

tion of a Teachers' Superannuation Fund was mooted, and this, I imagine, would have been carried out had not circumstances necessitated the expenditure of the accrued "School Fund" upon school buildings. To me there appears to be little difficulty in the way of establishing some such fund as here suggested if the central department would take the initiative. The retention of one shilling per head of the capitation allowance now paid to Education Boards for school maintenance would provide at once, and in the most equitable way I know, a fund sufficient to meet the cases of all teachers who, through ill-health or increasing years, find it necessary to retire from the profession. I am satisfied that a vast amount of good would be done to the cause of education, as well as to a large and important body of public servants, were some such scheme adopted, and I trust the Board will deem the subject of sufficient importance to make representations to the Minister of Education in its favour.

The Chairman, Board of Education, Napier.

I have, &c.,

H. HILL, B.A., F.G.S., Inspector.

SUMMARY OF RESULTS FOR THE WHOLE DISTRICT.

Standard Classes.	Presented.	Absent.	Excepted.	Failed.	Passed.	Average Age of those that passed.
S 7	18	...	...	...	...	...
S 6	149	3	3	32	111	14·2
S 5	278	10	5	89	174	13·3
S 4	530	25	19	151	335	12·7
S 3	778	21	33	214	510	11·7
S 2	848	34	37	160	617	10·4
S 1	1,132	25	50	243	814	9
P.	1,844	...	...	...	...	...
Totals	5,577	118	147	889	2,561	*

* Mean of average age, 11·10.

MARLBOROUGH.

SIR,—

Blenheim, 14th March, 1889.

I have the honour to submit to you my annual report on the public schools of the District of Marlborough for the year 1888.

Twenty-seven schools were examined, two small schools being temporarily closed at the time of my visit. There were 1,688 children on the rolls of the schools examined, 1,536 being present at examination. The proportion of passes in standards as compared with the number on the roll is 46·6, the percentage of failures in standard work being 18·6—a close approximation to the percentage obtained last year. On the whole, therefore, judged by this test, the Marlborough schools have acquitted themselves fairly well. The other means by which an examiner can gauge the efficiency of a school confirm this conclusion. The exceptions to this not unfavourable estimate are, however, far too numerous, as was the case last year, and are to be found largely, but not exclusively, in the smaller aided schools. In ten of the twenty-seven schools examined more than a third of the standard candidates have proved unequal to the very moderate demands made upon them, while in six schools the failures have ranged between 50 and 83 per cent. The Board will have no difficulty in gathering from the detailed account of each school how far the teacher is responsible for what can in any case be only regarded as a deplorable outcome of the past year's work. It should be remembered that during the last few years the number of certificated and thoroughly competent applicants for even small and not very well-paid posts has largely increased, so that Boards are no longer driven to accept the services of any chance candidate who may offer himself. I subjoin a summary showing the measure of success with which the several subjects included in the syllabus are being taught. It will be understood that this is only a general statement, that cannot be taken as equally true in every case. My detailed account of the present condition of each school will supply the necessary modifications.

READING.—It is gratifying to find that my repeated strictures on the poor quality of the reading in the bulk of the Marlborough schools are beginning to bear fruit. A perceptible, though very gradual, improvement is being effected in all but two or three instances. Comparatively few even of the older children can yet be said to read well, but the general level of attainment is certainly higher than it was. The most hopeful sign is that this improvement is chiefly noticeable in the lower classes, which were formerly the most neglected. It is at the outset that bad habits are formed, which it is almost impossible to get rid of later on. I have always held that the difficulties of reading should have been fairly mastered by the time that a pupil is nine years old, and it is to be regretted that the syllabus, strictly construed, should limit an Inspector to testing candidates for the First Standard in words of one syllable. An examiner thus trammelled finds it hard to insist upon such a degree of efficiency as he well knows to be easily attainable by any painstaking teacher who understands his business.

SPELLING.—Although the list of failures in this subject is not very long, it must be remembered that, especially in the lower standards, the examiner is limited to passages taken from the little reading book that has been carefully conned during the year, and from which, in all probability, all the passages that are likely to be selected for dictation have been picked out and carefully