

necessitates a relatively more expensive staff of teachers. Two of the larger schools have only just passed the line proposed above to be drawn between unsatisfactory and satisfactory schools, and in both cases the position occupied by these schools, so far as the pass subjects are concerned, is not what might fairly be expected.

The mean percentage of marks for class subjects for the whole district was 32 in 1887, and has increased to 34 for 1888. Fifteen schools have maintained or increased their percentages, and seven have fallen below last year's marks. The mean additional marks for the district show a decrease of 1 per cent., twelve schools having maintained or increased, and ten having decreased, their marks for these subjects. The figures corresponding to these for the whole colony in 1887 were 47.5 and 46.4 for class and additional marks respectively; so that in this respect Westland is considerably behind the rest of New Zealand, the large proportion of small schools being partly the cause of this inferiority.

The number of scholars absent on the day of examination exercises an important influence on the result. The percentage of the roll number absent in 1887 in the whole colony was 2.9, and in Westland for the same year it was 5.2, while for 1888 it is 5, showing a slight improvement, though still 2 per cent. higher than the mean of the whole colony.

Excluding the preparatory classes and the class above Standard VI., the absentees in the whole colony for 1887 amounted to 4.6 per cent. In Westland for the same year the percentage was 8.2, and for 1888 it is 7.9; showing again a slight improvement, but still exceeding the colonial average by 3.3 per cent. The following are the percentages of absentees at the principal schools in this district, exclusive of Classes P. and S 7: Kumara, 9.9; Goldsborough, 13.3; Stafford, 4.6; Hokitika, 8.7; Kanieri, 8.1; Blue Spur, 7; Woodstock, 4.6; Upper Kokatahi, 17.6; Ross, 9.6; Donoghue's, 5; Lake Brunner, 30. There were no absentees at Arahura Road, Humphrey's, Okarito, Gillespie's, and Okura. I know that in some cases the children are kept at home by their parents on purpose to enable them to remain longer in the same standards; and with this feeling—after the Fourth Standard is passed—I fully sympathize. I have long been convinced that the work of the Fifth and Sixth Standards cannot be fairly and thoroughly accomplished by average scholars in less than three years, and this time was allowed in Westland before the Government regulations came into force. I think that if the work of Standards V. and VI. were divided into three sections, and assigned to Standard V., Standard VI., and Standard VII., far better and in every way more satisfactory results would be obtained. The percentage of absentees in each class is as follows: Standard I., 3 per cent.; Standard II.,  $6\frac{1}{2}$  per cent.; Standard III., 7 per cent.; Standard IV., 7 per cent.; Standard V., 13 per cent.; Standard VI., 16 per cent. This would appear to indicate intentional absence in the higher standards, since of the two ordinary causes of absence—illness and bad weather—the former would probably affect all classes alike, and the latter the lower classes more than the upper. It will be observed that there are forty-seven scholars in the district who had already passed Standard VI. This is 2.6 per cent. of the roll number, and for the whole colony in 1887 the percentage was 0.6.

The last two columns on Table 2 contain, as required by the Regulations, remarks on (1) order and discipline, and (2) manners. Under the first head there is little to complain of while the scholars are under the eyes of the teachers, and in one or two schools the teacher's temporary absence from his class room could not be discovered by any alteration in the behaviour of the scholars; but at others such absence, or even the diversion for a few moments of the teacher's attention only, is sufficient to produce what might almost be called an uproar. Than this there could scarcely be a better test of the thoroughness and efficacy of the discipline. The highest excellence under this head certainly cannot be attributed to a school when the dismissal of the head teacher's class on an ordinary occasion is announced to a visitor in another part of the building by wild shouts and a boisterous stampede through the passage; and this was until quite lately the rule at one of the largest schools. As regards the manners of the scholars, under which head I include their behaviour in the playground and on their way to and from school, &c., there is much to be desired; but, since these are mainly the results of home influence and surroundings, and at best can only be modified by a few hours' daily attendance at the school, great allowance must be made for any shortcomings in this direction. Still, much could be done at all schools, and is done with good effect at a few, to cultivate habits of courtesy, respect, and (I use the word advisedly and in its true sense) gentlemanly behaviour, notwithstanding the inexorable demands of the sixteen subjects of the syllabus upon the time and attention of teachers.

The usual detailed statement of the results of the examination at the several schools is given in Table 3. The six columns on the right hand side of the table show the number at each school belonging to Classes P. and S 7, the percentage of passes (according to the old method of reckoning), the percentage of class subjects, the additional marks, and the "combined result." The last column is formed by adding the mean percentage of the "pass" and "class" subjects to the additional marks; and the total thus obtained shows as nearly as it is possible to do the relative success of the schools in dealing with the difficulties of the standards. It must not, however, be supposed that the difference in the figures set opposite any two or more schools is an accurate measure of their relative efficiency, even as pass-making machines. Some of the schools have not all the standards represented; a few have only three this year. On the other hand, some have all the standard classes with only one teacher, and with all classes in one room. Again, some schools have no female teacher, and are consequently debarred from obtaining additional marks for needlework, and the girls at such schools are required to pass on the same terms as the boys. Some teachers, notwithstanding their possession of certificates which authoritatively declare them (by inference) capable, are really on their own showing quite incapable of teaching vocal music; while some are similarly situated with regard to drawing; and among both of these are to be found a few of our best teachers.

Table 4 shows the number of scholars examined in the different pass subjects, and the number that passed. The percentages of passes on each subject for the year under review and for the two