated, but the answer appeared as a number of pounds sterling; and in another case the height of an ordinary room was found by a similar method to be upwards of 1,000 feet. Again, in Standard IV., the number of scholars who obtained full marks for the "bill" which was required to be made out was very small, and not one scholar in the first ten schools made out the "receipt" correctly. Many omitted the date, others signed their own names (not for, but) instead of the name of the supposed receiver, and others made the buyers of the goods sign the receipt for payment. In fact, I could not find a single receipt that would have been accepted at an ordinary store or office. The number of scholars at each of the above schools who made out the bill correctly is as follows: Greymouth, 3; Hokitika, 4; Ross, 5; Kumara, 0; Brunnerton, 1; Cobden, 0; Stafford, 1; Goldsborough, 10; Kanieri, 0; Paroa, 0. At the smaller schools, where the corresponding question was much easier, the number of scholars who made out the bill correctly was: Greenstone, 2; Maori Gully, 1; Bluespur, 2; Hatter's Terrace, 3; No Town, 1; Arahura Road, 2; all the remaining schools north of the Waitaha, none. Now, considering that Standard IV. is the "standard of education," and that this particular branch of arithmetic is, in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, the one likely to be of most practical benefit to the scholars in after-life, it does seem a pity that greater care is not taken to insure proficiency in this simple but most important part of their school-work.

I wish to recommend the more general use of the sequels to the several reading-books. In the two lower standards the children, by frequent repetition, soon come to know the lessons "by heart," when of course they cease to be exercises in reading. I propose, therefore, to signify to the teachers that at the next examination the reading of the four lower standards *may* be taken from the sequels to their respective reading-books, and the dictation and spelling of the third from the sequel to the second. These books are in stock at the Board's dépôt, and, I believe, in sufficient quantities to supply each school with one set of books for every class.

It is to be hoped that the Board will keep up the stock of Vere Foster's copy-books, which are steadily working their way into favour, with the most satisfactory results. Many teachers who formerly entertained strong prejudices against this system have completely changed their opinions after giving these books a fair trial. Several teachers complained that during the past year they could not obtain certain numbers of these books (generally the low numbers), and were therefore compelled to return to those of Darnell.

I have much pleasure in reporting the first attempt (so far as I know), in the district, to extend the influence of education beyond the walls of the school and the limits of the programme, and to bring it to bear upon the ordinary avocations of daily life. The teachers of the Kanieri School have succeeded in developing a taste for gardening amongst the scholars. At the cost of considerable labour, the children have transported the necessary soil to the school-ground, which is situated on a deposit of "tailings" from former diggings, and have marked out all round the reserve small allotments which are cultivated by them, singly or in partnership. Although the experiment was yet in its infancy, the display of flowers, vegetables, and even fruit trees, was very creditable. This is an example which I think worthy of special mention and of imitation, as, while it does not encroach in the slightest degree upon the ordinary school-work, it affords a rational and healthy occupation for the scholars, especially the girls, during play-hours; and in creating a taste for innocent as well as useful amusements, and

fostering habits of industry, order, and neatness, and respect for the rights and property of others, it possesses an educational value of no mean order. To mark my appreciation of the effort, and to give additional impetus to the movement, I have promised a prize to the owners of the neatest and best-cultivated plot at this school, at the next examination.

PUPIL-TEACHERS.—The pupil-teachers were examined this year, as on previous years, at the schools wherein they are employed, the state of the Board's finances forbidding the adoption of the recommendation made in my last report on this subject. Table E* shows the marks gained by each candidate in the several classes. The pupil-teachers from Hokitika took up Latin as an optional subject, in which they acquitted themselves very creditably; and the fact that they occupy so good a position on the list, without taking into account the marks gained in this subject, speaks highly for the excellence of their instruction, as well as for their own ability and diligence. The needlework this year was executed in the presence of the examiner and according to the regulations laid down by the Board, and was submitted to the judgment of a lady of experience, who awarded marks for the same. The Greymouth candidates were, as they always have been, most proficient in the subject, the work of Frances Kemple being specially commended. Three pupil-teachers signified to the Inspector-General their intention of taking up drawing at the annual examination of teachers, under the regulations made by the Government, but only one of these attended. The absence of the others has not yet been explained.

The undue proportion of female pupil-teachers in this district, which has often been referred to, seems likely to be rectified, for it will be seen that of the twenty-one examined this year eleven are males. It is unfortunate that in the past the appointment of female pupil-teachers should have been so general, as at the present time, when openings more suitable for males than females are occurring, there are only two of the former out of eleven who have, or will shortly have, completed their terms of service. Now that the balance is in a fair way to be restored, I hope the Board will urge upon Committees the necessity of preserving it in future, and, if necessary, insist upon the vacancies occurring being filled by males and females alternately. It is, I think, open to question whether local Committees have anything at all to do with the appointment of pupil-teachers under clause 50 of the Act, where alone any reference is made to them.

Before quitting this part of the subject I may repeat the hope that, whenever the time arrives for the consideration of the much-needed amendments in the Act, this Board will use all its influence in support of any that shall provide for the examination and classification of pupil-teachers by the department. The scale of payments might perhaps with advantage be left to the Boards employing them; but there can be no doubt that pupil-teachers, of a given class, should have as well-recognized a status throughout the colony as holders of certificates in E or in any other letter or grade, and this can never be the case while each Board has its own programme of instruction and system of examination.

Copies of the papers set at the eleven schools standing first on the list are given below.*

JOHN SMITH,
Inspector.

The Chairman of the Education Board.

OTAGO.

I.—MR. PETRIE'S REPORT.

SIR,—

Dunedin, 31st March. 1882.

I have the honor to submit the following report for the year 1881.

During the year I paid visits of inspection to 68 schools, and examined, according to the regulations of the Education Department, 68, in addition to the extra branches at two of the District High Schools. Mr. Taylor accompanied me at 20 of the largest schools, and undertook nearly the whole of the oral examination thereat.

It was only during the months of April, May, and June that I was able to devote most of my time to surprise visits or visits of inspection. The rest of the year was occupied by the examination of the schools in the standards, the preparation of questions for the various public examinations, and the perusal and valuing of the answers thereto. The amount of time devoted to visits of inspection has thus been shorter than in any previous year. I have repeatedly expressed the opinion that half an Inspector's time should be devoted to visits of inspection made without notice, and I cannot but deplore the fact that every year sees the amount of time available for this object more and more curtailed. I am convinced that a great improvement in the efficiency of many of the schools would follow upon more frequent and systematic visits of inspection without notice. The cost of the requisite assistance would be as nothing to the gain to education from sufficient and skilful superintendence. As it is, a considerable number of schools have not been visited except for examination in the standards. In the case of the teachers of these schools, and of a number of assistants in the larger schools, I have experienced no small difficulty in assigning marks for the purposes of classification, for I have not had sufficient opportunity of observing whether they have lately improved in their management and methods of teaching. It is not improbable that some have suffered considerable hardship through this circumstance.

Results for the Year.—In the 68 schools examined by me (with Mr. Taylor's assistance at 20 of them), 6,935 pupils were examined in the standards. Of this number, 5,417 passed in the standard for which they were presented. The following table shows (1) the number of pupils examined in each standard, (2) the number of pupils who passed in each standard, (3) the number of pupils who failed in each standard, (4) the percentage of passes in each standard, (5) the average age of the pupils examined in each standard, and (6) the number of schools at which the different standards were represented:—

* Not reprinted.

Standard.	Presented.	Passed.	Failed.	Percentage.	Average Age.		No. of Schools at which Standards were represented.
					Yrs.	mos.	
Standard I.	741	1,436	305	82	9	1	68
" II.	692	1,455	237	86	10	6	68
" III.	1,628	1,211	417	74	11	9	67
" IV.	1,046	739	307	71	12	7	63
" V.	569	389	180	68	13	6	49
" VI.	259	187	72	72	14	3	30

The figures in the above table compare favourably with those of last year. In Standards I., II., III., and IV. the percentage of passes is sensibly higher. In Standards V. and VI., on the other hand, it has fallen off somewhat. In the lower standards the average age is still far higher than might reasonably be expected. Naturally enough, care is taken to present no one for the First Standard who is not considered well abreast of the work. After allowing for some caution on this account, it is quite evident that the age at which children are presented on the average for Standard I. is much higher than it need be. Plainly, school children make far less progress between the ages of six and nine than they do between nine and fourteen. It seems fair to assume that on the average they enter school at the age of six years. This will allow them three years to work up to the First Standard—a period wholly out of proportion to the amount of work to be done. With fairly skilful teaching, the ground to be covered should be got over in half that time. In the larger schools there are difficulties which tend to retard progress, such as the largeness of the classes, and the too general employment of untrained pupil-teachers. But, with good and vigorous management, these could be largely, if not wholly, overcome. I can see no reason why, in large schools such as those in and around Dunedin, in Oamaru, Milton, Port Chalmers, &c., pupils should not pass Standard I. at the average age of eight years, or even less. In the smaller rural schools much more serious obstacles stand in the way of rapid progress at this early stage. The teacher's time is so cut up by the bewildering number of lessons that must be taught separately, that he cannot give to the classes below Standard I. the attention that is necessary for good progress.

If the system of examination prescribed by the regulations of the department were less elaborate, and allowed Inspectors time to conduct a brief examination of the classes below Standard I., some improvement on the present state of things might be looked for with confidence. With the present staff of Inspectors such a brief examination can seldom be undertaken in this district, and without it there will be great difficulty in stirring up infant-room teachers and their assistants from the apathy into which they have been sinking. Under such a stimulus as even partial payment by results, I am confident that the ages at which children are presented for Standards I., II., and III. could be greatly and speedily reduced.

It is gratifying to find that the number of pupils presented in Standard VI. is much greater than it was last year, and that the number of schools in which a Sixth-Standard class has been taught is also somewhat greater than in former years.

It may not be unnecessary to explain that Mr Taylor and I have never allowed any pupil to be examined a second time in standards already passed. We have also required every pupil above Standard I. to be presented for a standard higher than that which he had last passed. Some teachers have wished to take advantage of the permission apparently given in an official note to section 2 of the "Standards of Education and Inspection of Schools," to present pupils a second time in a standard which they had already passed. That note, as I understand it, appears to annul that part of the Order in Council which says, "No scholar shall be examined in a standard which he has already passed." To this clause of the Order in Council we have strictly adhered, and the note we have felt constrained to ignore. I have thought it needful to point out clearly what our practice has been with regard to this matter, as I have reason to believe that in several parts of the colony a different course has been followed; in which case it will be most unfair to institute comparisons between the examination results of such parts of the colony and those of the Otago District. The statistics in the two cases mean very different things. I should be very sorry to see the teachers of New Zealand intrusted with a discretionary power to present pupils a second time for examination in a standard which they have already passed. It is a power that would almost inevitably lead to gross abuses, and could be used so as to give dishonest and lazy teachers an advantage over those who were more honest and diligent. It is impossible for any Inspector to tell whether the reasons adduced to justify such a step are valid. How can an Inspector tell whether the pupil's backward condition is due to his being "not so well grounded in the work of the standard last passed as he appeared to be," or to his mental power being below the average, rather than to bad teaching or neglect. There seems to be no particular hardship in requiring every child to come forward for a higher standard than that which he has last passed. If he has been ill, or badly grounded, or irregular in attendance, or is of inferior mental power, neither he, nor his teacher, nor his parents, need be disappointed if he fails to pass; it is only what might be expected. If the pupil is very likely to fail, the parent can withhold him from examination, and so solve the difficulty without further trouble. Good reasons could, I believe, be given for fixing a certain attendance limit, such that all who made the specified number of attendances should be required to come forward for examination in the next higher standard to that last passed, while teachers could exercise their own discretion in presenting for the same ordeal any who had not made the specified number of attendances. Such a plan would be definite, and would not allow the same scope for abuse and imposition.

In an appendix to this report will be found a statement* of the principal details of the standard examinations for all the schools in my district. Of these, 34 gained a gross percentage of passes of 75 or more; 17 gained a gross percentage of between 50 and 75. The following schools had a percentage below 50: Bannockburn, Black's, Blackstone Hill, Brighton, Drybread, Duntroon, Evansdale, Eweburn, Hyde, Ida Valley, Kawarau Gorge, Kyeburn, Maerewhenua, Merton, Naseby, Nevis, and St. Bathans. Last year nineteen schools in the same district had a percentage below 50.

INSTRUCTION.—The subjects generally taught with least skill and success are reading, writing, composition, geography, and history. On each of these it may be worth while to make a few remarks. Good reading is on the whole rarely met with, and the cause is, unquestionably, unskilful teaching, and inability on the part of teachers to set a good model. Many simply *hear* the reading lessons, and make no serious or earnest attempt to *teach* them at all. In such cases improvement is out of the question. There is not a work on school management but discusses this subject, and points out many methods and expedients for teaching reading, so that those who merely listen during reading lessons can hardly plead ignorance in extenuation of their bad methods. In a large number of schools I have been struck by the neglect of preparatory examination and explanation of the principal difficulties. This is surely an essential preliminary to every skilfully conducted reading lesson. For how can the reading be fluent if the new and difficult words are met with for the first time while the paragraph is being read; and how can it be intelligent and expressive if the meaning of the sentence or paragraph is imperfectly understood? It is too frequently assumed that children can prepare their reading lessons without the assistance or guidance of the teacher. No doubt they can and should do something in this direction, but their self-help should not be trusted too far, and, above all, home preparation should never be allowed to supersede the preliminary examination and explanation of difficulties, whether in the matter or in the words of the lesson. To give this, the teacher must have gone over the lesson carefully before. So far as I can judge from lessons given in my presence, it is rather unusual for teachers in Otago to make themselves acquainted with the lesson before it comes on for hearing. Such previous preparation by the teacher is admitted on every hand to be essential to intelligent and successful teaching, and neglect of it is, I believe, the principal cause of the insufficient comprehension of lessons that an Inspector encounters with such unwelcome frequency. I know of no reason why reading should not be much better taught on the average than it is at present. Improvement is certain if teachers would only take the matter earnestly in hand. So long as they do not take the trouble to put in practice the most approved methods of teaching it, and to make themselves familiar with the lessons before they come on for hearing, little can be done to mend matters. What is wanted is to develop a higher conception of what good reading is, but this is by no means easy of accomplishment. A well-conducted and efficient model school in connection with the Training College could do a great deal to form opinion on this and kindred subjects; but, so far as I can judge, that institution has not exercised any notable influence in this direction. There are certain faults so prevalent in some parts of the district that I may be excused for pointing them out in this report. One is the practice of hearing large classes read in turn as they stand or sit. I never lose an opportunity of pointing out how faulty this method is; but many teachers, and especially pupil-teachers, persist in adhering to it. I find this practice very frequently accompanied by inattention and a want of interest in the lesson, and these characteristics it tends directly to encourage. Another is the injudicious employment of simultaneous reading in the lower classes. This is a most valuable method in the hands of a skilful and attentive teacher; but where no care is taken to see that every pupil follows the place with the finger or a slate pencil, where the model is badly given, or badly reproduced by the children, and where the children are allowed to learn the lessons by rote without knowing the words, it may do, and often does, a vast amount of harm. For efficient simultaneous reading, excellent order and attention are indispensable. When these are lax it would be better to hear the class read in small groups of half a dozen pupils or so, whose efforts could be more easily and carefully watched by the teacher. A third fault consists in frequent, and often unnecessary, interruptions during the reading of a sentence or paragraph. It seems much better to have the sentence read through first, and to make the needful corrections in a thorough and impressive way afterwards. Only one other point calls for notice, and that is the neglect to use the black-board sufficiently in the correction of mistakes. I am very often told that mistakes made by pupils in the pronunciation or explanation of words have been pointed out and corrected in the course of teaching. In such a case the correction has manifestly been ineffectual, and might almost as well have been neglected. I am satisfied that most of this ineffectual correction and teaching is due to want of clearness and emphasis in the explanations. Were they written down in a clear and simple way on the black-board the explanations or corrections would be far more impressive and emphatic, and would appeal much more forcibly to the understanding of the children. A rapid revision of the difficulties so dealt with would form a suitable close to the lesson, and tend to make the teaching effectual and educative; for the value of a lesson as a mental discipline is to be measured, not by the amount of explanation and comment given by the teacher, but by what the pupils have assimilated, do understand, and will remember. A teacher who measures his success by the latter standard will hardly expect an Inspector to excuse ignorance and mistakes because he is assured that the pupils have been taught the things they show they do not know. Such teaching is not work to boast of, or to urge in palliation of shortcomings.

Writing is the next subject that is often taught with less skill and success than might fairly be looked for. I do not say that in a majority of the schools I have examined the copy-books were carelessly written; but I do say that in a majority of these schools the exercise-books, the written answers of the upper classes, and the slate-work in the lower, were written more or less carelessly. Even the copy-books in a good number of schools showed very poor work. Vere Foster's series is now in very general use. They work out a definite and easy style of writing, marked by certain peculiarities in the height, form, and linking of the letters and their component parts. With these characteristics a few teachers have not even taken the trouble to acquaint themselves, and they allow

* Not reprinted.

their pupils to deviate in many ways from the model. Most, however, superintend the writing lesson with satisfactory care, though many hurry their scholars through the series too quickly, and allow them to practise the small writing of the higher numbers long before they have learned to form the letters neatly and accurately. This is a mistake of which there is frequent reason to complain. Teachers lay the blame on the parents; but I believe that is a mere subterfuge, and that they could easily prevent the evil if they were anxious to do so. Nothing like the same care is taken with the writing in the exercise-books, which is rarely satisfactory, and is very often in a totally different style to that taught in the copy-books. It is quite common to find in them letters formed without loops which always have loops in the copy-books. To allow children who are learning to write such latitude as this cannot but greatly retard their progress. It is, I conceive, imperative for a teacher to see that the hand he uses as a model is imitated and followed in all the writing his pupils do; not in the copy-book only, but also in all exercise-books, and other exercises written on paper. This is surely a most important matter; yet it is by no means generally attended to in the public schools of Otago. In like manner a great deal of careless scribbling and figuring on slates is to be met with in almost every school; and at examination times it is not uncommon to hear the classes admonished to do their slate-work as neatly as they can, and not in the usual way. In uttering such an admonition a teacher condemns himself from his own lips. The indifference of many about the neatness and style of the every-day written work of the school is almost beyond belief. They forget that habits are the resultant of all our actions and doings in some particular direction, and that the habit of writing carefully, as scholars do for the most part at the formal writing lesson, is very apt to be counteracted by the habit of writing and figuring carelessly, day by day and hour by hour, on slates and in exercise-books. On the average the transcription in the Second Standard is far more carefully written than the dictation on slates of several of the higher ones. The best exercise-books are almost invariably those written in school. Those written at home are, as a rule, so inferior that I have often to recommend the total discontinuance of such exercises as part of the home work. There is no surer sign of good management and efficient work than the general character of the scholars' writing and cyphering, and I could almost reckon on my fingers the schools in my district in which they are thoroughly satisfactory.

Little improvement is to be observed in the teaching of composition. In not a few schools it is merely practised, and not taught at all. During the past year a short exercise in this subject was required of every child from Standard III. upwards. No extravagant expectations of excellent work were entertained, for the art of writing is not easily taught, and the correction of exercises in it takes up a great deal of time. The matter of the composition exercises was generally ample and suitable, but in Standards III. and IV. it was seldom properly divided into sentences. In Standard IV. a letter had to be written, but it was rarely that the children knew how to formally open and close it—a thing that could be very readily taught. In the two highest standards very fair exercises were received. In the lower standards skilful or even suitable systematic teaching should soon lead to higher proficiency in this subject. To those who desire assistance and advice as to the teaching of composition I would recommend the excellent and suggestive elementary book on the subject lately published by Mr. J. B. Park, of the William Street School, Dunedin, and Dr. Abbott's well-known little work entitled "How to Write Clearly."

The last two or three years have witnessed very considerable improvement in the teaching of geography, but there is still ample scope for further progress in the same direction. In many schools I have been greatly dissatisfied with the geography lessons in the Second Standard. The work, which is really easy and simple if intelligently taught, is too often done in a thoroughly mechanical way; and though the definitions can be repeated the children have no true comprehension of what they denote, and know little or nothing of what a map is. Some, I have found, could define an island, but could not tell whether it was land or water. Few knew whether and why the north end of New Zealand was warmer than the south, or whether and why the sun rose earlier in New Zealand than in Australia. Hardly any were able to point out a place at the equator directly south of the point where the first meridian cuts the Arctic Circle. In one school some twenty children could not point out a single island on the map of the world. Teaching that leaves such results as the above must be hopelessly devoid of intelligence, and cannot possibly contribute to that training and discipline of the powers of the mind which is the sole aim of the vast educational machinery of the colony. As in former years, a very great proportion of the pupils examined for Standard IV. failed in this subject, a circumstance that says little for the skill and thoroughness of the teaching. From what I have seen of the lessons in geography, I believe that in most schools there is too little actual teaching of it, and far too much hearing of book-work committed to memory, or supposed to be so, by the pupils. Were the time evenly divided between actual teaching of the subject, and examining on and recapitulating past work, much greater proficiency might readily be attained. Nowhere else are teachers more prone to confound teaching and examining, and to substitute the one for the other, with results that may be disagreeable to them, but should certainly not be surprising. In the two highest standards too much time is devoted to the barren drawing of outline maps. The teaching is also narrow in its scope, giving insufficient prominence to the resources of the various countries, their great physical features, and other kindred matters. A wider and more comprehensive treatment at this stage would greatly increase both its interest and value as information.

History continues to be the worst-taught subject in the whole course of instruction. Some teachers have an indifferent acquaintance with the subject themselves, and cannot for that reason teach it successfully. A great many seem to aim at getting the scholars to commit to memory the *ipsissima verba* of the text-book, and their success in accomplishing this feat is often astonishing. But no one can call such work teaching, and no pupil can derive much benefit from going through this worthless process of cram—for such in most cases it is, and nothing else. The failures in history in Standard III. have been very numerous; but this is not to be wondered at, for the lessons are vaguely defined, extend over the whole range of English history, and are often beyond the grasp of the majority of the children. In Standard IV., also, the failures were very abundant, and the answers, when correct, were generally couched in the words of the text-book. At this stage somewhat more intelligent work

might be forthcoming. It is when we find the same want of intelligence in the history of Standards V. and VI. that there is substantial reason to complain of the character of the instruction. Unfortunately such occasions are too common—not only in small schools, where there is little time for teaching this and several others of the subjects, but also in the large schools, where no such obstacle to efficient teaching exists. The text-books in the hands of the pupils are, however, largely to blame for the indifferent character of the work; for they are either too meagre or too full of facts, while in both cases the connection of causes and effects is not traced with sufficient clearness and emphasis. The chief requisites for better instruction in history in the schools are: a better and fuller knowledge of the subject on the part of the teachers, and more careful and diligent preparation of the lessons to be taught. In no subject is it more necessary for the teacher to prepare the lesson thoroughly beforehand, and settle its scope and how he is to handle it. For intelligent instruction such preparatory study is indispensable, and to the general neglect of it the shortcomings in the teaching must be mainly attributed.

Frequent complaints are made to me by parents about the lessons required to be prepared at home. In several cases inquiry has shown that an altogether unreasonable amount of home work was prescribed. If the teaching in the schools is such as it ought to be, there should be no occasion for burdening children with work of this kind. At the outside, home lessons should not take up more than an hour for their thorough preparation. Anything in excess of that is unnecessary, and may be hurtful. I would advise that few or even no written exercises should be set for this purpose. In the great majority of cases they are so badly done that it would be a gain to omit them altogether. Where the lessons are *taught*, and not merely *heard*, home preparation is a matter of secondary importance. In the larger schools the school-hours are sufficient, if turned to proper account, for teaching all the scholars have to learn; and all that is required to get rid of the bugbear of home lessons is to make a practice of teaching a lesson first, and examining on it afterwards. It should never be forgotten that unnecessary hours of home study injure health, and mar happiness and comfort, at an age when these interests should be guarded with sacred care. Loss of health and sourness of temper are far too great a sacrifice to make for the doubtful advantages to be secured. A wise teacher will prefer to err on the safe side; and if he incur the censure of some parents, he will gain the approval of the more thoughtful, and deserve the blessing of the young, who are spared an unnecessary infliction.

Object-lessons, for the most part of a suitable character, are regularly given in nearly every school. I have asked that full notes of these be kept for examination, but a good many have failed to comply with this very reasonable request. I have not had many opportunities of ascertaining the results of the science lessons, but what I have seen has not impressed me highly with the value of this part of the school-work. In a few schools, however, the children have gained a good deal of useful and accurate knowledge of the elements of the subject. Not a few teachers in the smaller schools have given no instruction in this subject, the other claims on their time and attention not allowing of it.

Another year's experience of the present system confirms the opinion I have ere now expressed, that it cannot be successfully carried out in the smaller schools, in which a single unassisted teacher has to do everything. Such a teacher finds his time so cut up by the great number of lessons that must be taught separately that he can produce little impression. Many complain that, no matter how faithfully they work, they feel they are beating the air. They cannot, they say, dwell long enough on any lesson to teach it effectually, but have to hurry after the time-table. In a school with five standards and a single teacher, I have computed that at the very least 85 separate lessons must be taught every week. In most schools of this kind the number is 90, or over, but with proper care it may be reduced to 85. Now there are five hours a day available for school work. Roll-calling, class-movements, and other unavoidable interruptions, will occupy half an hour of this time. There will thus be left twenty-two and a half hours in the week for 85 lessons that must be taught separately, or an average time per lesson of somewhat less than sixteen minutes. Some will no doubt occupy less than the average time, and others may be correspondingly lengthened, but the gain of time for the longer lessons cannot in any circumstances be considerable. In the above computation two lessons a week are allowed for teaching each of the following subjects, to each of the two highest Standards (IV. and V.): Arithmetic, grammar, geography, history. Now the teachers assert that the time thus allowed for these lessons is insufficient for teaching them intelligently and efficiently. Were the attendance perfectly regular the difficulty complained of would be great, but it is always much aggravated by frequent absences for one or more days, and often for long periods. I must frankly admit that I consider the difficulty here insisted on a very serious one, sufficient to encourage teachers to attribute the ill-success of their labours to the unworkable and rigid character of the system they have to carry out, rather than to any deficiency in skill and fidelity on their own part. I do not say that this is always the cause of their ill success, but they often feel that it is a sufficient and unavoidable cause of failure. In the Otago District there are forty schools in the position just discussed. Their teachers possess, I believe, quite as much professional skill and ardour as their more successful brethren, but their percentage of passes was only 64, or 13 per cent. below that for the whole of the district. In the same district there were 28 schools with four standards taught by a single teacher. Here the number of lessons need not exceed 75, which will allow for each an average time of eighteen minutes. In these 28 schools the percentage of passes was 61, or 16 per cent. below that for the whole of the district. For the sake of comparison I have computed the percentage of passes in the thirteen schools in the North District having a staff of two teachers (aided by a pupil-teacher in two cases). In these the percentage of passes is 75, or 2 per cent. below the average for the whole of the district. The higher results in the thirteen schools just referred to I attribute mainly, if not wholly, to the circumstance that a considerably longer time can be given to each lesson, rather than to any superior skill on the part of their teachers. The above considerations go far to justify the opinion that the existing system of elementary education cannot, on the average, be carried on with success in the smaller schools. For intelligent and effective teaching a certain time is required, but the number of separate lessons is such as to leave this all-important condition unsatisfied. This being so, the teacher loses heart, the scholars are discouraged, and learning from text-books more or less takes the place of that quickening contact of mind with mind

which is indispensable to true mental training. In the smaller schools the prevailing mechanical character of the work is mainly due to the hurry and pressure under which the teaching is done, and to the apparently unavoidable necessity for substituting learning from text-books—in other words, cram—for skilful teaching in classes.

There can, I think, be no doubt that some modification in the regulations of the Education Department, calculated to lessen the evils I have tried to point out, is urgently needed. What is wanted is a reduction in the number of lessons that must be taught separately. Such a reduction may be made by omitting some subjects and amalgamating others, so that two classes might be taken together in one subject. Geography, for example, might be omitted from Standard II., and history from Standard III., without any detriment to the education given in the public schools. If the pass in the standard were made to depend wholly upon reading, spelling, writing, arithmetic, and composition, then grammar, geography, and history might be examined as class subjects, and reported on specially; and there would be nothing to prevent the amalgamation of the classes preparing for two standards into one class in any of these subjects. Besides lessening materially the number of separate lessons, such an arrangement would greatly facilitate an Inspector's examination, for he could substitute a brief oral class examination for the individual written examination which the desire to deal fairly between scholars and schools compels him to resort to at present, and he would be better able to tell—what alone it is important to know—whether the teaching was intelligent, skilful, and thorough. Parents in all parts of this district complain that the children are burdened with an intolerable amount of work. Teachers protest that more is required of them than they can efficiently overtake. On every hand are complaints. No doubt these are partly, perhaps largely, due to unskilful instruction; but they are unquestionably in a great measure due to the elaborate and rigid character of the regulations that direct the curriculum of study. I am convinced that modification in the direction I have indicated would materially relieve the pressure of work now experienced in the smaller schools, and tend to make the teaching and examining of all grades of schools more easy and effective, while it would not to any appreciable extent detract from the breadth and comprehensive range of the education now attempted.

It is to be noted that no very revolutionary change would be required to effect the desired improvement. All the subjects now taught could continue to be taught, but they would not be taken in the same subdivisions as at present. Whoever went through the full course of the public schools would learn all that he learns now, but in a different order. The existing sequence of the parts of a subject is certainly the best and most natural, but the gain on that account is, as I believe, much more than counterbalanced by unavoidable disadvantages.

Of the discipline and tone of the schools I can still report favourably.

During the year a good deal has been done by School Committees, with or without assistance from the Board, to improve the school-buildings and their surroundings. In a few cases broken window-panes, bad door-locks, &c., have been left unrepaired for considerable periods; but such cases have been rare and exceptional. The new schools are substantially built and suitably arranged, and give every satisfaction in the districts where they have been erected.

I have, &c.,

DONALD PETRIE, M.A.,

Inspector of Schools.

The Secretary, Otago Board of Education.

2. MR. TAYLOR'S REPORT.

SIR,—

Dunedin, 31st March, 1882.

I have the honor to present my report for the year ended 31st December, 1881.

During the year I made visits of inspection to 40 schools, and examined, according to the regulations of the Education Department, 76 schools, situated principally in the Peninsula, Taieri, Bruce, Tuapeka, and Clutha Counties. I also assisted Mr. Petrie with the examination of 20 of the largest schools in the district, and with office duties.

The greater part of the year was occupied by standard examination work, a few months only being available for visits of inspection. The regulation relating to inspection states "That, as far as practicable, the work of the Public School Inspectors shall be so arranged as to provide for two visits to every public school in every year: one visit for purposes of general inspection, and the other visit for the purpose of examination according to the standards." In this district so much time is taken up with examinations and other duties that visits of inspection, except to a small number of schools, are impossible, and consequently a very important part of the work devolving upon us has to be left undone. In some instances, where the teachers are known to be efficient and faithful, an examination once a year may be considered sufficient; but there are other cases where more visits than one would be beneficial, by giving opportunity of making suggestions and recommendations, where necessary, respecting management and methods of teaching, and of checking the registers and reporting generally on the condition of the schools. Except in small schools, where the examination work is light, general inspection on the same day cannot, from want of time, receive adequate attention.

In the 76 schools examined by me, 3,037 pupils were presented for examination, of which number 2,295 passed the standard for which they were presented. The following table shows (1) the number of pupils who were presented in each standard, (2) the number who passed, (3) the number who failed, (4) the percentage of passes in each standard, (5) the average age of the pupils examined in each standard, and (6) the number of schools at which each standard was represented:—

Standard.	Presented.	Passed.	Failed.	Percentage.	Average Age.		No. of Schools at which Standards were represented.
					Yrs.	mos.	
Standard I.	735	620	115	84	9	1	74
" II.	776	630	146	81	10	5	74
" III.	722	507	215	70	11	7	75
" IV.	500	335	165	67	12	9	67
" V.	226	144	82	64	13	3	54
" VI.	78	59	19	76	14	5	24

A comparison of the above table with those for previous years, contained in the Secretary's report, shows but little alteration in the percentage of passes or the average age for the different standards and the likelihood that there will be but little advance in the former or decrease in the latter until compulsory attendance is made more general than it is at present. It deserves to be noticed, however, that, for the whole of the district, the number of pupils presented in the higher standards continues to increase from year to year, the number of pupils presented in each of the Standards III., IV., V., and VI. being this year more than 100 over that of last year. Standard IV. is the standard of education which, if a child has reached it, shall, according to the Education Act, exempt him from compulsory attendance, and, I presume, shall be deemed a fair educational foundation and a fair equipment for the business of life; but, as showing a great desire to reach the highest standards, and to avail themselves of the greatest amount of education the public schools can offer, 1,132 pupils presented themselves for examination in Standards V. and VI., being an increase of 260 over last year. That the total percentage of passes for this year—namely, 78—is somewhat higher than for the previous one—namely, 76—is good evidence of continued diligence and intelligent teaching, and a proof that the former efficiency of the schools is being more than maintained.

In the appendix to this report the usual detailed statement* is given for each of the 76 schools examined by me, from which it can be seen that 13 of them show a percentage of passes of 90 and over; 37, between 70 and 90; 20, between 50 and 70; and 6 below 50. These results are more satisfactory than the corresponding results of last year. When a school passes less than 50 per cent. of those presented for examination, it is certain proof that something is seriously at fault either in the general management or methods of teaching, or both. Of the six schools on my list showing less than 50 per cent. of passes, I am disposed to attribute failure in two of them to mismanagement and an ambition to present pupils in high standards; but in the other four I believe failure arose not so much from mismanagement as from the inefficient and unintelligent methods of teaching employed either by their present teachers, or by those immediately preceding them, and was altogether inexcusable.

In regard to reading, I cannot report so favourably of it as I did last year. Even in some of the largest and best schools, where one naturally expects to hear good reading, it is rather disappointing. Its unsatisfactory character is chiefly due, I believe, to the fact that in the large schools most of the junior classes, in which the foundation of a good style has to be laid, are in charge of young teachers who in many cases seem satisfied if the pupils acquire the power of naming the words in the order of the book with fluency, irrespective of the other qualities that characterize good reading. Little improvement is likely to be effected until headmasters direct particular attention to the subject and insist upon a better style being practised. The principal defects are—great haste, inattention to pauses, and indistinct enunciation. If teachers would insist upon their pupils reading in a slow deliberate manner, with attention to pauses, and with a firm and distinct utterance, a great advance would be made in the way of intelligent and intelligible reading, and a proper preparation for giving it taste and expression would be afforded.

I wish to advert here to the practice sometimes met with of keeping classes reading over and over again during a whole year the same little books until they can say them off by rote. The object of such a practice, of course, is to secure accurate reading at next examination; but I have observed that it utterly fails of its purpose, for the reason that the pupils, having become so familiar with the substance of the lessons that when once started they can go right on without requiring to consult the book except in the very smallest degree, keep substituting one word for another, and so produce inaccurate reading, and reveal the weakness of the expedient. I very much fear that if the pupils of such classes met with the words of their books in other connections they would fail to recognize them. It would be much more profitable for the pupils and satisfactory to others interested in their progress if at least two books suited to the same standard were gone over during the year, rather than that one book should be read over several times. These remarks apply chiefly to classes preparing for Standards I., II., and III.

The few remarks made in last year's report regarding the comprehension of the meaning of the subject-matter of the reading lessons and of the verses of poetry prepared are applicable to the present year, and need not to be repeated. I have, however, to express regret that greater use is not made of examination on the reading lesson, for when rightly and earnestly employed it becomes an educative instrument of great power—greater, perhaps, than any other that can be used in the school. It is the most serviceable in "forming and informing" the minds of children, and thus facilitates the study of all other branches of instruction. It is a melancholy spectacle to see a class that has just managed to read mechanically through a lesson stand absolutely mute when a simple question is asked about the meaning of what has been read. Young teachers especially should use every effort to acquire the art of examining skilfully and effectively, for it will add immensely to their power as educators, and prove most profitable to those they educate.

* Not reprinted.

Object-lessons are given in nearly every school, and with considerable effect in some; but in the majority of cases they do not receive that amount of attention they merit. Their purpose does not always seem to be understood. Their main object should be to train the pupils to think and reason, and not merely to cram them with a number of facts. A plan of every lesson to be given ought to be thought out by the teacher, and he should so introduce it to the notice of his pupils, by making calls on what knowledge they already possess, that they may be led to discover new facts for themselves. Books on object-lessons are numerous, and many of them give excellent hints and present good models; but the plan of a lesson must be arranged in, and take as it were the shape of, the teacher's own mind, before he is likely to present it to his pupils in a sufficiently interesting form to attract their attention. A lesson that fails to command attention and arouse the interest of a class ought to be reckoned more or less a failure.

Composition shows very fair progress indeed. In several schools good specimens are produced. Still, much requires to be done before this subject reaches the degree of excellence to be desired. But, as more attention is being directed to the subject, and greater facilities afforded for the acquirement of the art, higher results may reasonably be expected.

I have, &c.,

WILLIAM TAYLOR,
Inspector of Schools.

The Secretary, Otago Education Board.

3.—MR. PETRIE'S REPORT ON DISTRICT HIGH SCHOOLS.

SIR,—

Education Office, Dunedin, 31st March, 1882.

I have the honor to submit my report on the District High Schools for the year 1881.

Only two of the four District High Schools were examined, viz., those at Milton and Lawrence. The Oamaru District High School had closed for the annual holidays before I could overtake its examination. The rector has, however, supplied me with a statement of the extra branches, and of the work done in each, which I embody in this report. About the middle of the year the rector of the Port Chalmers District High School resigned, and temporary arrangements were made for carrying on the work to the end of the year. The extra branches were then allowed to fall into abeyance, and at the end of the year it was not thought necessary to hold any special examination.

Tokomairiro District High School.—Examined December, 1881.

Subject.	Class.	No. Taught.	No. Examined.	Work done.
Latin	I.	6	4	Virgil, Book I.; Sallust's Catiline; Easy Translation into Latin; Grammar.
	II.	2	2	Virgil, Book I.; Grammar.
	III.	4	4	Principia Latina, Part I., 75 pages.
French	IV.	9	9	" " Part I., 49 pages.
	I.	6	5	Ahn's First Reader, 79 pages; Grammaire des Grammaires, 136 pages.
English	II.	12	11	Ahn's First Course, 89 pages.
	I.	22	20	Richard II., in Nelson's Series; Dr. Smith's Grammar; History from 1714 to present time.
Geometry	I.	3	2	Euclid, Books I., II., III., IV., and VI.
	II.	11	10	" " I., II., and III.
	III.	8	8	" " I.
Algebra	I.	12	10	Todhunter's for Beginners, and Hamblin Smith's.
	II.	10	10	To end of Quadratics.
Trigonometry	III.	9	9	Simple Rules and Factoring.
	I.	12	10	Todhunter's for Beginners, and Hamblin Smith's.
	II.	10	10	Todhunter's for Beginners, first six chapters, and the Solution of Triangles.

Lawrence District High School.—Examined December, 1881.

Latin	I.	2	2	Cæsar, in S.S.B.A. Series; Grammar; and Principia Latina, Part IV., 47 pages.
	II.	6	6	Principia Latina, Part II., Fables and Anecdotes; and Part I., 97 pages.
French	III.	8	8	Principia Latina, Part I., 36 pages.
	I.	5	5	Ahn's Second Course, to Exercise 100; De Jardin's Reader, to page 198.
English	II.	1	1	Ahn's First Course.
	III.	9	8	Ahn's First Course, to Exercise 70.
	I.	10	9	Richard II., in Nelson's Series; and English Language, its History and Structure, in ditto.
Geometry	I.	3	3	Euclid, Books I., II., III., and IV., with Easy Exercises on Book I.
	II.	2	2	Euclid, Books I. and II.
Algebra	III.	10	9	Euclid, Book I.
	I.	2	2	Todhunter's for Beginners, 229 pages.
	II.	9	9	" " 120 pages.
	III.	24	24	" " 41 pages.

Oamaru District High School.

Subject.	Class.	No. Taught.	Work done.
Latin	I.	3	Grammar; Principia Latina, Part II.; Anecdotes, Mythology, and History, Books I. and II.
	II.	11	Principia Latina, Part I., to end of verbs.
French	I.	7	De Jardin's French Class Books; Charles XII.; Racine's Athalie (last Act); and Translation of English into French.
	II.	5	De Jardin's French Class Book, pp. 1-90, and 181-220.
English	I.	9	Richard II.
Geometry	I.	5	Euclid, Books I., II., and III.
	II.	7	Euclid, Book I.
Algebra	I.	3	To Quadratics.
	II.	6	Todhunter's for Beginners, 13 chapters.
	III.	19	Beginners.

At the Tokomairiro District High School a large amount of extra work has been done. The mathematical subjects have been taught with very great success, and the pupils have made rapid and sound progress in the different branches studied. In English and French very fair results have attended the teaching. The Latin classes were somewhat weaker than the others. The translations were for the most part feeble, and the accidence, though well known by some, was on the whole backward.

At the Lawrence District High School the Latin papers were very well answered. There has been a steady improvement in the teaching of this subject. Very satisfactory results were found both in French and in English. The algebra and geometry have been on the whole very successfully taught. Though the work was not so advanced as that at Tokomairiro, it will bear favourable comparison with the latter in accuracy and intelligence.

I have, &c.,

DONALD PETRIE, M.A.,

Inspector of Schools.

The Secretary, Otago Education Board.

SOUTHLAND.

SIR,—

Invercargill, 27th February, 1882.

I have the honor to forward my general report for the year 1881. At the end of the year 63 schools were in operation. Of these, 62 were inspected and examined; and one, owing to the fact that it was not open till after July, was only examined: a few of them were inspected more than once. The schools are generally well supplied with maps, black-boards, &c., but these articles are not, I regret to say, in all cases so well taken care of as they should be. Black-boards are not properly cleaned, and maps are allowed to get into bad condition for want of a tack or two or a little paste. Locks of doors, fences, &c., too, might often be kept in good order if teachers would not be above turning a screw or driving a nail occasionally. Except in a few places very little has been done in the way of beautifying the school-grounds, which are for the most part veritable wildernesses. Teachers are somewhat migratory in their habits, and few appear to care to sow what others may reap: the result is, of course, unfortunate for the school-grounds, the pupils, and, it may be added, the teachers themselves.

When my last report was written, of the 80 teachers employed by the Board 24 were unclassified. At the end of the year now under review 84 teachers were employed, and of these 26 were unclassified; there was, therefore, a small increase in the percentage of unclassified teachers. Several of these teachers presented themselves at the recent examination, and thus afforded evidence of their desire to escape from their present unsatisfactory relation to the Education Department. Many of our schools have suffered, and some are still suffering, from the scanty knowledge of their teachers; and children are losing time that can never be redeemed, and contracting mental habits that will follow them through life. They leave school at thirteen or fourteen years of age with but little power of concentration, of induction, and of observation, with only the slenderest knowledge of the language they are to speak and write through life, but with tolerably fixed habits of mental indolence and inattention. To an earnest man this is a very serious affair; but upon the minds of some that undertake the office of teacher the responsibility appears to sit very lightly.

During the year I paid a great deal of attention to the work of the pupil-teachers; and I am bound to say that in only a very few schools do these teachers get sufficient instruction in the art of teaching and class management. I know only one school in which model and criticism lessons are systematically given; and, as might be expected, each of the pupil-teachers in that school is as good as an average assistant. The work of pupil-teachers requires continuous watching; no errors in methods and management should long escape the head-teacher's vigilant eye; and, of course, none should go uncorrected. But it is not enough to say "That is wrong" and "That is wrong": the reason why it is wrong should be pointed out, and the head-teacher should take the junior's class for a few minutes to show how the correction is to be practically carried out. Nor should this be an occasional thing: it should be repeated as often as the errors are repeated. In the pupil-teacher system I have the fullest confidence, if head-teachers will but keep steadily in mind that not the least of their duties is to make teachers of those intrusted to their training.

The comparative tables I. and II. show that our schools are, on the whole, steadily improving.

TABLE I.—Showing the Percentage gained in the several Subjects of Examination for the Years 1879, 1880, and 1881.

Subjects.	1879.	1880.	1881.
Reading	87.2	92.6	84.5
Spelling	72.2	81.6	82.3
Writing	87.1	96.0	95.2
Arithmetic	46.4	53.5	54.0
Grammar	26.4	38.0	52.4
Geography	44.0	58.4	62.0
History	17.0	45.2	48.0

The result gained in reading, it will be seen, is lower than that gained in any previous year. I do not think, however, that the subject was worse presented than in former years, but more stress was laid upon the comprehension of the passage read. If a pupil read poorly, and gave satisfactory answers to the questions on the subject-matter and the language, he was invariably passed; but if, on the other hand, he read poorly, and could not answer the questions, he was invariably recorded as having failed.

TABLE II.—Showing the Percentage of Passes gained by each Standard in the several Subjects of Examination for the Years 1879, 1880, and 1881.

Standards.	Average Age.	Reading.	Spelling.	Writing.	Arithmetic.	Grammar.	Geography.	History.
	Yrs. mos.							
Standard I., 1879	9 6	89.6	86.0	91.4	56.7	...	...	...
" 1880	9 2	89.7	82.5	96.5	70.2	...	...	...
" 1881	9 2	78.6	86.2	93.0	58.4	...	...	...
Standard II., 1879	11 5	86.8	83.3	86.9	41.1	...	46.5	...
" 1880	10 11	92.9	88.7	95.6	51.9	...	55.9	...
" 1881	10 4	84.0	86.2	93.0	60.0	...	67.3	...
Standard III., 1879	12 5	81.6	55.4	83.3	49.5	29.2	45.3	14.5
" 1880	12 0	95.1	71.8	95.1	41.6	41.8	42.0	28.4
" 1881	10 10	86.2	77.8	94.0	48.8	56.4	56.1	40.1
Standard IV., 1879	13 5	90.5	48.0	80.2	31.0	26.6	34.5	20.6
" 1880	13 3	91.1	77.0	95.9	30.0	43.0	59.6	49.6
" 1881	12 10	92.9	75.4	98.0	36.2	46.8	58.2	56.7
Standard V., 1879	13 11	85.1	37.8	89.2	23.0	15.0	48.7	20.3
" 1880	13 11	96.1	77.9	85.5	32.7	30.3	34.6	37.5
" 1881	14 1	98.2	86.7	100.0	53.1	40.6	67.2	74.3
Standard VI.,* 1880	13 9	100.0	80.0	100.0	80.0	80.0	100.0	100.0
" 1881	14 7	100.0	92.9	100.0	78.6	50.0	78.6	64.3

* There were no pupils presented in this standard in 1878.

TABLE III,† showing the percentage gained by each school in the district, is, on account of its length, given at the end of the report; but the results of it are focussed in the following statement:—Average percentage gained of the passes attainable, 73.4.

The prevalence of measles during the greater part of the year no doubt very seriously affected the state of the schools. Of the 2,929 pupils due for examination in the standards, only 1,499 had attended three-fourths and upwards of the school meetings held during the interval between the examination for 1880 and that for 1881; and, of the remainder, 875 had attended more than one-half but less than three-fourths, and 555 less than one-half, of the meetings. The wretched quality of the attendance revealed here was probably largely due to the epidemic referred to; but the fact that the attendance was very inferior must, in justice to our teachers, be borne in mind in connection with the tables of this report.

TABLE IV.—Showing the Number of Pupils due for Examination, the Number Absent on the Day of Examination, the Number Examined, the Number that Passed the Standard for which they were presented, and the Percentage of Passes in Standards.

Standards.	Children Due for Examination.	Absent on Day of Examination.	Actually Examined.	Passed in accordance with Regulation 8.	Percentage of Passes in Standards.
Standard I. ...	841	69	772	601	77.9
" II. ...	931	100	831	584	70.3
" III. ...	749	55	694	268	38.6
" IV. ...	274	19	255	70	27.5
" V. ...	117	3	114	55	48.2
" VI. ...	17	3	14	10	71.4
Totals	2,929	249	2,680	1,588	59.3

† Not reprinted.

Besides the 2,929 children due for examination in the standards, 1,596, having an average age of seven years, were presented as infants not yet fit to be examined in Standard I. This seems a large proportion to be below the requirements of Standard I., but I find that it is no larger than the proportion of infants in most of the other education districts. Except in the larger schools and in a few of the smaller ones, this class is sadly neglected. To teach thirty or forty children divided into five or six classes is of course no easy matter, and few teachers succeed in doing it well; but the difficulty would be found much less formidable were about ten minutes out of every thirty of the school-day set aside for the supervision of classes doing silent work in desks, and about five of the ten minutes invariably given to the infant class. Where the lessons are of thirty minutes' duration the general rule should be: teach about twenty minutes and supervise about ten.

READING.—I cannot, I regret to say, report much improvement in the method of teaching this subject. It is still too commonly taught as if mere ability to utter the words of the book were the only thing to be aimed at. Measured by the standard of verbal fluency, the reading is tolerably satisfactory, though even here distinctness of utterance is the exception rather than the rule. Very little heed is paid to the stops given in the text, and still less to logical pauses. The pupils read right on as if only solicitous to finish as quickly as possible the sentence or two assigned to them. The same faults are common in the recitation of poetry.

SPELLING AND WRITING.—These are now the two strongest subjects of the whole school-course. In many schools the writing is excellent, and in very few is it really bad. The mistakes most frequently met with are errors in points of junction of the hook and the link, in the width and length of the loop, and in the relative heights and lengths of the t, h, d, &c. In my view, so long as children write in copy-books, we cannot be too particular in insisting upon their imitating every detail of the head-lines. In many schools the home-exercise books are models of neatness.

ARITHMETIC.—This is a very easy subject to teach so long as neither teacher nor examiner goes beyond mere rules; but difficult when general principles are dealt with by the teacher and examined in by the Inspector. Most of my questions were problems, and were not to be answered by mere rule. They required for their solution a knowledge of principles, and were therefore generally poorly answered. Instead of divide 53,228 by 7, the question ran: If 53,228 marbles be divided amongst 7 boys, how many marbles will each boy get? Instead of subtract the sum of £19 6s. 11d. and £8 3s. 10d. from £40, the question ran: If a man had £40 and spent £19 6s. 11d. in one shop and £8 3s. 10d. in another, how much would he have left? and so on. The form of these questions differed from the form of those the children had been accustomed to; and, ignorant of the principles of the rules they had learnt, a large number of them broke down. Teachers would do well to attend to the excellent suggestions made by Mr. Habens in the annotated standards. There is a great lack of thoroughgoing black-board instruction in this subject.

GRAMMAR.—Like arithmetic, this subject is difficult to teach if the teacher aims at anything above the merely mechanical. Generally it may be said that the children should not be allowed to enter upon the grammar of a sentence the import of the language of which they do not understand. I invariably select the passage for parsing from the reading-book of the class: the language of the books is seldom understood; and, as might have been expected, the percentage of failures in this subject is very high. The composition was generally worse done than the parsing. There is an abundance of time devoted to essays, letter-writing, reproduction, and so on, to make very fair composers of the pupils; but the method of correcting these exercises, though very laborious, is so ineffective that the time is spent almost in vain. My experience has now taught me that it is well nigh useless to suggest remedies in a general report, for those teachers that most need help are precisely those that pay least attention to what is said. At the risk, however, of writing in vain, I shall indicate briefly what appears to me to be an intelligent method of correcting the composition exercise. (1.) Let the exercise be done in an exercise-book. (2.) Collect the books and examine the exercise out of school-hours, carefully underlining every error, and transferring two or three examples of each kind of error to a note-book. (3.) On the following day transfer the errors from the note-book to the black-board (and this should be done either before school assembles in the morning, or during the dinner recess). (4.) Make these errors the subject of the day's grammar lesson; after which distribute the books, and cause the children to correct their own errors. (5.) Re-examine the exercise to see that this has been well done. (6.) Do not make the criticisms personal. The errors are made by the class, and should be treated as such.

GEOGRAPHY.—In a large number of schools this subject is but poorly known and poorly taught. It is really painful to watch some teachers give what they are pleased to dignify by the term lesson—now peering into the text-book for the facts, and now groping about the map in search of the place about which the facts are stated. This kind of work is, of course, utterly inexcusable, for any man that will take the trouble to work up and arrange the facts can give a very fair lesson in geography. Our better teachers teach the subject from maps drawn by themselves on the black-board. Of course a class will have a much more exalted notion of the man that can rapidly sketch out his own map, and fill in the details of the lesson from a full mind, than of the man that knows less of the subject than themselves.

HISTORY.—There is not much real teaching in history, but there is a good deal of effort made to work up the text-book, and with tolerably fair success.

OBJECT-LESSONS AND ELEMENTARY SCIENCE.—Object-lessons are now given in most schools; but, except in a few, very ineffectively. There is too much of the pouring-in process, and not enough of the drawing-out—in a word, the lessons are not made educative. With respect to elementary science, the general complaint made by teachers is want of apparatus. To me this appears to be a confession of ignorance, for any man with a sound knowledge of the subjects named under Regulation 12 can do more good work with rough apparatus improvised by himself than with the elaborate sets of apparatus made up by the instrument-makers at Home. Children can easily imitate the teacher's rough handiwork, and will become experimenters themselves, but they will never attempt to imitate the perfect article of the instrument-maker. Hitherto no marks have been assigned for excellence in

science- and object-lessons; but in future, when Regulations 9 and 12 are fully complied with, and the character of the work done is satisfactory, I purpose to allow marks—the maximum to be 10 per cent. on the marks attained in the other subjects.

SEWING.—In most of the schools in which this subject is taught the character of the work done reflects the highest credit upon the teachers.

SINGING AND DRAWING.—In most of the large schools, and in a few of the small ones, the singing is excellent, and the elements of the theory of music are fairly known; but in the majority of schools nothing is done in this subject. The drawing is generally very inferior.

RECORDS.—The records are now in a better condition than in any previous year. Except in one or two schools, they are fully written up, and neatly and accurately kept.

The discipline and behaviour of our schools have improved since my last report was written. In a few schools they are very good; in a large number fair, and bad in only very few.

I have, &c.,

P. GOYEN,

Inspector of Schools.

The Secretary, Education Board, Invercargill.

AUCKLAND.

SIR,—

Auckland, 1882.

I have the honour to submit this report for the year ended 31st December, 1881.

The number of primary schools in the Education District, and the attendance of pupils, are given in the following table:—

Quarter ending.	Number of Schools.	Roll Number.			Working Average Attendance.		
		M.	F.	Total.	M.	F.	Total.
March 31st	206	8,230	7,473	15,703	6,627	5,936	12,563
June 30th	210	8,254	7,447	15,701	6,395	5,687	12,082
September 30th	210	8,190	7,378	15,568	6,248	5,462	11,710
December 31st	212	8,258	7,572	15,830	6,457	5,818	12,275

The attendance in the December quarter of 1880 was: roll number, 14,939; average, 11,830.

Since the date of my last report the training college has been opened. The report of the Principal will show the nature of the work done.

Many teachers and pupil-teachers mistake the kind of assistance meant to be given them in connection with the Training College. It is that which will develop the habits of thought and self-help, not that which will destroy and impair these habits. It will happen under this system that those who cannot or will not help themselves, who want almost everything to be done for them, will fail to fulfil the requirements of their position and must give way to others. There can be no doubt that this is a benefit to education. I hold it to be a benefit to the individuals themselves, for no good can come to any one from trying to follow a calling to which he is unequal. I think the Board will have little difficulty in procuring for the future an excellent class of pupil-teachers from the public schools; especially as it will now be possible to raise the age for their beginning the work to sixteen, and to require that they shall qualify for beginning by passing the Sixth Standard.

As somewhat bearing on this matter, I would here refer to a feeling which has shown itself in one or two places in favour of excluding pupils of over fifteen from the public schools. The Education Act provides that pupils over fifteen must have the consent of the Committee to their attendance. I think this is a wise provision. It is as well that young people of an age when they are apt to become difficult of control, should not be able to claim entrance to the schools as a right. This is as far, I think, as the Act was designed to go. It seems to me monstrous to suppose that it was intended to shut out well-conducted boys and girls, whose parents are perhaps stretching a point to keep them at school, or others of the same kind, whose early education has been neglected or hindered. It is from the former class the best teachers may be expected to spring. Apart from this, to cut short the education of children is to inflict an injury on the State, in this case almost gratuitously, as the extra cost of all these pupils is comparatively trifling. Again, by excluding these pupils, an injustice is done to the classes who are not wealthy enough to send their children to the secondary schools. Perhaps some of those who desire to exclude them have forgotten to look at the matter from a public point of view.

In connection with the question of the age of pupils comes the question of the age of candidates for scholarships. The present regulation on this point is, that candidates for district scholarships must not be less than twelve, nor more than seventeen years of age. I do not attach much weight to the objection that it is not fair to the younger candidates to make them contend at equal weights, so to speak, with the older ones. Scholarships and the like are not intended for the benefit of individuals. The country, with an enlightened selfishness, enables them to be founded, in order that she may select for further education those most likely to do the State some service. Of course it is not possible to contrive a perfect machinery for this end. That adopted by the Auckland Board has, in my view, acted well. I was asked, before the Royal Commission on Education in 1879, as to whether it might not be advantageous to make a distinction between boys under sixteen and boys under fourteen. My answer was: "I doubt it very much. If all boys were equal in intellect, in maturity of intellect, and had the same surroundings and associations, a distinction might be made. As things must be, age is but one element." Another objection is that it is found very inconvenient in the secondary schools to have boys of fifteen beginning classics and mathematics, and further, that the boys themselves are

placed at a great disadvantage by beginning late. Our experience in Auckland does not bear out this last objection. It is well known that the district scholarship boys have come well to the front at the Grammar School, and that many of them have gained open scholarships. I am inclined to think that the first-named objection has been over-rated, as what I have just stated will, to some extent, bear out. To return to the last objection, I am aware that a good deal may be said in favour of the idea that boys for secondary schools should be caught young. I am not prepared to admit that this is to be looked on as indisputable; if, however, we admit its truth in a general way, it by no means follows that it is justifiable to make very young boys fight their way through a competitive examination into these schools. I really cannot think that it is required at this time of day to show how deadly such a process must be to children of, say, eleven. Every one should be able to figure that to himself. Unfortunately we are not left to rely on theory alone in this matter. We have a wide experience, too, to warn and to guide. To come to a particular experience. A gentleman, whose recent lamented death causes a serious loss to education in this colony, described to me the sort of young boys who won scholarships in the district with which he was connected. Small, sharp, precocious boys, with bad physical development, no weight of brain, and no future in them. He was of opinion, and I entirely agree with him, that public money spent in turning out such an article is worse than lost. It must be borne in mind that the mischief done by early competition is not confined to the unfortunate competitors; the *virus* infects the school and the district. Under what I may call the comparatively healthy system pursued here, I am satisfied that, as a rule, the most promising boys have gained the scholarships. Some of the best have gained them at fifteen, after trying for two years before. I myself agree with those who think that it is no benefit to a boy to begin the study of classics and mathematics before twelve. However that may be I am convinced that it would be most injurious to the public primary school system to permit competition for scholarships by children under twelve. I do not see so much objection to reducing the upper limit of ages, say, to boys under fifteen. The vital point to be considered is the healthy and successful education of the great body of the people. If the secondary schools cannot make their arrangements to contribute to this end, some other mode of disposing of the winners of scholarships must be devised. I fully recognize the importance of secondary and higher schools and the University in the structure of national education. That structure has its foundation in the primary school, and it behoves us to build the foundation strong.

The system of examination in standards, begun here in 1879, has received further development. It must, of course, take some years yet before the system is fully developed, so that its defects shall be minimized and its good points made the most of. I would again point out that much mischief will be done by putting pressure on teachers to send up pupils prematurely. Undoubtedly, as the Chairman of the Board has pointed out, every reasonable precaution should be taken to prevent abuse. Teachers are now required to furnish a list of the pupils not presented; and, in case of every child over seven, to state the reasons why the child has not been presented.

I append a table showing the number examined and passed in each standard. It will be seen that the percentage is larger than that of last year (66).

Standard.	Presented.			Passed.			Per Cent.
	M.	F.	Total.	M.	F.	Total.	
I.	1,250	1,102	2,352	964	905	1,869	79.4
II.	1,299	1,236	2,535	911	904	1,815	71.5
III.	842	823	1,665	496	512	1,008	60.5
IV.	462	438	900	271	292	563	62.5
V.	152	108	260	111	70	181	69.6
VI.	23	17	40	21	12	33	82.5
Total ...	4,028	3,724	7,752	2,774	2,695	5,469	70.5

As I mentioned in my last report, the test of results is often a fallacious one. We want to know how the results have been brought about. Great efforts have been taken here to encourage teachers to seek results from judicious training, and not from "the brute force of cramming," which is directly antagonistic to healthful "mental training." Injudicious outside interference will tend to neutralize these efforts. There seems, unfortunately, now-a-days a tendency in this and other matters to believe that entire ignorance of a subject is the best qualification for the utterance of dogmatic opinion upon it.

The state of the schools is on the whole satisfactory. Of course there are many shortcomings—a want of buildings, unsuitable buildings, unsatisfactory teachers. The last-named evil will never wholly disappear; it is to be hoped that year by year it may be lessened.

The methods of teaching the various subjects are, on the whole, improving. I have so frequently dealt with this subject in former reports that I think that it is not needed I should do so now. But I would again impress on teachers the necessity of teaching arithmetic in an intellectual fashion. It is time that the use of the multiplication table were abandoned.

The remarks made in my last year's report, in regard to teachers not paying due attention to the health of their pupils, are, I regret to say, still in some degree applicable. I find that in many cases the means provided for the ventilation of schools are not sufficiently made use of; that the rooms are not flushed with air when the pupils are out of them; that an undue amount of home work is given. There is undoubtedly an improvement in these respects since last year, which it is to be hoped will be rapidly progressive.

There is, I am glad to say, a somewhat better state of things prevailing respecting that exalting of children on which I had occasion to animadvert last year. Not only here but in other districts, as I am

informed, the most enlightened school authorities and teachers are setting their faces against practices like those described last year; practices the almost inevitable result of which will be "a race of men who will be incapable of doing anything which is disagreeable to them." The development of larrikinism in Victoria should serve as an emphatic warning to New Zealand.

Among the schools 38 are taught half-time—that is to say, one master takes two schools, teaching each for half the time; it may be week about or some other arrangement. I consider every alternate week the best for elementary schools. These schools have succeeded admirably where the teacher is competent and energetic and receives the support and encouragement of the parents. Where the parents are opposed to the plan the schools do not get on so well. I have no doubt myself that a well-conducted half-time school will produce as good results as a well-conducted whole-time school, and in a far healthier way. I have long thought that this plan is especially adapted for the higher education of girls. It is heart-rending to think of the amount of work in the way of school lessons and accomplishments which a girl is often expected to crowd into every week. No time for the digestion and assimilation of knowledge; but little time for healthful exercise or for the acquirement of acquaintance with home duties. I am convinced that if half the time were given to school work and the remainder left free for other things, the "dull brain," that "perplexes and retards," of many a girl would be cleared. Health would be given to her, intellectually and physically; a real educating process would be substituted for our present senseless proceedings. At these future generations will look back with amazement. I am convinced that this system could be well applied in some form to the larger elementary schools. The half-time system has great possibilities. In this way, perhaps, the problem of how to give technical instruction during school years can best be solved. In this way time can be found for girls to acquire a knowledge of household duties. These things have been done in other countries. I quote from a recent author. "Take one out of a hundred instances that might be adduced: The *Albergo dei Poveri* at Naples, one of the most wisely conducted and most successful institutions of the kind in the world, has turned street boys into Pääsellos and Verdis. Here, although the more refined and elevated arts of music, drawing, painting, sculpture, architecture, &c., are taught, it is not as accomplishments to vitiate the character by unclassifying the pupils; but, some one of these pursuits being carefully selected, according to the aptitude of each individual, it is thenceforward made the subject of his special and serious study as a future profession. Those boys who are found to have no aspirations or qualifications for anything higher are taught bookbinding, cabinetmaking, tailoring, shoemaking, &c." I give this quotation simply to show what may be done, and to furnish food for thought. If the value of the half-time system were generally recognized, carpenters, dressmakers, and others, would probably take boys and girls as apprentices at an earlier age than usual, on the understanding that the apprentices should attend school on every alternate week. I am certain that neither the school nor the workshop would suffer. The elasticity of mind produced by variety would insure better work in each. Youths would be early trained to habits of industry, and a most welcome relief would be afforded to many an overburdened parent. Then, there is the money question. The growing cost of education in New Zealand is a matter for grave consideration. Under the half-time system the same building and the same staff would be enough for twice the number of pupils. Here is the possibility of a great economy in the future, when a large increase takes place in the number of pupils. But perhaps it is too much to expect people to clear their minds of old notions which have their roots deep down, and which spring from an unconscious (or conscious) belief in cram—that process so "fatal to all true intellectual life."

There is a smaller economy which, I think, could be practised with beneficial results in many ways. If no children under seven years old were admitted to the public schools a saving to some extent would be made in the general fund and the building fund. The children would be very much benefited. It will be seen in the education reports from the southern districts of New Zealand, where the standard system has been in operation for some years, that the average age at which pupils pass the First Standard is about nine and a half years. Nothing but harm can come to children from being kept stewing in schools for the first two of these four years. To shut up a child in a school at five is to arrest his physical growth and his intellectual growth. Just at this time he most requires freedom and fresh air. Just at this time his observing powers are developing rapidly, and should have free scope.

I regret to say that a tendency has begun to show itself here which should not be allowed to grow into a practice. We have been happily free from it hitherto. In more than one case teachers have sought to obtain appointment or promotion by canvassing and bringing outward pressure to bear. It is easy to see how pernicious may be the results of this tendency. Fitness may cease to be considered. Not the man who has most qualifications, but the man who has most friends, may be he who will get appointments. The possible disastrous results to pupils and parents may come to be left out of sight altogether. This is no vague apprehension. A Royal Commission is now sitting in Victoria to examine into, amongst other things, the causes of the unsatisfactory state of many of the Victorian schools. It has already been made plain enough that many of the schools are in a wretched condition, and it has also been made plain enough that this disastrous state of things has been brought about by patronage. Ministers of Education have repeatedly passed over teachers of whose fitness they were assured in favour of men whose chief qualifications were the good word of a Ministerial supporter. It is, of course, not very likely that things will come to this pass here; but the evil principle is the same when favour and not fitness is allowed to be made the road to appointments. All efficient teachers should resent this; all who have the good of education at heart should resist it.

I have, &c.,

The Chairman of the Education Board, Auckland.

R. J. O'SULLIVAN.

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.

As might naturally be supposed, the attendance of the younger children has been most affected by sickness, and the result of the examination in the lower classes has been most unsatisfactory. In several instances the whole of the scholars presented in Standards I. and II. have failed to reach the requirements, and it is very discouraging to see that there is no diminution in the large proportion of children who fail to reach Standard I. After making every allowance for the exceptional difficulties teachers have had this year to contend with, it must be admitted that there are vital defects in the course of instruction when out of 2,859 scholars examined 1,107, or 38·7 per cent., failed to reach Standard I.; in other words, that this large proportion could not read and spell easy words of one syllable, write on slates the letters of the alphabet, and do very elementary addition. The reason is, however, not far to seek. The syllabus is so exacting that the head-master's ability and energy are fully taxed to cover the work of the upper standards, and the younger classes are left, with very little supervision, to the management of pupil-teachers and incompetent assistants. I use the term incompetent advisedly, for of the twenty assistant teachers at present in the Board's employ only nine are certified, and the greatest difficulty is experienced in securing the services of assistants with even the most limited knowledge of school work. It is admitted on all hands that the most skilled teaching is required to do justice to the infant and junior classes; and all who have tested the capacity of children must agree that if the instruction in the early stages were thoroughly efficient, the average age at which the standards are passed would be considerably reduced, and the work in the higher classes would be far more intelligently done. At present scholars pass into the upper standards with the barest rote-knowledge that can secure a pass, and with their general intelligence and reasoning powers in no way developed. If the defect is afterwards remedied, it can only be at an altogether unnecessary expenditure of time and labour. In the majority of cases, however, the natural result is that the comprehensive work of the higher standards, in place of securing the broad, intelligent instruction intended, degenerates to rote-work and cram. I am fully persuaded that we should hear very few complaints of the difficulty of meeting the requirements of the higher standards if efficient instruction were secured to the junior classes.

The work in the upper classes is more satisfactory, and shows fair improvement. Forty scholars passed Standard VI., as compared with 12 in 1880; and, though there is a falling-off in Standard V., the numbers passing Standards IV. and III. have steadily increased.

In my examinations and reports I have, as far as possible, pointed out the cause of defects, and suggested means of improvement. It is, therefore, unnecessary here to enter upon a lengthened description or criticism of the work in the several subjects. I may, however, draw attention to a few points affecting the schools generally.

Reading is generally sufficiently fluent to secure a pass, but devoid of special merit, there being often a total want of intelligence or expression. Although much of the fault lies with the teacher, I am persuaded that the prime cause of the defect is the use of a single set of reading books. In the lower classes the lessons are practically known by heart, and the reading becomes purely mechanical, calling for no effort of the mind; and in the higher classes the constant repetition of the same pieces cramps the intelligence, leads to a distaste for reading, and is a loss of valuable time. Two sets of reading books should be in use in every school, and, where possible, a scientific, geographical, or historical reader should be provided for the higher standards.

Spelling is generally very successful where it is examined orally, but it is not uncommon to find classes able to spell all the difficult words in a paragraph but quite unable to write the passage from dictation. The sense is often obscured or entirely destroyed by the misuse and omission of words, and a total disregard of the principles of punctuation.

Writing is often the best-taught subject in the school. I have insisted on correct—or, rather, systematic—formation of letters from the earliest stages; and the books of the higher classes are, as a rule, thoroughly neat and well written. A large portion of the examination in Standards III. to VI. is taken on paper, supplemented by oral questions. While I have seldom to condemn the papers on the score of neatness, I have constantly to complain of the amount produced in the given time. The laboured style of necessity adopted in the copy-book is continued for too long a time, and the writing of the most advanced scholars is generally far too large for a commercial hand.

Arithmetic is subject to the greatest variation, and may, perhaps, be taken as the best test of the quality of the instruction, and of the ability of the teacher. I am happy to say that, in a good proportion of our schools, the subject is thoroughly well taught, the mechanical work is accurate, and the principles well understood. In other cases the simple examples are accurately worked, but the scholars are unable to apply the principles of the rules to the solution of such problems as might be expected to occur in actual experience. In all the higher standards I have required an intelligent appreciation of principles, and, as a necessary test, have invariably given a number of questions in the form of problems. Thus, the question, "If a horse travels ten miles an hour, how long will it take him to go seven miles," may be worked mechanically; but let the question be varied thus: "From Geraldine to Winchester is seven miles; if I travel at the rate of ten miles an hour, at what time must I start from Geraldine to catch the twelve o'clock train at Winchester?" and the value of the instruction is fully tested.

The principles of grammar, as shown by parsing and analysis, are, as a rule, well taught; but it is much to be regretted that in only a few schools is the knowledge thus gained put to its legitimate use in composition. In examining the papers one can scarcely credit that the composition is written by the same scholars who worked the answers in other subjects. The teaching of composition presents considerable difficulty, especially in its earlier stages, and the results of the labour expended are not soon apparent. Teachers become disheartened, and the subject is neglected as being beyond the scholars' capacity; but its importance justifies its position in the syllabus, and claims for it systematic treatment in every standard.

History and geography have very much improved. I am pleased to find a growing appreciation of oral teaching, and the free use of maps and black-board diagrams for both subjects.

Science, drawing, singing, and drill, have made little progress during the past year. Exceptionally bad attendance has made it impossible for many teachers to overtake all the work of the syllabus; and the less essential subjects, that do not materially affect individual passes, have naturally been neglected. I hope another year to make a more favourable record of these subjects.

Needlework has been regularly inspected, and I have in all cases expected that the Government requirements should be systematically carried out. I can report very favourably on the work, but, in several cases, the subject receives too large a part of the school time. In a number of small schools two half-days are given to needlework. This is unnecessary and seriously retards the progress of the girls in other subjects. I have, where necessary, advised that two lessons in the week, of one hour and a quarter, is sufficient. This would give about one-tenth of the school time to the subject.

Our pupil-teacher system has assumed such proportions as to demand the best attention of the Board. Of the 84 teachers in this district 30 are pupil-teachers, and several others, having successfully passed through the pupil-teacher's course, are now employed as assistants. The Board has made the most liberal provision for the training and remuneration of these teachers, and I think the results are fairly commensurate with the Board's expenditure. Any pupil-teachers' course is, however, only preparatory to the regular training of teachers at normal schools, and our system must be considered incomplete until successful pupil-teachers are enabled to proceed to a normal school to complete their training and obtain the teacher's certificate. Under existing arrangements the pupil-teacher, on the completion of his course, receives a district license, but a weary term of one or two years' private study must ensue before he can gain his certificate of competency as a master. It is, perhaps, not possible for the Board to provide a college training for all our ex-pupil-teachers, but I think the importance of the subject would fully justify the Board in granting two scholarships annually, of say £50 each, to be competed for by the teachers completing their course; the scholarships to be tenable at the normal schools of Christchurch and Dunedin.

Our new schools are fully supplied with furniture and apparatus of the most suitable description, and liberal grants have been made to supply any defects in the furniture of the old established schools; but I regret to state that sufficient care is not always exercised by teachers and Committees in preserving it in good order. Much of the damage is caused when the schools are used for public meetings and entertainments. In one case that came under my own notice—and which I have reason to believe is not an isolated case—an entertainment, followed by a dance, was held in the schoolroom. The blackboards were taken out of their frames and placed upon desks for a platform, and were seriously indented and damaged; the maps and diagrams were taken down and packed away without care; the room was so crowded that many of those present were standing on the desks and forms; and after the entertainment the whole of the furniture was unceremoniously put outside in the rain to make room for the dance. I am aware that to prohibit the use of country schoolrooms for meetings and entertainments would be a serious grievance to the residents, but the necessity for exercising the greatest care with the building and furniture cannot be too strongly impressed upon local Committees.

Another matter I feel compelled to speak upon is the vexed question of the powers and duties of School Committees as affecting teachers. I have no desire to underrate the value of the work performed, and the influence exercised, by Committees generally. In many districts their labours are invaluable, their influence strengthens the hands of the teacher, and creates an active interest in the cause of education which, in their absence, would be often entirely wanting; but many cases come under my notice of undue interference with the teacher's work. Committees seldom comprehend the requirements and technicalities of the Government syllabus, and often fail to see that the teacher is not responsible for the course of instruction pursued. They often exercise considerable control over the discipline and organization of the school which may not be injurious, but any interference with the course of instruction must seriously prejudice the teacher's work.

I have, &c.,

HENRY W. HAMMOND,

The Chairman of the Education Board, South Canterbury.

Inspector of Schools.

