

attended by no substantial countervailing advantage. Again, as regards arithmetic, I see nothing to be gained by limiting the teachers' choice to one or two books. A useful hint can be obtained in almost every good work on that subject which is not found in any other; and as far as these two important parts of the syllabus are concerned, I think the Boards as long as they exist, and after them the teachers, should have the privilege of using their own judgment within certain limits. As regards the other subjects of the syllabus, the objection to uniformity is not so great; but, in my opinion, the selection of books to be used throughout the colony should be left to a conference of Inspectors, and their recommendation should be submitted for the approval of the Boards before final adoption; also, that such change should be brought about gradually, to avoid hardship to the poorer scholars, who have already provided themselves with the books at present in use. Being unacquainted with many of the books recommended by Mr. Hendry, I am not able to offer an opinion as to their fitness for general adoption throughout the colony.

The Chairman, Board of Education, Hokitika.

I have, &c.,

JOHN SMITH, Inspector.

SUMMARY OF RESULTS FOR THE WHOLE DISTRICT.

Standard Classes.				Presented.	Absent.	Excepted.	Failed.	Passed.	Average Age of those that passed.	
									Yrs.	mos.
S 7	...	...	...	47	...	...	...	...	...	...
S 6	...	...	...	96	16	...	20	60	14	1
S 5	...	...	...	178	23	3	39	113	13	4
S 4	...	...	...	198	14	6	45	133	12	4
S 3	...	...	...	250	17	10	52	171	11	0
S 2	...	...	...	212	14	5	37	156	10	5
S 1	...	...	...	200	6	3	15	176	9	3
P.	...	...	...	609	...	...	...	...	...	...
Totals	...	...	...	1,790	90	27	208	809	*	

Mean of average age, 11·9 years.

NORTH CANTERBURY.

1. MR. WOOD'S REPORT.

SIR,—

Christchurch, 16th March, 1889.

I have the honour to submit my general report for the year 1888 on the schools of the Northern Division of the North Canterbury Education District.

In area this section of the district extends from Christchurch to Kaikoura, and it numbers sixty-one schools of all classes, from the important suburban school with 550 pupils to the small rural one with twenty. In every locality in which the settlement of population is such as to justify the establishing of a school-ample accommodation has been provided by the Board. The buildings are substantial, and kept in good repair, and those of the latest construction especially are well designed to meet modern educational requirements. The erection of new schools at Marshland and New Brighton, and the enlargement of buildings already in use at Belfast and Harewood Road, have practically satisfied all the demands of the year for additional school supply. The school at Okuku, which never had at any time more than eight pupils on the roll, has now been closed after being in operation for nine months.

The staff employed in the schools on my list comprises fifty-nine head teachers, of whom nineteen are in sole charge, fifty-seven assistants, sixty-nine pupil-teachers, and thirteen sewing mistresses who take no part in the general work of the school. This gives twenty-seven pupils in average attendance to each teacher. The diminution in the number of teachers contemplated in the recent adoption by the Board of a new scale of staff has not yet been completely effected, as care had to be taken in making reductions to avoid as far as possible inflicting hardships in individual cases; but a near approximation to the scale is gradually being made. The other important change introduced by the new regulations—the employment of female labour in small rural schools—promises to be a decided success. The somewhat popular belief that the discipline of a school must suffer in the hands of a mistress seems to me to have no solid basis for foundation, and cannot, I think, be entertained in the light of experience. None of the schools in which masters have been replaced by mistresses show the slightest signs of deteriorating, and in one at least the improvement in the conduct of the pupils is very marked.

During the past year all my schools, with the exception of the two at Kaikoura, were visited for the purposes of inspection, and all but that of Marshland received a separate visit for examination. Five schools were closed for holidays when I paid my visit of inspection. I subsequently found an opportunity to revisit two of these. In order to facilitate the work of inspection the School Committees were some time ago requested to intimate to the Board the dates fixed for holidays. The request was seldom complied with, and is now pretty generally disregarded. In my opinion it would be better to intrust the head teachers with the duty of supplying information of this kind, and I am sure they would very willingly perform it.