1889.

NEW ZEALAND.

EDUCATION:

REPORTS OF INSPECTORS OF SCHOOLS.

[In continuation of E.-1B, 1888.]

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

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

AUCKLAND.

1. Mr. Goodwin's Report.

Sir,— Auckland, 2nd March, 1889.

I have the honour to submit my report on the schools in the southern division of the Auckland Education District for the year 1888.

At the beginning of the year there were in operation ninety-one schools: three new ones have since been opened and one closed. I have examined eighty-eight schools in standards and presented forty-six inspection reports: ten of these reports relate to small schools which were examined and inspected on the same day. Fifteen schools have been specially reported as "unsatisfactory." I have not had time to visit the Whangamarino, Waiheke, Karaka, and Taupo schools. The following table gives a summary of the examination results:—

Standard Classes.	Presented.	Absent.	Excepted.	Failed.	Passed.	Average Age of those that passed.
						Yrs. mos.
S 7	27	...	...	...	...	...
S 6	168	13	4	43	108	14 10
S 5	391	37	18	164	172	14 7
S 4	697	35	39	189	434	12 6
S 3	902	60	37	183	622	11 7
S 2	999	39	47	186	727	9 11
S 1	774	46	31	46	651	9 3
P.	2,178	...	...	...	...	...
Totals ...	6,136	230	176	811	2,714	*

* Mean of average age, 12 years 1 month.

The schools in this division of the district afford a very fair means of judging the extent to which the syllabus of instruction prescribed by law can be efficiently carried out. I find that in the larger schools, and in those with more than one teacher, the demands made by the Inspector at the annual examination do not press heavily either on teachers or pupils in fair attendance; at the same time, I think that the number of attendances necessary to justify an "exception" should be increased, say, to two-thirds of those possible to be made between one examination and that following. At present it appears to be considered that a child can pass from one standard to a higher with about a hundred and fifty attendances—a feat seldom accomplished, but in the attempt much superficial cramming may be resorted to in order to save the credit of the school, as shown in the percentage of failures. I may here remark that in any estimate I form of the value of the work done at any examination I am not guided solely by numerical results: they cannot, of course, be disregarded, but the state of a school is, in my opinion, shown by the character of the work done in pass subjects, the proficiency and ground covered in the class and additional subjects, and the degree of intelligence shown in the answers given by the scholars. It is much to be regretted that parents and Committees do not see the matter in this light.

I find that there is a general tendency among teachers to rely too much on arithmetic, rather to the detriment of other branches. This subject is certainly well taught as far as regards the work done on slate or paper, but mental arithmetic has never received the attention which its importance merits: it is ridiculous that scholars in the Third and Fourth Standards, after working five or six questions accurately with their pencils, should be unable without these aids to perform quickly and correctly such simple calculations as are daily required in the smallest country store. There are signs of improvement in grammar and composition, though the last named is too frequently spoiled by gross misspelling. I have imposed more difficult special spelling tests this

year. It is not there, however, the mistakes occur so much as in the papers on grammar, composition, and geography. The spelling of geographical names is sometimes so bad that one is forced to the conclusion that the scholars seldom see a map, but receive their instruction entirely by ear. Apart from these errors, most schools show a fair knowledge of geography, that portion which relates to the district in which the school is situated seeming to suffer the most neglect.

The writing is not so good as it was some years ago. I find this to be the case chiefly in the Third and Fourth Standards. I have not had to record many failures in reading this year, but I am afraid the result would sometimes have been very different had the test not been confined to the reading book in use by the class. Questions on the subject matter of the lessons were generally well answered in the lower classes; in the higher the pupils were not so well prepared. It would be an advantage in every way if teachers would take a little trouble to train their pupils to do their work more expeditiously; there is really no reason why the examinations should occupy so much time. If the scholars have been properly taught, and are really fit to pass, very little time will enable them to answer the questions set; if they are not well advanced in their work it is far better that they should fail than that by just "getting through" they should entail upon themselves and their teachers increased labour in preparing for the next higher class.

I cannot say that the class subjects have as a rule received as much attention as I should like. I allude more especially to drawing, object lessons, and elementary science. It appears to me that, at least for the present, nothing more can be done in the direction of technical education in our schools than to encourage the teaching of these branches of knowledge. There has been some improvement in drawing, particularly freehand, and this is due, I firmly believe, to the fact that it is now a "pass" subject in the first three standards. Scale and geometrical drawing do not seem to be so popular among teachers as freehand. It is expected that the visits of Mr. Robinson, drawing instructor, will do much in country districts to awaken some interest in this matter.

In rather more than half the schools under notice elementary science is taught, but except in a few cases with only moderate success. Some teachers have gone to much expense and trouble to procure and make such apparatus as is necessary to illustrate the lessons given, but in many instances book work appears to have been relied upon to produce the desired result. In most schools the three highest classes are grouped for instruction in this subject. Agricultural chemistry would, I believe, be more generally taken in the country schools were it not that the teachers are in some doubt as to what is meant by "efficiently taught." The subject is a wide one, and involves not only such knowledge as may be obtained from books and experiments, but also some practical acquaintance with the actual work of a farm. Professor Tanner says, "Whatever may be our views of the great value of agricultural science, we ought always to remember that the only foundation on which it can rest is a sound and practical knowledge of farming operations."

I have long been of opinion that the object lessons given in our schools are of very little use. Few teachers are able to give these lessons in the proper manner: their sole aim seems to be to give the children detached morsels of information upon some object selected from the animal, vegetable, or mineral kingdom, whereas the true end of these lessons should be cultivation of the powers of observation, and leading the child by easy reasoning to find out things for itself.

I am sorry that I have not been able to devote more time to the inspection, as distinct from the formal examination of the schools in my division of the district. So far as I have been able to observe there is a decided improvement in the methods pursued by the teachers, and they are now nearly all certificated. I wish I could say that they all possess natural aptitude for the work they have chosen: unfortunately some have taken to teaching as a business, "because it seemed as good as anything else," as one remarked to me. Such persons will never really excel, though by constant practice they may at last arrive at some degree of mechanical skill in lesson giving and school keeping. Under the present regulations for the employment, education, and examination of pupil-teachers, candidates will not be indentured until they have served at least three months on probation. This will have the effect of excluding from the service those who are not likely to become good teachers, and who would probably not profit by the course of instruction prescribed. The scheme of examination also has been so arranged that pupil-teachers who have completed their term of service should have no difficulty in passing the certificate examination.

In conclusion, I may state that, on the whole, fair work is being done, every attempt is made to comply with the requirements of the syllabus, the scholars behave well, and the discipline of the schools is satisfactory. The school buildings are, generally speaking, in good condition. The special building reports now required from the Inspectors will no doubt cause more attention to be paid to this matter.

I have, &c.,

The Chairman, Board of Education, Auckland. JOHN S. GOODWIN, Inspector.

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2. MR. FIDLER'S REPORT.

SIR,— Auckland, 8th March, 1889.

I have the honour to submit this annual report on the work of the schools in the northern division of the Auckland District during 1888.

There were in this district at the close of the year, in all, 104 schools, four of which I had not time to visit—namely, the two small schools on the Great Barrier Island, the Long Bay aided school, and that at Takahue. The last named was not open when I was in the neighbourhood. Five small schools have been inspected only—namely, Waipu Cave, Te Moari, Mata, Pukekaroro, Mareretu. I examined in standards ninety-five schools, and inspected fifty-seven, of which twenty were inspected on the day of examination. Ten days were taken up in visiting as many districts *re* applications for new schools. The rest of the year was occupied in reporting on school work, drawing up special reports on various subjects required by the Board, or with work in connection with the pupil-teachers' examination, &c. I submit here Table I., of summary of results:—

Standard Classes.	Presented.	Absent.	Excepted.	Failed.	Passed.	Average Age of those that passed.
						Yrs. mos.
S 7	7	...	...	...	...	...
S 6	95	6	...	34	55	14 8
S 5	242	12	16	103	111	14 3
S 4	398	22	29	111	236	12 11
S 3	533	42	47	152	292	12 1
S 2	672	42	47	135	448	10 4
S 1	601	43	38	60	460	9 4
P.	1,425	...	...	...	...	...
Totals	3,973	167	177	595	1,602	*

* Mean of average age, 12 years 3 months.

The marks accorded for the class and additional subjects show that these are taught with very varying results in the different schools. The above results were obtained from a district in which there are very many small schools, including half-time and aided schools. Thirty-three of the schools examined by me had less than twenty-five scholars on the roll.

In the annual report presented in 1886 I dealt very fully with the conditions under which it seemed to me that small schools could be most efficiently carried on; further experience in the work of inspection has confirmed me in most of the views therein expressed. Many of the pupils attending these schools have to give material aid at home, in farm work, &c.; many of them have also long distances to walk daily. In a number of the small schools teachers have to conduct single-handed many classes. Making allowance for these and other drawbacks, some of which are referred to below, I consider the work done to be on the whole fair. Some of the inefficient teachers, with whom teaching has in olden times been a makeshift, whose employment could only have been a compromise owing to the difficulty formerly experienced of getting teachers who were qualified, have gradually found their way to other occupations. Several beneficial changes in this direction have taken place during the year in consequence of the reports sent in. In many of the schools visited good work was being done throughout, in others the work was passable or very uneven; while seventeen special reports on fifteen different schools were sent in owing to unsatisfactory results or methods of management. Many of the schools where the work ranged from passable to unsatisfactory suffered from the drawbacks above referred to, but also from others. Some were in charge of teachers who had had very little training in the art of teaching. The management of some was marked by want of energy, of thoroughness, of attention to detail, &c. In the case of these the reports sent in draw attention not only to results, but to such matters as ill-constructed or incomplete time tables, uncorrected home-work books, the ignoring of methods recommended by the Board or its Inspectors, or generally a style of management requiring to be braced.

But another cause affecting the work of the schools needs special notice. Nearly a third of the schools examined by me were at the time of my visit for examination being conducted by teachers who have been less than a year in charge. Though, particularly of late, an improvement has been going on in the *personnel* of the teaching staff, the improvement is not to be measured by such frequent changing, which cannot but tend to produce unrest in the minds of the teachers and to lessen their interest in the work of their schools.

In many of the schools the spelling was throughout the standards very bad. I have frequently had to point this out in reports on individual schools.

It has been felt here that the work of the syllabus is somewhat too much for schools which are conducted by one teacher. In such schools, feeling compelled to recognise the difficulties to be contended against, I have accorded a pass to all scholars who have shown proficiency in reading, writing, spelling, arithmetic, and composition, provided that I found the other subjects had been taken up as well as the circumstances would permit.

Freehand drawing from the flat is fairly taught in a great number of schools; model drawing is quite neglected or, for the most part, poorly taught. The little that is attempted in geometrical drawing is fairly done. The suggestion made in my last report, that the work of the drawing master should be extended to the country schools, is being carried out with good results. His teachers' classes in the country are much appreciated. Some good drawing to scale is being done in the schools visited by him.

Some people, apparently misled by the fallacy that the whole education—technical and other—of children, should be obtained in the public schools, would thrust all kinds of subjects into the excellent prescribed course of instruction. Elementary science and drawing are the subjects having a technical bearing which really can be conveniently taught in the primary schools, and for them provision is made by the department's syllabus. It is a pity that the Board should continue in force its resolution *re* time to be devoted to laws of health, as it tends to cripple any effort to carry out properly the department's regulation *re* the teaching of the elements of physics, chemistry, and physiology. About a dozen of the schools visited had suitable materials for the teaching of elementary science. Very few teachers take up agricultural chemistry as part of the work; many are prevented by want of apparatus. This difficulty could be overcome. Mr. J. Grey, of Auckland, has made up complete sets of apparatus and chemicals to illustrate Johnson's Catechism of Agricultural Chemistry, at a total cost not exceeding £3 10s. a set. Could not country Committees, where the teachers desire to take up this subject, obtain the Board's sanction to purchase sets out of the school funds?

I believe the Board makes a rule of advertising for applications when any of the higher positions become vacant: would it not be well to adopt this method in the case of all positions worth more than £100 per annum? I believe that if this suggestion were adopted the Board would

be able to make better selections for the smaller appointments. Again, teachers are classified by the department in nine ranks: when appointments to the more important positions are being made would it not be advisable to hold only those eligible for selection who hold the higher grades of certificates, and to submit only the names of those to the Committees? Some direct stimulus ought to be given to teachers to qualify themselves for the higher grades of certificates.

I have, &c.,

The Secretary, Education Board, Auckland. WM. FIDLER, M.A., Inspector.

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3. MR. AIREY'S REPORT.

SIR,— Auckland, 16th February, 1889.

I have the honour to submit my report on the work of the schools in the Central Division of the Auckland District for the year ending the 31st December, 1888.

There are in this division fifty-eight schools. Of these, I have been unable to visit for examination two small half-time schools at Huia and Whatipu; and the school at New Lynn, which was opened during the year, has not yet been examined. The accompanying table shows the results of the examination of the remaining fifty-five schools, five of which were examined by Mr. O'Sullivan previous to my beginning work at the end of March. I consider the results of the year's examinations to be on the whole satisfactory. Much of the work shown was of very good quality; and the number of schools is small, and the schools themselves comparatively unimportant, from which the results have been wholly or in great part unsatisfactory. While I think thus well of the work in the aggregate, I have observed some weaknesses which I now mention under their different headings.

READING.—In Standard I., Standard II., and to a less degree in Standard III., a good deal of what is called reading is no proof in itself that the children are able to read; it is virtually reciting. The reading work has been got up by heart, and I have often doubted whether children who read with great fluency from their regular book would be able to read even fairly well sentences of not greater difficulty, but which they had not previously seen. This, I think, can only be remedied by a wider range of reading matter in the lower classes. This would probably be objected to by parents on the ground of expense; but it would remove much of the difficulty which is found in getting the children of Standard IV. and higher classes to read fluently and intelligently.

SPELLING.—Writing from dictation is well done in most of the schools; but I have been surprised to find frequent errors in the spelling of common words in the composition and other papers sent in.

WRITING.—Copy writing I have found very good, but there is often a marked want of neatness and care in the other written work.

DRAWING.—A good deal of energy will be required in some schools to prepare the higher classes for the next examination in this subject.

ARITHMETIC.—This subject has been on the whole taught very satisfactorily. What weakness exists is in problem work. Want of an intelligent comprehension of the question and ignorance of the proper process to apply more often causes failure than want of accuracy.

GRAMMAR.—Better grounding in Standard III. and Standard IV. would much assist the teaching of grammar in the higher classes. Composition is often poor in matter. This is caused, I think, by want of observation on the part of the children. Science and object teaching ought to be a great help to good composition.

GEOGRAPHY.—New Zealand geography in Standard III., and mathematical and physical geography in Standard V., are not often taught to my complete satisfaction. A good many teachers appear to depend upon antiquated text-books and atlases for their geographical knowledge of this country. Insignificant villages are magnified into important towns, and it is not a rarity for children to tell me of towns which never had any existence, but which have been marked on old and inaccurate maps of the colony. From Standard V. I rarely get good answers about the motions of the earth, the seasons, &c. So long as this part of geography remains in the syllabus as a portion of Standard V. work some pains should be taken to give the children some clear notion of the earth's movements and the phenomena arising therefrom, as well as a knowledge of the real significance of such terms as "meridian," "zone," &c.

ELEMENTARY SCIENCE.—The amount of science taught and the quality of the teaching vary very much in the different schools. Some teachers have gone to considerable trouble and expense to provide suitable apparatus for illustrating the lessons; others are satisfied with mere book work, and in a good many schools no attempt is made to teach elementary science except what may be contained in the "Laws of Health" or "Lessons on Temperance." In some schools I have been pleased to find that without any special apparatus teachers have well illustrated their science lessons by reference to the common phenomena of nature which may be observed by all.

OBJECT LESSONS.—The general treatment of this subject is one of the least satisfactory in the whole course. Many teachers fail to understand the real aim of object teaching. They laboriously construct lessons from information got from books which the children will in course of time be able to read for themselves, but material for observation which lies at every schoolhouse door is in the main neglected. Lessons are given on the oak and palm, while the children cannot distinguish between the appearance and use of kauri and puriri, which are growing close by, and of which the very building in which the children are is constructed. It is the same with animals, manufactures, and other things. The observing powers of the children are not cultivated by the methods of object teaching which generally prevail.

In the matter of inspection I have been quite unable to overtake the work. Nine schools were inspected this year by Mr. O'Sullivan before my appointment; I have since been able to inspect only twenty. Thus there remain twenty-nine schools which have not been inspected during the year. I can conscientiously say that this omission of inspections is not due to any apathy on my part; as I have spared no labour to visit as many schools as possible. For this reason I have

not spent more than one day in the inspection of even the largest of the city schools, though I am of opinion that one day is not sufficient in the case of schools of more than five hundred children. The order, tone, and discipline of most of the schools are very satisfactory, and the manners and behaviour of the children are creditable to themselves and their teachers.

The following is the summary of results for my district:—

Standard Classes.	Presented.	Absent.	Excepted.	Failed.	Passed.	Average Age of those that passed.
						Yrs. mos.
S 7	41	...	...	...	...	... ...
S 6	265	15	18	42	190	14 6
S 5	677	38	50	200	389	13 5
S 4	1,242	65	95	244	838	12 9
S 3	1,756	98	167	345	1,146	11 6
S 2	1,591	85	123	153	1,230	10 2
S 1	1,602	71	99	160	1,272	8 11
P.	4,113	...	...	...	...	...
Totals ...	11,287	372	552	1,144	5,065	*

* Mean of average age, 11 years 5·5 months.

In addition to the schools reported on above I have inspected and examined the industrial schools at Kohimarama, and St. Mary's, Ponsonby, reports on which I have sent to the department, and the night school which I have reported on to the Board.

I have, &c.,

The Chairman, Board of Education, Auckland. W. H. Airey, B.A., 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	75	...	...	...	...	...
S 6	528	34	22	119	353	14 8
S 5	1,310	87	84	467	672	13 11
S 4	2,337	122	163	544	1,508	12 9
S 3	3,191	200	251	680	2,060	11 7
S 2	3,262	166	217	474	2,405	10 2
S 1	2,977	160	168	266	2,383	9 0
P.	7,716	...	...	...	...	...
Totals ...	21,396	769	905	2,550	9,381	*

Mean of average age, 12 years.

TARANAKI.

Sir,— Education Office, New Plymouth, 4th February, 1889.

I have the honour to submit my report on the schools in the district for the year ending the 31st December, 1888.

The number of schools in operation in the district has been increased by two during the year. After waiting for several years the settlers on the Tariki Road have had a commodious and convenient building erected by the Board. The attendance exceeds the number expected, and I am able to say the scholars attend very regularly. Nearly all are foreigners—Swiss or Poles—and for a time after the opening of the school some difficulty was experienced by the master in conducting the school. During the interval between the inspection and the examination visits good progress was made, especially in the order and behaviour of the scholars, and, though several were far beyond the average ages of the lowest standards, the examination work was taken up and carried out with spirit and earnestness. Fortunately for the school, a teacher that shows much tact and firmness in its management has been obtained. At Eltham Road and Oanui some difficulty has arisen in obtaining sites for schools, owing to the land in both districts being inalienable Native reserves vested in the Public Trustee, who is unable to sell or lease areas on satisfactory conditions to the Board. It is to be hoped that this difficulty will soon be got over, and the schools be erected without further loss of time. Temporary accommodation was obtained in July at Eltham Road in an unoccupied cottage, which was to some extent fitted and arranged as a school. The attendance here is exceptionally good, and the school is in charge of an ex-pupil-teacher, whose efforts are being sustained by the settlers. Now, while arrangements are pending, the best position for each school could be determined, and further delay avoided in the erection of the buildings when the sites are secured.

The erection of the bridge across the Waitara has opened communication with the Ngatimaru Block. Already the greater portion of the land has been either leased or sold to settlers, who are building homes for their families. A school will be required at the township of Tarata, which is fully eleven miles distant from the Inglewood School, and five miles from the nearest school at Tariki Road. I understand that an attendance of twenty could be obtained were the school opened now.

The large reduction in the building grant will completely stop any effort to carry out the intention of economizing the working expenses at the Central and the West Waitara schools by enlarging both buildings and closing the Courtenay Street and East Waitara schools. For several years this work has been delayed by the pressure of other demands on the yearly vote, and I fear the hindrances to economy and efficiency will continue indefinitely to hamper each school's progress. At Waitara the two schools, about a mile apart, have during the past five years been carried on under exceptional difficulties on account of the frequent changes in the staff, arising from the variable and uncertain attendance. Residences are required for ten or eleven schools. No rent allowance is given to teachers that are not provided with dwellings, consequently for such positions the low salaries command a very limited number of applications, from which a selection must necessarily be made. For this reason good results cannot be expected until either a residence is supplied or the salary is increased, to obtain better teaching power. As the majority of the school buildings and residences have been painted the Committees of several districts could effect improvements about the grounds by planting hedges and trees. Applications for new fences or repairs to old ones appear very frequently at the Board's meetings.

With two exceptions, the school accommodation throughout the district is satisfactory. At Waitara West the overcrowding can be easily obviated by the removal of a number of the objectionable dual desks with their high seats, giving an overlooking position, and erecting an infant gallery, and suitable desks for the junior standards. A difficulty, however, exists at Okato, where any future enlargement was overlooked when the plans were prepared. The alterations made some eighteen months ago have certainly given increased space, yet the building is very unsuitable for the present attendance.

The Eltham Road School was the only one not visited for inspection, as it had been but a short time in operation. Pukearuhe, being closed for a few months in the end of the year, was not examined. The examination at Eltham Road was made more for the purpose of ascertaining the classification of the scholars than of adding to the number of passes. Surprise and other visits were likewise made.

The Saturday mid-day classes were continued during the last quarter of the year. Singing lessons, as well as lessons to illustrate the teaching of model and geometrical drawing, as required in Standard IV., were conducted by myself; likewise several teachers gave class lessons on the teaching of numbers and on the elementary tables, required by the preparatory classes. A few female teachers kindly gave their assistance, and the attendance was, though not so large as that of the former year's course, fairly regular and satisfactory. These lessons have done much good, but the weekly expense of travelling prevented many who were anxious to be present from giving the attendance they desired.

Owing to the delay in introducing the proposed new Scholarship Regulations the examination did not take place until January, 1889. It was conducted under the existing regulations, therefore the nominations were few and the results not satisfactory. The indifference generally prevailing throughout the district will continue until the suggested changes have been made, when a healthier tone and greater interest in the annual competitions may be looked for.

The numbers on the school registers show a much smaller increase than usual, exceeding last year's return by twenty only. They are 2,415 for 1888, and 2,395 for 1887. Throughout the year nearly 1,100 have been admitted. Doubtless the majority of these have been readmissions, probably caused by withdrawals on account of the sickness that even now abides in the district. On the other hand, the changing of pupils from one school to another is carried to an excess that indicates an unhealthy tone. The close proximity of a number of schools encourages this practice, which could be greatly lessened by the interference of Committees.

The total attendances for the year are 7,325, as against 7,412 for the preceding year, or 87 less. Last year's, however, were calculated on the working average, which has been discontinued, and the present return shows the strict average. Comparing the returns of December for both years, the later date gives an excess of forty-seven; hence the attendance still continues to indicate improvement.

In a few years the mean average ages of those passing the various standards should reach a better position. Standards I. and II. are higher than last year's, owing to the unusually high averages at the recently opened schools, and at a few backward ones where the averages ranged from ten years to twelve years and a half in Standard I. alone. The Third is more satisfactory, whilst those above are gradually improving and showing in the case of the Fourth that the pass can be made in the twelve months.

For examination 2,169 children attended, which gives a percentage of 89: 1,440 were examined in standards, but the presented number was reduced by the non-attendance of 121; the passes were 974, the failures 355, and the number excepted 110. This information is, however, more fully given in Table I. The percentage of failures has fallen from 32·2 to 26·7, while the percentage of passes has risen from 36·7 to 40. Both percentages give numerically the advancement on last year's results. The schools at Omata, Frankley Road, Lower Kent Road, Huirangi, Opunake, Upland Road, and Tataraimaka failed to make even moderate returns; otherwise the percentages would have stood higher. At Omata the attendance is very unsatisfactory; likewise the unusual number of exceptions both at this school and at Opunake are not creditable to the settlers. The percentages on "class" and "additional subjects" remain about the same, although a great many schools lost marks through the senior pupils taking the freehand drawing only. A higher award for science, however, brings the total marks to an equality with last year's returns.

My own marks awarded on the examination tests and papers return a percentage of 62·8: 59·7 per cent. was the result of the preceding year's examination.

Although I have generally reported the preparatory classes to be in a satisfactory state, yet there are many reasons why attention should be directed to other and better treatment in their

management. As a rule, there is almost an entire absence in the schools of this district of anything like the essential elements that enter largely into successful infant training. Day after day the same daily routine continues, while the little folk, either left to themselves for the greater part of the day or toiling away under the control of some one whose efforts are not unfrequently misdirected, drift into a state of inactivity and indifference, which no subsequent effort appears to be able to withdraw them from. This state arises solely from the fact that the small annual payment to the female assistants does not secure the appointment of efficient persons for these positions. School Committees seek the services of an assistant, whilst teachers, rather than be burdened with incompetency and friction, prefer the appointment of pupil-teachers whom they can, at any rate, control. The remedy is to raise the present assistant's salary of £50, and the scale of payments to female teachers, so that experienced teachers, competent to undertake the responsibility of their position or the whole duty of the smaller schools, may be secured. Meanwhile the foundations for future progress are being laid, and the work goes on apparently without hindrance. Surely the classes whose management requires the greatest sympathy and skill from their instructors deserve kinder treatment and greater recognition from the Board.

The weakest "pass-subjects" have been arithmetic and grammar. The first-named has improved in accuracy; the passes also are greater in number; and, moreover, the subject has secured greater attention in Standard II., where the results were so indifferent last year. To test each pupil independently, a printed paper in mental arithmetic formed part of the arithmetic test in the Third and Fourth Standards; but I am compelled to state that the results showed that its instruction in the greater number of schools was about as weak as it could possibly be. The questions presented no difficulty to those who had been faithfully and systematically taught. The habitual neglect or fitful treatment of the subject is unquestionably the reason of so many failures to work the standard problems. If teachers would seek to anticipate the work of the following standard by giving a lesson for a few minutes daily to each class on some definite plan, their teaching of arithmetic would be more successful, and less time be wasted in vain explanation of a principle that ought to have been previously grasped. Delivering the questions when required in quick succession, let the daily exercise be conducted with spirit, and its aim be to incite every child to greater mental activity. Questions should be practical and useful, framed with easy numbers, and applicable to the every-day life of a child. Grammar was found to be weak in the inflection work of Standard IV.; the case relationship in parsing was often omitted. I have frequently drawn attention to the latter, and will deal severely with this practice in future. The work of Standard III. is on good lines, while the same can be said of the composition of each standard; indeed, this subject is yearly receiving greater consideration with improving results. Careless scribbling and ciphering are frequently met with in the test papers. This is, of course, the natural outcome of the teacher's indifference and low standard in his daily supervision. Many mistakes are also traceable to this cause, as well as to the limited number of periodical tests, or to their entire absence. Yet teachers express their astonishment at the mistakes and the failures of their scholars, whose knowledge has never been independently tested.

The other "pass subjects" are progressing satisfactorily. Referring to writing, I would urge teachers to make good use of the blackboard and of Vere Foster's blank copy book No. 15 for collective lessons before introducing the books indicated for the lower standards. Wherever this plan has been tried the writing has made material progress. Drawing will require all the time that the time-table can allow; therefore it should be taken in hand without delay.

The Ladies' Sewing Committee, in their report, suggest that a uniform calico should be provided to all schools. For some years past a large number of the standard specimens have been made of inferior material, not unfrequently purchased by the teacher at her own expense. The work has consequently not been a fair test of the pupil's ability, labouring under such unfavourable conditions. To obviate this difficulty, I suggest that each school be supplied with all the material required for the specimens, and after the annual examination of sewing each girl may purchase her own work at the cost price of the material, the remainder to be submitted to the public for sale at prices fixed by the Ladies' Sewing Committee. Any surplus of receipts over expenditure could be yearly applied to the purchase of prizes for furthering the improvement of sewing in the schools of the district. In connection with the recent examination of sewing, the school standing lowest in position of merit last year has obtained the maximum number of marks.

But seldom have I had cause to complain of the behaviour of the pupils, and, although the tone of all the schools is not quite satisfactory, their discipline and control reflect much credit on the teachers. Though improvement has been effected in the manners of the children during the past five years, still there are localities where the scholars can be more respectful in their bearing to their teachers.

Before concluding, I would urge the Board to consider the question of making the annual holidays at a time more suitable to the school districts than as at present arranged. In the country the many occupations connected with dairy farming compel parents to withdraw their children from school to give assistance at home, hence the school average is lowered and the work is interrupted. Were the School Committees allowed to fix the date of closing this trouble would be avoided and the school attendance be maintained.

In a few words I desire to convey my sense of indebtedness to the teachers who have so successfully aided me in bringing the work of instruction within the schools to so satisfactory a position, and to ask their co-operation in any future action that may assist in still further raising the position of the district. With much confidence I assure the Board that many of the schools are now conducted with earnestness by competent, zealous, and painstaking teachers, who are worthy of its confidence, and whose efforts should at least command more of the respect and the good will of the district settlers.

I have, &c.,

The Chairman, Board of Education, Taranaki. WILLIAM MURRAY, Inspector.

SUMMARY OF RESULTS FOR THE WHOLE DISTRICT.

Standard Classes.	Presented.	Absent.	Excepted.	Failed.	Passed.	Average Age of those that passed.
S 7	1	...	...	...	...	...
S 6	19	...	...	5	14	14·5
S 5	97	4	6	36	51	14·3
S 4	263	16	12	83	152	12·8
S 3	388	43	35	125	185	11·8
S 2	421	28	31	70	292	10·4
S 1	372	30	26	36	280	9·3
P.	871	...	...	...	...	...
Totals ...	2,432	121	110	355	974	*

* Mean of average age, 12·2 years.

WANGANUI.

SIR,— Education Board Office, Wanganui, 25th February, 1889.

I have the honour to submit my fifth annual report on primary education in the Wanganui District.

WORK OF THE YEAR.—The work of the year opened with the supervision of the Teachers' Certificate Examination and the Civil Service Examination in January. Before the end of February all the statistics of 1887 required by the department, and my annual report, were forwarded to the Secretary. All the schools open for twelve months—namely, seventy-eight—were examined, and, in addition, seventy-four visits of inspection were paid. Altogether, 118 days were spent in examination, and fifty-one in inspection. Of the seventy-eight schools, twenty-one were examined between March and June, and the majority were inspected, while the remaining fifty-seven were examined continuously from 23rd July to 21st December. The examination schedules of each school and my reports were posted to the Board's Secretary within from one to five days of each examination, and within the same time I made out and forwarded duplicate copies to the teachers through their Committees. This of course entailed a great deal of night work after each examination, but during the last three months of the year such work was somewhat lessened owing to the help of a clerk. During the last week of June I examined thirty-six pupil-teachers. Of these nine passed for the first or highest class, and one failed; seven passed for the second class, and two failed; nine passed for the third class, and seven failed; and one passed for the fourth class. The work on the whole was good, except in the case of some candidates in the third class. And here I may say that I am much pleased with the improvement that has taken place during the past few years in the examination work of the pupil-teachers. At the Government Certificate Examination in January, 1888, eleven pupil-teachers either completed, passed, or obtained partial success towards, E; and of these eleven six were not yet out of their pupil-teacher time, and two were only in the middle of their third year. Such a result is very gratifying as regards the scholarship of the candidates, especially as a few years ago a pupil-teacher just out of his time could not, as a rule, approach the requirements of the E examination. But I am pleased to be able to state that many pupil-teachers, in addition to possessing this very necessary scholarship, handle their classes well, and give promise of becoming, with more experience, very capable teachers. Some pupil-teachers out of their time have been promoted during the year to the rank of assistant, and some have charge of country schools. At the same time with the pupil-teachers I examined the candidates for the scholarships offered by the Board. Twenty pupils competed—ten for the senior and ten for the junior scholarships; and nine of the Board's schools were represented, and two secondary schools. . . . .

NUMBER OF SCHOOLS. ATTENDANCE.—At the close of the school year eighty-four schools (including two half-time schools and twelve aided schools) were in active operation, having an average weekly roll number of 7,019, and a strict average of 5,275, or 75 per cent. These eighty-four schools were officered by 165 teachers (92 males and 73 females), made up as follows: 31 head teachers, 52 sole teachers in charge of schools, 27 assistant teachers, and 55 pupil-teachers. The roll number of pupils shows an increase of only 220 for the year; and, as several new schools have been opened, some of the old ones must have declined in numbers. Formerly the working average was in vogue, but it has lately been abolished, and consequently the salaries of teachers of country schools are liable to very material reduction by wet weather.

EXAMINATION IN STANDARDS.—Of the eighty-four schools in operation at the end of the school year, seventy-eight had been open for twelve months or over, and each of these was examined. New schools were opened during the year at Kapuni, Bird Road, Kaupokonui, Whakamara, Kairanga, and Taikorea. These schools were not examined, but the four open for six months were inspected. In addition to the foregoing, buildings have been erected at Linton, Fitzherbert, and Birmingham, and a school will shortly be opened at each place.

On the days appointed for the examinations there were 6,732 children (3,535 boys and 3,177 girls) on the school rolls, of whom 4,310, or 64 per cent., were presented for promotion in the six standards, 2,401 were in the preparatory classes, and 21 had already passed Standard VI. Of the 4,310 children presented for promotion in standards, 4,086, or 94·8 per cent., attended and were

examined, 224 were absent, 240 were excepted, 869 failed, and 2,977 passed the requirements. The percentage of failures was 22·59, and the percentage of passes on the number examined in standards, omitting exceptions, was 77·41. In 1887 the percentages were 27·06 and 72·94 respectively, so that there has been an improvement of nearly 5 per cent. for 1888.

The following table (Table A) gives a condensed summary of the examination results during the past two years. Table B shows the result in each standard, and also the average age of the children. Table C (not printed) gives every information with regard to individual schools.

TABLE A.

—	1887.	1888.
1. Presented in Standards I. to VI. inclusive	4,102	4,310
2. Preparatory classes	2,372	2,401
3. Classes above Standard VI....	29	21
4. Number on rolls on days of examination	6,503	6,732
5. Percentage of roll number presented in Standards I. to VI. inclusive	63·07	64·02
6. Examined in Standards I. to VI. inclusive	3,874	4,086
7. Absent in Standards I. to VI. inclusive	228	224
8. Excepted in Standards I to VI. inclusive	286	240
9. Failed in Standards I. to VI. inclusive	971	869
10. Passed in Standards I. to VI. inclusive	2,617	2,977
11. Percentage of passes, calculated on roll number (4) ...	40·24	44·22
12. Percentage of failures	27·06	22·59
13. Percentage of passes on number examined in standards (6)	67·55	72·86
14. Percentage of passes on number examined in standards, omitting exceptions	72·94	77·41

TABLE B.

No. of Schools examined in each Standard.	Standard Classes.	Presented.	Absent.	Excepted.	Failed.	Passed.	Average Ages of those that passed.	Percentage of Failures in Standards.
							Yrs. mos.	
12	S 7	21	...	...	...	...	... ...	...
41	S 6	168	6	7	26	129	14 3	16·8
64	S 5	339	15	8	93	223	13 7	29·4
73	S 4	623	39	43	180	361	12 9	33·3
74	S 3	1,045	72	68	308	597	11 9	34·0
75	S 2	1,103	51	69	147	836	10 6	14·9
74	S 1	1,032	41	45	115	831	9 3	12·2
No. of schools examined in one or more standards, 78.		4,331	224	240	869	2,977	*	22·59

* Mean of average age, 12 years.

Upon comparing Table B with the similar table in my last report I am pleased to notice an improvement in every respect. Thus, though in 1888 208 children more were examined than in 1887, only 224 were absent, 240 were excepted, and 869 failed in 1888, as compared with 228, 286, and 971 respectively in 1887; while in the year just over 2,977 have passed, as against 2,617 in 1887. At the same time I should like to see the number absent and the number excepted still more reduced. The two chief schools in Wanganui were responsible for far too many absentees in standards, no less than twenty-seven at the boys' school and sixteen at the girls' school (or forty-three out of a total of 224 absentees for the whole district) failing to put in an appearance on the examination days. In the percentage column of Table B I find for 1888 a decrease in the percentage of failures—that is, an increase in the percentage of passes—in Standard VI. of 17·9, in Standard V. of 5·9, in Standard IV. of 6·1, in Standard III. of 1·9, in Standard II. of 6·8, in Standard I. of 2·9. There is thus a very great improvement in Standard VI., a considerable improvement in Standards II., IV., and V., and a slight improvement in Standards I. and III. Arithmetic, grammar, dictation, and reading were the subjects, in the order named, in which pupils in Standard III. failed most frequently; but it must be remembered that in this class there was an additional pass subject this year—namely, drawing. No doubt percentages are deceitful when used to compare one school with another, for it by no means follows that a school which has obtained 100 per cent.

of passes is taught in a superior manner to a school which has obtained 90 per cent.: in the latter all the passes may have been strong, in the former many may have been weak; while irregular attendance may have militated against the success of one school and not against the success of the other. Percentages, however, calculated for all the schools in a district must tend to show the quality of the work done in the district, and therefore it is pleasing to see such an improvement in them. On the other hand, while some very excellent results were attained at several schools, about three large schools and about fourteen small ones sent in work varying from bad to very indifferent. In a report of this class I do not like to name unsatisfactory schools, but if the members of the Board look at Table C (not printed) they will notice that many of the worst are situated in Wanganui and Rangitikei Counties, while one very backward school is in Manawatu County, and another in Patea County.

The following (Table D) I consider a most important one, showing as it does the number examined and the percentage successful in each of the seven pass subjects in each class; consequently, though it entails the expenditure of a great deal of time and trouble, I keep it each year. On comparing this table with a similar one for 1887, I find that there has been an improvement in the percentage of passes in reading of 5·6, in spelling and dictation of 1·4, in writing of 2·1, in arithmetic of 6·1, in grammar and composition of 7·4, in geography of 5·9, in drawing of 10·7.

TABLE D.

Subject.		Reading.		Dictation and Spelling.		Writing.		Arithmetic.		Grammar and Composition.		Geography.		Drawing.	
Class.		Number Examined.	Per Cent. Passed.	Number Examined.	Per Cent. Passed.	Number Examined.	Per Cent. Passed.	Number Examined.	Per Cent. Passed.	Number Examined.	Per Cent. Passed.	Number Examined.	Per Cent. Passed.	Number Examined.	Per Cent. Passed.
Standard VI.	...	162	96·3	162	92·0	162	96·9	162	77·7	162	61·7	162	82·1	...	...
Standard V.	...	324	91·0	324	75·6	324	96·0	324	73·1	324	68·8	324	63·2	...	...
Standard IV.	...	584	84·2	584	67·3	584	92·5	584	66·6	584	65·4	...	...	...	...
Standard III.	...	973	79·3	973	73·5	973	92·0	973	62·4	973	66·0	973	79·5	973	92·1
Standard II.	...	1,052	84·5	1,052	83·5	1,052	94·3	1,052	77·4	...	...	...	...	1,052	94·3
Standard I.	...	991	83·8	991	87·4	991	95·0	991	85·3	...	...	...	...	991	92·6
Totals ...	1888	4,086	84·1	4,086	79·4	4,086	93·9	4,086	73·8	2,043	65·9	1,459	76·2	3,016	93·0
	1887	3,874	78·5	3,874	78·0	3,874	91·8	3,874	67·7	1,824	58·5	1,221	70·3	2,050	82·3

Possible number of passes in subjects, 22,862; actual number of passes in subjects, 18,802; percentage of passes in subjects, 82·2.

INSTRUCTION.—*Reading* slowly improves, but there is still much to be desired, for in comparatively few schools do the majority of pupils read with distinct articulation, proper emphasis, and feeling; while in some pupils have not mastered the mechanical difficulties of the text. Indeed, I am convinced that, if reading were marked on the same hard and fast lines as arithmetic, the percentage of passes in the former subject would not be over seventy. The following, I think, are some of the reasons why reading is not as strong as it should be: (1.) The children in the preparatory classes in many schools are unable, when they are raised to the class preparing for Standard I., to read beyond a few simple sentences.—Certainly in a few of the best schools pupils in this class can read with fair ease and expression a very simple book, but as a rule all that can be done is to read a few first primer cards, while at some schools only disconnected words have been mastered. If the upper division of the preparatory class could read Nelson's "First Reader" (old series), or Nelson's "Queen Infant Reader," little difficulty would be found with reading in Standard I. The Rev. R. Wilde, one of Her Majesty's Inspectors, pointed out, in his report on elementary education in Victoria, that in England "children of seven years of age, when transferred from the infants' department to the class preparing for Standard I., can read with good expression at sight from an easy book, can write and spell well, can add and subtract; can do, in fact, all the work laid down by you (Victoria) for Class I." (2.) The matter in the reading book used in Standard I. in several schools is far too meagre and simple.—The book referred to is being gradually discarded, but I am convinced that, to obtain really good reading in Standard I. and Standard II., two books must be used during the year in each class. As it is, I often find that pupils in these classes read their one little book by heart. Let me quote again from Mr. Wilde's report: "Again, with you I notice that your very youngest classes of infants and your children up to eight years of age have only to master the same one small reading book, over which they may have spent two, or even three, years. I notice also that your second class has only one book for reading. These are gone over and over again until the children know them by heart. In one school I desired the children in the second class to close their books, and the reading went on just as if the books had been open, much to the amusement of the teacher and the delight of the children themselves, who thought they were performing a very clever and difficult feat. With us Class I. must have two books, neither of which has been previously read in the infants' class; and Class II. the same number of more advanced books. It is, I am inclined to think, our system of infants' departments that enables us to require much more from the two lowest classes, and so to advance our children to the highest classes at an earlier age than you." (3.) In the schools officered by only one teacher the pupils do not get nearly

sufficient practice in reading.—This could be remedied to a great extent if the lower classes were so well advanced that two standards could be grouped in the reading lesson, as Standard I. with Standard II., or Standard II. with Standard III., or Standard III. with Standard IV. (4.) In the upper standards the reading is not sufficiently varied, and the matter in many books is of poor quality.—In these standards also two books should be used, one of which need not necessarily be what is known as a "Reader." I am quite certain that many pupils who know their school readers fairly well could not read text before unseen—say an article from a newspaper—correctly and intelligently. It would be a good plan to ask pupils to bring a newspaper to school once a week, and to take the day's reading lesson from it. I consider that, where only one book is used in a standard during the year, Nelson's new Readers are, by themselves, too simple in Standard V. and Standard VI. (5.) Reading is too often merely heard, not taught.—As in a former report I have written fully upon this last, I shall say nothing about it now. I may, however, point out a common method of teaching reading, seen at inspection visits, which appears to me a very bad one. A pupil is asked to read a short portion of the text, then another pupil follows after the first, then another, and so on until the lesson is finished, when it is begun again and treated in the same manner. Hence in a large class the same lesson is gone over many times, until the pupils are heartily sick of it. Far better, it appears to me, would it be to get one pupil to read a few paragraphs, and then to invite other pupils to endeavour to improve upon the rendering given. When the teacher is satisfied he proceeds to treat the next few paragraphs in the same manner. By this method, with a little tact, a wholesome spirit of emulation may be educed. Distinct articulation needs insisting upon. Many children drop their consonants, especially at the beginning and end of words, when they are of like kind. It is very difficult to get rid of a careless habit of slurred utterance when such is once formed. Also, at all schools pupils should be required to speak out well. Mumbling is far too common, and is resorted to by pupils merely to cover their ignorance. I noticed during the year that the reading in a few schools where it was so loud as to be positively disagreeable had this redeeming and fine feature—almost every pupil was quite at home with the text. The reading of "a" as "eh," and "the" before a consonant as "thee" should not be allowed; and care should be taken to join "a," "an," and "the" with the words following them. Some teachers themselves err with regard to these words in reading, but more often in dictation. In many schools the habit of emphasizing all pronouns is very prevalent. Of the "subject matter of the reading lessons" pupils were generally ignorant. Such ignorance was, I think, due partly to neglect of the subject, and partly to pupils being asked during the year to learn merely the meanings of words given at the top of the reading lessons. But these meanings, too, were often not known; while few could express sentences in their own words—such, for instance, as "Do your duty in the station in which you are placed," "The fisherman was firm," "He was quite of your mind in the matter."

Recitation varied from excellent to very bad. In some schools the recitation indulged in must have done incalculable harm to the reading, for I found pupils altering the text in a senseless manner and slurring words.

Dictation and Spelling.—In dictation there has been a great improvement in punctuation in the upper classes. Spelling was generally good in Standard I. and Standard VI., fair in Standard II., moderate in Standard V. and Standard III., and poor in Standard IV. On the whole I consider spelling a weak subject in this district. At not a few schools Standard III. and Standard IV. sent in very bad work. The writing of "their" for "there," "where" for "were," "to" for "too," and suchlike, was a very common style of error in these classes; while for longer words of every-day use such absurd combinations of letters were made that I frequently could not tell what a pupil intended to write without comparing his paper with another paper. The first class of error is merely the result of carelessness; as for the second, even if a pupil cannot spell a word correctly, he ought to be able to approach the phonetic rendering of it, and to put a vowel in each syllable. Children require to be trained to sound each syllable, and to have their attention drawn to such terminations as "ion," "ous," "able," &c., and to other common combinations of letters. Again, words that perhaps may not be in the reading books should be treated, for I frequently found the names of the days of the week and of the month misspelled, while in composition such words as "paddock," "fence," "acre," &c., often fared badly. At the examination teachers always were asked to dictate the passages to their pupils, and I may here point out some matters with regard to dictation in school that need attention. It is not advisable to dictate one word at a time, for single words are easily misunderstood. The pauses should be made between the logical elements of the sentence, so that each piece to be remembered by the pupil carries a meaning of its own. In correcting dictation the method that, on visits of inspection, I have seen some teachers pursue—the method of spelling out the words—should not be practised. The eye has a good deal to do with correct spelling, so pupils should correct from books after, if desired, changing slates. I would especially recommend teachers to take up only about half the time in giving out the passage, and to spend the remainder in examination, correction, and a little oral teaching. It will be found a good plan to keep a list of words that are commonly misspelled, and, in a future lesson, to get pupils to write sentences embodying these words. Dictation in the upper classes should be written on paper; and misspelled words in exercise books, in whatever work they may be, should never be passed over.

Writing on the whole may be said to be a very strong subject in this district. At a great many schools the writing in copy books, on transcription papers, and on slates is very good indeed; at a few schools, while the writing in books is fair, that on paper is very poor, owing to pupils being allowed throughout the year to form the letters in different style from that which they are supposed to copy in books. In Standard II. transcription on slates was often excellent and seldom poor. At some schools the ruling on slates is too small, as also the writing in the upper classes. It should be borne in mind that small writing, like low reading, is intended to cloak faults.

Arithmetic showed considerable improvement, and the percentage of passes for all classes, 73·8, may be considered a fairly high one for this subject. In Standard VI. the improvement was very

marked, the percentage of passes, 77·7, being high, and 16 per cent. over that of last year. In Standard V. the percentage has risen from 62 to 73, and I found a great improvement in fractions. Hawera and Waverley sent in exceptionally good work in Standard V. and Standard VI. In Standard IV., while the percentage has increased by 9, it is still low—66·6. In these upper classes pupils broke down oftener in money problems than in any other sum (indeed, in Standard VI. little problems involving nothing but reduction in avoirdupois weight and the application of the simple money rules were often not attempted); while mensuration in Standard VI. sometimes, and reduction of weights and measures in Standard IV. and Standard V. frequently, were very poor. In Standard IV. the working of bills of parcels showed marked improvement. Standard III. shows the lowest percentage of passes—62·4. Failures were generally the result of bad notation in the simple rules and of inaccurate working in the money rules. In Standard II. very fine work was often done, especially in the smaller schools, where pupils as a rule were more careful than those in the larger schools. The figuring frequently was better in this class than in Standard III. At Bunnythorpe, Ashurst, Stanway, and Whenuakura exceptionally excellent work was sent in by the pupils in Standard II. In Standard I. the work often was excellent, but at some schools pupils required a great deal of coaching. As to the way arithmetic is treated by the teachers, there is still too much examining by giving tests, and not sufficient teaching. In place of putting before children cards which have five or six sums, each in a different rule, all sums worked at one teaching lesson should be given in the same rule. Back rules should be kept up by repetition on a particular day, as Friday, and cards should be used only occasionally, and then merely to test the progress made. For this testing process in the first half of the school year cards with all the sums in the same rule would be found the best kind. A common and bad practice is that of finger counting, which I noticed often in Standard I. and Standard II., and sometimes even in Standard III. and Standard IV. The addition tables should be taught systematically (see Calkins's "Object Lessons") as well as the multiplication tables. The ball frame is not used sufficiently in many schools. With regard to putting down the work, the papers generally were very neat indeed, and the arrangement good; but I would draw attention to the fact that now, when, after a great deal of trouble, I have at last got pupils to show the explanatory writing to each step in a problem, they omit showing all the work. I hope teachers will remember that both writing and work must be put on the paper. The proving of sums before copying them from slates is, I am glad to say, becoming more common. Small figuring might be avoided.

Grammar, with Composition, shows an improvement of over 7 per cent. in the number of passes; but still the total percentage is again this year far lower in this subject than in any other of the seven pass subjects. As to grammar, in Standard V. and Standard VI. the verb was often not at all known, while in Standard IV. and Standard III. guesswork was very common. Considering that the majority of English verbs are conjugated in one of two ways, it is not easy to see where the difficulty lies; nor can an excuse be made for pupils that fail to distinguish future from present in the verb, or plural from singular in the noun. If grammar is intelligently taught it is second to no other subject as an instrument of intellectual discipline, so I should be sorry to see it removed from the syllabus. Analysis was rather weak in Standard VI.: the writing of the passage first with the words in grammatical order should insure better work. Analysis, with synthesis, can be made a most useful aid in teaching higher reading, and also composition. I recollect several years ago curing a large Sixth Standard of frequently using "and," "it," and the like, in commencing clauses in composition by writing several sentences on the blackboard and stating after each the position I wished it to take in a complex sentence, as principal clause, appositional phrase, adjective clause, &c. In a few days pupils learned how finite verbs might be dropped in favour of participles, how clauses might be commenced with the conjunction "that," the relatives, or the adverbial conjunctions; and at the same time they improved their knowledge of analysis. Composition varied very much in Standard III., from five lines without a capital in some schools to a filled sheet of foolscap of really good work in others. At Palmerston the composition in Standard III. was remarkably good. In the upper classes the subject continues to gradually improve, more especially in the style of writing letters.

Geography showed very great improvement in Standard VI. In Standard V. the work was very moderate, the percentage of passes being only 63. Mapping, especially in Standard IV., was often very poor. When at some schools excellent maps are sent in, I can see no reason why at others even the outline should bear no resemblance to that of the country it is supposed to represent. Commercial geography, in so far as a study of it involves a knowledge of the natural products of different countries and of the industries of the inhabitants of such countries, might receive more attention, both at the geography lesson proper and at advanced object lessons. If there are any special industries in a school district—dressing of flax, sawing of timber, for instance—they should receive full consideration. It is of infinitely greater moment that children should know the chief commercial productions and manufactures of New Zealand and important countries than that they should be aware that the River Yang-tse-kiang is a few miles longer or shorter than the Hoang-ho. But I have found whole classes unable to name the chief wool-producing countries of the world; and I can call to mind a school where, though in Standard VI. descriptive geography was well known, I was informed that cotton was largely grown in England. Charts or pictures of the vegetable productions, industries, &c., of New Zealand would form a desirable addition to the apparatus in our schoolrooms. The remarks on geography in my report of last year are again applicable this year.

Extra Subjects.—Last year I pointed out that I considered that some of the extra subjects should be compulsory and some optional, and that the number which a teacher was required to take up should vary according to the size of his school, and, consequently, the number of his staff. I now see no reason to alter this opinion. It seems to me both hard upon the sole teacher of a small school, and prejudicial to the education of his pupils, that he should be obliged to teach as many extra subjects as the headmaster of a large school where each standard has a separate teacher.

In the former class of school the most important subjects—more especially reading—suffer materially, while the veriest smattering of some of the extra subjects is obtained. I also pointed out that I considered drawing should be made a class subject, at all events, in the higher three standards. Of this I am now more than ever convinced. According to the present syllabus drawing will be a pass subject this year in Standard IV.; and if the full requirements—drawing to scale and geometrical drawing, in addition to freehand drawing in a book authorised by the Minister—are insisted upon, there is no doubt in my mind but that the majority of pupils in country schools will fail in the subject, unless, indeed, Inspectors disregard the regulations by granting a pass to pupils that have met the requirements in freehand only. It is not at all likely that the majority of parents will supply their children with the instruments necessary for geometrical drawing; and if pupils have not done this work, are they to be denied passes in their standards? Let me not be misunderstood in this matter. There are many educational advantages attached to the practice of drawing—amongst others, accuracy in observing and thinking is promoted, the graphic memory is improved, the imagination is exercised, and the inventive power afforded scope; it combines training of the mind, the eye, and the hand—so the subject should be kept in the syllabus, but, for some years to come, when perhaps all our teachers will be able to teach it, as a class subject. Some models and casts are needed in each school. *History.*—The teaching of history as a formal subject in Standard III. might well be abolished, and its place taken by the reading of an historical reader. *Elementary Science.*—Johnston's "Catechism of Agricultural Chemistry" does not appear to me to be a suitable book, though no doubt pupils will be highly delighed if some of the experiments treated therein are shown to them. What is wanted is a text book dealing particularly with the kinds of soil, minerals, &c., found in New Zealand.

Registers, as a rule, are neatly and correctly kept. Occasionally I found that the attendances were not added daily, as required by law. The attendance of pupils, I believe, has improved somewhat in regularity, but there is still a great deal of unpunctuality. Many pupils who, according to the registers, have attended fairly regularly, have nevertheless missed many lessons during the year through coming to school late or through leaving early. The general habit of allowing late-comers to go straight to their seats on arrival, without questioning them, is a bad one. When late-comers are led to be ashamed of being seen by their teacher and their punctual schoolfellows, unpunctuality will cease. Time-tables should not be departed from shortly before the examination for the purpose of "cramming" some particular subject. The benefit of such forced instruction will not last.

Board's Regulations.—The regulation with regard to reporting at once to the Board the absences, arrivals, or departures of teachers is more honoured in the breach than in the observance. Frequently, too, I found that the fact of no school being held on a particular day was not reported to the Board. Some teachers make a practice of taking longer midsummer holidays than those authorised.

Discipline.—Upon the whole teachers are to be congratulated upon the general government of their schools. Really bad conduct, in so far as I am aware, is almost unknown, though I have noticed one or two cases, which, sad to say, and strange though it may appear, were due to parental prompting. In many schools the manners of the pupils are very pleasing, in very few are they bad.

Before closing this report I should like to remark upon the very great dissimilarity in the quality of the work at one school and at another. Sometimes the difference is to be seen in all classes and subjects, sometimes in one or two subjects or in one or two classes. At one school grammar is bad and arithmetic excellent, while at the neighbouring school the positions are reversed. At Whenuakura all the pupils in the Fourth Standard worked and proved on paper every sum in arithmetic (six), while at some other schools the pupils in the same standard failed utterly in the same sums. At Terrace End a large first division of the preparatory class wrote on slates all the tables to twelve times, and the second division wrote to seven times; but at some schools the pupils in Standard I. were not quite at home with five times. At Aramoho all the pupils in Standard I. (twenty-five) made the possible number of passes in subjects (125), and in Standard II. 187 passes in subjects were made out of a possible 190. In grammar also the attainments were very dissimilar at different schools. One day, perhaps, I thought that an examination card in arithmetic or in grammar was too difficult, so poorly were the questions answered; but the following day this idea was dispelled, owing to the same card being easily "cleared" by the majority of pupils at another school. Again, the time taken over the work at examination varied considerably. In some schools the whole morning was spent at arithmetic, while at others not only this subject but also geography, and sometimes dictation, were finished in the same length of time. It appears to me that the Teachers' Association might help in a large measure to do away with this unequal state of things. Cannot teachers at their meetings compare their methods of handling the various subjects, and try honestly to help each other? I regret that no attempt has yet been made to start a teachers' library. In conclusion I am glad to be able to say that the number of weak schools diminishes yearly, and that the number of strong passes increases.

I have, &c.,

W. H. Vereker-Bindon, M.A., Inspector.

The Chairman, Board of Education, Wanganui.

WELLINGTON.

Sir,— Wellington, 27th February, 1889.

I have the honour to present my fifteenth annual report on the working condition of the primary State schools in the Wellington District.

Seventy-one schools have been examined, representing 10,008 children. Of this number on the books, 6,641 were presented for examination in standards, and 5,431 passed. The percentage of passes on the number presented is 86·4.

As compared with last year's results, there are five additional schools in operation—that is to say, Mauriceville East, Pirinoa, Whakataki, Alfredton and Manakau; and there are 597 more children in attendance, 892 more presented in standards, and 705 more passes. The percentage of passes (86·4) is 3·4 higher than in 1886, but hardly so high as it was last year, when, as pointed out in my report, it was abnormally high, owing to many schools being examined later than usual during my absence in England.

I am well satisfied with this year's results as a whole, especially when it is borne in mind that those schools which had a longer time for preparation last year have had a shorter time this. Also there appears a marked increase in the numbers passed in the higher standards, as will be seen in the following table:—

	Passed in 1887.	Passed in 1888.
S 1	1,171	1,602
S 2	1,195	1,133
S 3	1,043	1,074
S 4	736	799
S 5	399	550
S 6	177	216
S 7	7	57

The large increase in the number passed in Standard I. this year is due to my action in passing, with the consent of the head teachers, any fair unpresented candidates in the second preparatory class who should make good material another year for Standard II. But, whilst I have been to some extent lenient with regard to neglected and backward children over nine years of age, I have been more exacting with candidates under eight years of age.

Although I am satisfied with the results as a whole, looking at the matter for the present through the medium of standard passes, I am sensible of much weakness in particular schools and in particular classes, and I know that the generally satisfactory condition of the whole is in part due to the more intelligent and more faithful work of many of the largest schools. I find, in twenty-six small schools, each under one teacher, the percentage of passes is 84; in twelve schools, with less than 100 pupils each, and under more than one teacher, the percentage is 79; in thirteen larger schools, with from 100 to 356 attending, it is 83; whilst in the eight largest schools, each with an attendance exceeding 350, it rises to nearly 90. Clearly the general average result of 86·4 per cent. of passes is mainly due to the work of the largest schools being so satisfactory.

So unsatisfactory, however, is the condition of some schools that from 42 to 72 per cent. of the candidates presented in standards failed to pass. The weakest were Ohariu, Tawa Flat, Porirua, and Cross Creek. Unsatisfactory work was also met with in certain classes of larger schools, and sometimes in those which on the whole are well conducted. In some cases the class teachers were more or less incompetent, and the head teacher had neglected the periodical examination of those classes, and had thus failed to detect the weakness in time to remedy the defect. In three cases of fairly large schools the head teachers' own upper class work in arithmetic was weak. Further, there are schools whose results never attain any degree of excellence; and almost every alternate year the work shows positive weakness. The teachers of such schools are called upon to use greater diligence and care.

Thus far I have estimated the work of the year by the number of standard passes made, which, as every educationist knows, is by no means an exhaustive method of testing the value of the teaching. Still, whatever objection may be made to estimating work done by standard passes, I am sure of this: that no school can lay any claim to efficiency in which over 40 per cent. of the pupils fail to meet minimum requirements. In the schools reported by me as being especially weak there is no ground for such objection, for in them the best of the work is bad. It is not too much to say that in the seventy-one schools examined every head teacher put his own impress on his management; and the general style and character of the work varied with every class teacher. I will, however, attempt a sketch of the general scope and quality of the teaching.

Especial attention has been given to reading and recitation, and the style of both is much improved in many schools. I have met with class after class in which at least two-thirds of the pupils read with expression and some culture, as well as with accuracy. I notice a tendency to pronounce "i" as "oi," and "oo" as "ew." Thus, "fine" is pronounced "foine," and "spoon" is pronounced "spewn." Generally the enunciation is good, and much better than it is in most parts of the United Kingdom. I have found that wherever the reading is decidedly fluent and easy the class spelling is invariably good as a whole. The eye is trained to accurate spelling by much practice in reading. It is the want of this practice in some schools which is the cause of bad spelling and lame reading. Careful syllabic spelling of words is not always insisted on, and this is another cause of bad spelling. I have commended the reading in fifteen schools, mostly large ones; and found much fault with the reading and spelling in twelve schools, mostly small ones. To show how far accurate spelling is attainable, I may mention that in one Standard IV. class examined sixty-nine pupils out of eighty-seven wrote the passage and words dictated without a mistake.

English composition is another subject which has much improved during the past year; and, as a consequence, less formal grammar has been taught. Ordinary parsing exercises are fairly done. Good rules and definitions are not so well taught, and class knowledge of grammar as a science should receive more attention in the upper classes of large schools. Only a fairly good rudimentary knowledge of the subject is attainable if the aim of our schools is, as it should be, to

develop the intelligence of the average pupil, and not to produce a few exhibitioners at the expense of the rest.

Geography and history have been examined orally. In the upper standards much more political than physical geography is known. Second Standard geography was very well answered. History presents many difficulties, and I am afraid those who look to our upper classes for an understanding of constitutional changes and of the import of the Bill of Rights, &c., will remain disappointed. History is only fairly well taught in about half the schools, and the knowledge is such that an ordinary school class book affords. I hope the introduction of historical and geographical reading books will do much to infuse fresh interest into these subjects, and lead to a more intelligent appreciation of them. I look upon history as the subject least worth retaining, simply because it is difficult for children under fourteen years of age to understand or realise, and a great deal of time is spent for very moderate and doubtful results.

Arithmetic is a decidedly weak subject in certain classes of several large schools, and it is more or less badly taught in twenty schools. The subject presents most difficulties to teachers of moderate ability, and it may be looked upon as the crucial test of an efficient teacher. More attention should be paid to the use of good methods and clearness of working; but this can hardly be expected in many cases until the teachers study the subject with this view, and train their pupils to rapid mental exercises and to obtaining results in more ways than one. I have met with much very good work in arithmetic, more particularly in the S 6 and S 7 classes of the largest schools. I do not think there is any falling off in the teaching of arithmetic, but, as it is of the highest educational value, I hope to see a great effort made by the weaker schools to satisfy requirements. The teaching of the subject is commended in fourteen schools, mostly large ones.

Writing is fairly well taught. I do not like the perpendicular writing attempted in the Thorndon School, as it degenerates into a back-handed style; nor the very open writing introduced into the Te Aro School; nor some exceptionally large hand introduced into one or two small schools. Altogether the writing of nine schools is very faulty, and that of thirteen others is commended. Much time ordinarily given up to writing is now devoted to drawing, which, of course, is a similar exercise. The freehand drawing required in the first three standards was well done, and much of the upper standard voluntary work is much in advance of the requirements looked for, there being a good system in connection with the School of Design in operation throughout the district. The schools especially commended for drawing are the city schools, Fernridge, Featherston, Pahautanui, and Waingawa.

Since the introduction of the tonic sol-fa method of teaching singing the subject has been more generally and, I think, more successfully taught.

Sewing is very fairly taught, but it needs some encouraging stimulus. Next November I purpose submitting all the upper standard class work in the city schools to the inspection of a committee of ladies. I was pleased to observe that Lady Jervois had taken an interest in the Johnsonville work, and in one or two Wairarapa schools ladies had kindly inspected the work.

The teaching experimentally of the outlines of physical and chemical knowledge is confined to the larger schools. The syllabus generally adopted comprises the composition of air, the properties of oxygen, hydrogen, and carbonic oxide, simple laws of heat, and properties of metals. In one or two schools the elements of botany are taught. I am afraid this important subject does not receive the attention it did in former years, except in one or two of our best schools.

The drill instructor visits the city schools once a week, and the principal country schools in turn. Ling's system of drill and Indian club exercises are well carried out. Military drill is also generally fairly taught by the school staff. The drill instruction in the larger Wairarapa schools is incomparably inferior to M. de Mey's work, and I recommend the Board to again place those schools under his direction.

Looking at the work of the schools as a whole, I find, on going carefully through my detailed reports of each, and summing up in my own mind their working condition, that twenty-two of them are in a decidedly improving and satisfactory state, and that twenty-nine others are fairly meeting requirements. The remaining twenty are more or less in an unsatisfactory condition, and this unsatisfactory condition is due in every case to the incompetency of the teacher.

To show what good average work a school is capable of, I may state that in several instances large classes of pupils in standard work have one and all passed creditably. And yet in weak schools the pupils one and all failed to meet precisely the same requirements. There are and always have been in the service teachers deficient in instinct and culture, and so educationally unsuitable for the work; others who are hard-natured, unsympathetic, and incapable of exercising any wholesome personal influence; others who take no trouble to prepare their lessons or to illustrate their teaching, and who work by the rule of thumb and not by the light of reason; and others who do not study the various characters and dispositions of their pupils, but insist on attempting the unattainable. The success of a school almost wholly depends on the teacher. It is therefore of the utmost importance that teachers should be carefully selected and carefully promoted. They should not only be competent to teach, but also earnest-minded, painstaking, and gentle; and in the case of pupil-teachers I hope the period of probation now to be insisted on will effectually serve the purpose of ridding the service of those who do not possess the essential attributes of a teacher.

In a report of this kind the chief aim is to review the work of the year and to sum up the class results, but to complete a survey of the work we must examine carefully into the scope of the system itself. We must ask ourselves again and again what is the end and aim of education; we must inquire whether the teaching is rational, and we should be satisfied that the children, as far as possible, are surrounded by wholesome influences. I fear there is much shortcoming; but as I look back on the past condition of the schools, and look forward to the probable effect of the present state of things, I feel pleased both with the retrospect and the prospect. No doubt the system is defective in parts, and we have not arrived at a clear sense of what educa-

tion is; but the schools of the colony are exercising a vast civilising influence, which is felt in the recesses of the country, and an education is imparted which must be looked upon as a good one when we consider that only the head teachers and a few of the assistants are experts, and that so much of the work is done by young teachers receiving very moderate remuneration. The appendix to this report contains a summary of the examination results of each school.

I have, &c.,

J. R. Blair, Esq., Chairman, Education Board. ROBERT LEE.

SUMMARY OF RESULTS FOR THE WHOLE DISTRICT.

Standard Classes.	Presented.	Absent.	Excepted.	Failed.	Passed.	Average Age of those that passed.
						Yrs. mos.
S 7	74	...	...	...	...	...
S 6	333	16	7	94	216	13 10
S 5	701	21	29	101	550	12 11
S 4	1,077	38	45	195	799	12 0
S 3	1,413	49	64	226	1,074	10 11
S 2	1,467	56	73	205	1,133	9 9
S 1	1,676	47	4	23	1,602	8 10
P.	3,367	...	...	...	...	...
Totals ...	10,108	227	222	844	5,374	*

* Mean of average age of Standard I. to Standard VI., 11 years 4½ months.

HAWKE'S BAY.

SIR,— Education Office, Napier, 31st January, 1889.

I have the honour to submit to you my report for the year ended the 31st December, 1888. All the schools have been duly inspected and examined by me in accordance with departmental regulations, and the tables of schools and results appended to this report show the general condition of each school so far as percentages of passes and failures, and of marks obtained for additional subjects, afford a basis of comparison in estimating the efficiency of the Board schools. To those unaccustomed to school work in its many phases it may be a matter of some difficulty to conceive how percentages can be so nicely drawn between the several schools; but so far as the specific work of a standard course is concerned, the task is by no means a difficult one if, when the percentages have been drawn, one could be sure that they afford a true educational gauge as to the efficient training and preparation of children for their future well-being. For my part, I confess to having grave doubts on this point. Still, percentages bearing on the condition of schools, when viewed from the same standard of comparison, have a sort of public value which cannot be lightly set aside. They afford at all times fairly exact evidence of the degree of thoroughness reached by children in that special form of standard work which the Government of a country prescribe for the pupils instructed in the public schools, and it is mainly by such means that the relative efficiency of the different schools in the preparation of the same work can be justly estimated and balanced.

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE.—The rapid increase in the school attendance which has been going on in the district for some years showed signs of abating during the second half of the school year. In the first part of the year the growth in the average attendance bid fair to exceed even the increase made in previous years, but the September quarterly return contained two hundred fewer names than were in the return for the June quarter, and the December return showed a still further downward tendency. For the whole year the increase in the average attendance is 8·3 per cent. more than for the corresponding period of 1887, but this increase is made up in part by an improvement in the regularity of the children at school compared with previous years. The actual increase in the number enrolled as attending school amounts to 6·4 per cent., whilst the average attendance has increased by 8·3 per cent. It is curious that the withdrawal of the capitation payment on what is known as the "working average" should have resulted in improving the school attendance, but this appears to have been its effect here, as the average attendance compared with the roll number—by which means the regularity of pupils is estimated—rose from 78·3 per cent. in 1887 to 79·7 in 1888. This improvement in the regularity at school is in reality much greater than the difference between the above percentages, because the comparison is drawn between the "strict average" for 1888 and the "working average" for 1887. In the latter all bad-attendance days were excluded, but in the former they were included. I can only account for the greater regularity of the children during the past year by supposing that stronger efforts were put forth by the School Committees and teachers to induce pupils to attend school on wet days than was the case when the "working average" was recognised by the department in the payment of capitation allowance.

ACCOMMODATION.—Little has been done to increase the school accommodation during the past year, and several of the large schools have been carried on for a long time under trying conditions. The additions now in progress at Woodville, Napier, and Danevirke, and the proposed additions at Makotuku and Port Ahuriri, will provide accommodation which is much wanted in those places. The new building now being erected at Blackburn, and the one authorised to be erected at Te Aute, will supply the wants of the people there for some time to come. Nothing has

been done to improve the teachers' residences. For a number of years no improvements have been attempted, and some of the residences have fallen into a state of disrepair which is far from creditable to the district. Most of the school buildings are in good order and repair, and some of them, like Waipukurau, Waipawa, Norsewood, Hastings, Napier (Infants'), and Napier (Hastings Street), Meanee, Te Arai, Petane, Hampden, Woodville, and Port Ahuriri, are models of neatness in their internal arrangements, if not in their external surroundings; but I am at a loss to understand why one so often finds, when visiting the schools, petty defects to fences and buildings neglected when things might be so easily placed in order by the pupils themselves, if directed to do so by their teachers. Gisborne and Meanee appear to be the only two schools where improvements are carried out in this way. One hears a good deal about the thriftlessness of people generally in this country, but it seems to me that something akin to thriftless habits are being engendered among the children attending the schools by the non-application of the excellent motto of "the stitch in time." A hammer, saw, plane, rake, and spade are as useful and quite as necessary as pens, ink, and pencils in the economy of life, and I think one might reasonably expect to find them forming a part of the appliances of every well-equipped school. For my part, I see no reason whatever why children should not be encouraged and even required to keep school fences and grounds in good order and repair, under the supervision of the teachers. I am satisfied that a good deal of money would be annually saved to the districts in this way, and it would be perhaps the best means of illustrating the possibility of applying theory to practice in the matter of school training. Here technical training and school studies might easily be made to go hand in hand.

Examination Results.—At the date of my examinations forty-six schools were in operation, and the names of 5,577 children were returned as attending, 3,733 of them being entered for examination in standards. The latter number represents nearly 67 per cent. of the children in the district. Of the standard pupils 118 absented themselves on examination day from unavoidable causes, 147 were "excepts" under Regulation 6, and of those remaining 889 failed to reach the requirements as laid down by the department in the "Standards of Instruction." The actual number of passes for the year was 2,561, exclusive of the pupils above Standard VI. and of those attending the highest class at the Gisborne District High School. The corresponding numbers for the previous year were: On the roll, 5,221; presented in standards, 3,350; passed, 2,194. The following tabulation gives in a summarised form the results of the standard examination for the year:—

Standard Classes.	Number Presented.			Absent.	Examined in Standards.			Excepted.	Failed.	Number Passed in Standards.			Average Age.	
	M.	F.	Total.		M.	F.	Total.			M.	F.	Total.	Yrs.	mos.
S 7 ...	10	8	18	...	10	8	18	...	...	...	...	...	...	
S 6 ...	62	87	149	3	59	84	143	3	32	42	69	111	14	2
S 5 ...	152	126	278	10	142	121	263	5	89	97	77	174	13	3
S 4 ...	283	247	530	25	258	228	486	19	151	167	168	335	12	7
S 3 ...	395	383	778	21	372	352	724	33	214	255	255	510	11	7
S 2 ...	444	404	848	34	413	364	777	37	160	318	299	617	10	4
S 1 ...	624	508	1,132	25	584	473	1,057	50	243	428	386	814	9	0
	1,970	1,763	3,733	118	1,838	1,630	3,468	147	889	1,307	1,254	2,561	11	10
Preparatory	972	872	1,844											
	2,942	2,635	5,577											

Failures—Modification Suggested.—With respect to the "failures," a few words of explanation are necessary. Many of those who have been unsuccessful in the examination are well qualified in a large portion of the work required for a pass, and a failure in a standard should simply be interpreted as representing insufficient progress in one, or probably not more than two, of the subjects known as "pass subjects." Wherever pupils are presented for examination, one may rest assured they are fairly prepared for the ordeal through which they are required to pass, and in estimating the standard results of a school or district even the failures should receive consideration, for they always represent a good deal of educational progress on the part of pupils, and certainly much hard work on the part of their teachers. I am inclined to think that the present mode of estimating the progress of the schools simply by the number of standard passes too often gives rise to what, for the want of a better term, must be called an injustice. At present, a pupil failing in a pass subject like reading counts as a failure for a standard, however excellent he may be in the other subjects necessary for a pass. This, no doubt, is a proper thing as far as promotion to a higher standard is concerned, but it is difficult to understand why all the other pass subjects, in which even the failed pupils may have done well, should not count in favour of the teacher and the school where the pupils have been taught. This could readily be done without altering the present arrangements, by the addition in the official schedules of a column for each standard showing the actual passes in subjects as well as in standards. By adopting some such simple plan, I am satisfied that much needless anxiety would be taken from many teachers, who are too often blamed for standard failures without reference or regard to the number of passes which may have been gained by their pupils in separate subjects.

Quality of Work.—The quality of the work done in the schools continues to show signs of steady improvement. In class teaching one sees the introduction of intelligent methods by skilful

and able workers, for whom every lover of education must feel the greatest regard. It has not been so long ago that too many teachers were employed, even in some of the principal schools, whose moral characters would not bear the light of public inquiry. I do not think such can now be said of the teachers in the Board's employ. From a somewhat intimate acquaintance with the majority, I am satisfied that most of them reflect credit upon the profession they follow, and that their lives are worthy of imitation even by young children.

INFANTS' DEPARTMENT.—In the junior department, with but few exceptions, invaluable work is being done by the lady teachers; indeed, it seems to me that the most permanent and lasting work in the school course is that which is accomplished in the upper preparatory classes of a good infants' department. Since the introduction of the new standard regulations I have endeavoured to cope with what is certainly an ambitious syllabus by keeping the school classification as low as possible, as I do not see how so much work is to be even fairly well done unless by some such means. An advanced standard syllabus must affect the schools in one of two ways—either greater thoroughness must be demanded in the preparatory classes, or the requirements for a pass in each standard subject must be lowered, seeing that the hours available for instruction are the same under the old and new conditions. In such a case the question is not even one as to the suitability of one subject over another, but rather how much time is available for instruction in each. I am not disposed to pass any pupils who possess what can only be characterized as a mere smattering of a subject, and I have therefore aimed to adapt the preparatory classes to the present standard course by recommending teachers to prepare with their pupils two, three, and even four elementary readers before presenting for examination in the First Standard. All the foundation work of the schools is being strengthened in this way. In the infant departments most of those forming the upper preparatory class can do the requirements of an easy Standard I., and when presented for examination as standard pupils have mastered a fair portion of the work required for a pass in Standard II. Such classification is having an excellent effect upon the thoroughness of the work in the different schools. I am satisfied it is only by some such means as this that the heavy requirements in and above Standard III. can be met with any hope of success. Here, again, it will be seen that no fair estimate as to the actual attainments of the pupils in a school can be formed simply by taking the number of standard passes. Indeed, much of the best work done in the schools at the present time is outside the requirements of the ordinary standard course. I know there are some teachers who regard my demands for thoroughness with something akin to disfavour, but now the initial step has been taken I am hopeful such teachers will agree with me that if the standard work has to be done it ought to be well done, even though the passage of the pupils through the standard course be somewhat slower than it used to be. It is not standard percentages so much as influence and effect upon mind and character which one desires to see paramount in the schools, and if these can be attained good results are certain to follow. The great aim and purpose of school training is in danger of being lost in the too great worship of the percentage god. The attendance of children at school is not merely to enable them to pass through a course of stereotyped work, but rather to so train and harmonize their natures and intelligences that when they shall become men and women they may act with manliness, with sympathy, and with virtue in their dealings towards one another.

COUNTRY SCHOOLS IMPROVING.—One of the most encouraging features met with in the school work during the year is the commendable progress that has taken place in the management and control of the small schools. It was for a long time supposed that country schools could not hope to contend in the matter of efficiency with the larger and better equipped town schools, but the delusion is passing away. It matters little to a good and earnest teacher what his surroundings may be, or where he may have to give instruction, so long as he has the material to work upon. The good results are sure to be forthcoming. As pointed out in my report on the synchronous examination for Standards V. and VI., some of the country schools are doing work which would be worth commendation anywhere. Trained teachers are generally employed in such schools. But there still remain several districts where the results are not satisfactory, nor are the teachers capable of fulfilling their duties even fairly well. I know it seems ungenerous to speak thus plainly of certain teachers who really try to do their best to give satisfaction, yet the fact remains that the children whose misfortune it is to be under such teachers suffer most seriously from causes which need not exist if the School Committees in such places would determine to do their duty fearlessly and with an eye to the future welfare of their district.

PROMOTION OF TEACHERS.—I have often wondered why no scheme for the promotion of successful teachers from the small to the larger schools has been devised. One can scarcely imagine anything more reasonable and desirable than the promotion to a better and more responsible position of one who has given proof of his qualification for such. I am aware that the power vested at present in local School Committees is a bar to any scheme in this direction, but I am convinced that when the principle of promotion is recognised—from the small to the large, and from the large even to the secondary schools—the better it will be for the education of the children. As to the larger schools, I have little to report beyond what was stated in detail a year ago. In some good and in others excellent work continues to be done, and the discipline and moral tone, as far as one can judge, appear to be entirely satisfactory. In all schools the records are generally well and carefully kept.

MORAL TRAINING.—Objection is often urged against the instruction as carried on in the schools that there is no moral instruction recognised in the school course. This is a great mistake. The moral training of children is not undertaken by means of a catechism or primer of instruction, as in some countries, but their moral and nobler natures are constantly being exercised by practical training in the schools. Every piece of work children are required to do is a moral as well as an intellectual test. Thorough and honest work is the outcome of moral training, and if the latter has been disregarded the school work will give evidence of such, seeing that every aspect of moral training is in constant operation in the work of a well-conducted school. A child carefully trained

and prepared even in a subject like drawing manifests in the work the qualities of neatness, patience, order, and industry. Such moral qualities only appear where moral influences are in operation, and where, therefore, honest work is done. For my part I am satisfied that a much higher moral tone exists in our schools to-day than at any former time within my experience, and that the same influence is operating for good in the homes of many where the higher influences of religion have not yet reached. The work of training, it is true, is slow, but

Though the mills of God grind slowly
Yet they grind exceeding small.

Non-compulsory Work very Good.—Last year I made reference to the good work being done in the schools in those cases where teachers had freedom in the choice of subjects for instruction. This freedom is enjoyed in what are known as "class" and "additional" subjects, and no part of the standard school course continues to give me more satisfaction. In the "class subjects," which include elementary science, object lessons, geography (Standards II.–IV.), and English history (Standards III.–VI.), I find that nine schools gained 70 per cent. or more of the maximum marks, twelve others gained between 60 and 70 per cent., and ten others between 50 and 60 per cent.—that is, thirty-one out of forty-six schools gained more than half marks. In the "additional subjects" much of the work is of a kind that is always attractive to teachers and children, and, as the marks appended will show, some of the schools have reached a high standard of excellence in them.

Elementary Science.—That much good is being done by instruction in elementary science in our schools the following quotations from an ex-schoolboy's letter to myself will plainly show. I might say that the school where the lad was taught uses "Paul Bert's Year Book of Scientific Knowledge," a book which I should like to see oftener used in the schools. Writing to me in November last, acknowledging the receipt of some magnets I had sent him, the lad says, "It may be interesting to you to know about the electrical machines I have and the experiments I perform with them. . . . . I am not describing these things because I am proud of what I can do, for I am willing to tell those desirous of learning all I know about these things. . . . . I made an electrical bell and battery. . . . . I made a microphone myself, and have put up a telegraph line from our washhouse to the woolshed. The line is supported on poles, has two wires, and is about ten chains long. I put a battery of my own making on the washhouse, and also a telephone; then I go down to the woolshed and put on a microphone. People talking or singing about 3ft. or 4ft. away can be heard in the telephone quite distinctly." Small as this work may appear, it is a lad's work, and it is the outcome of the elementary scientific instruction authorised to be taught in the public schools.

Technical Education.—Here a good example is presented showing what the scientific instruction in the schools—elementary though it be—is likely to produce if carefully fostered. But it seems to me scarcely possible for scientific teaching to be carried into the school routine much further than this. Handiwork, or the skilful employment of the hands in combination with the mind, can hardly proceed beyond the introduction of writing, drawing, and their cognates into the standard school course, because to do so would result in carrying specialisation beyond the limits of practicability. You can specialise too much in public-school keeping, just as you can generalise too much. A public school is not the place for individual specialisation in knowledge, for the reason that the school, and not the child, constitutes the unit to be dealt with. The aim of every school should be to give that instruction and that training likely to be of use to all pupils attending the school. Hence, whilst schools should be differentiated in the matter of instruction so as to become adapted to districts, the instruction ought not to be further specialised for the benefit of any pupil. Towns, districts, countries are examples equally of special and of relative generalisation, and good government, whether educational or other, adapts itself to each, and so develops types and characteristics such as the environment demands. To do the same thing at the same time in all places develops what is best expressed as Chinese uniformity. All children cannot become farmers, or carpenters, or ploughmen, or mechanics, nor is it desirable that they should, so that it would be useless to specialise the work of a public school for the benefit of any trade or calling, as some persons are vainly imagining to be possible. The public schools do not require workshops to be added to them, for they are already workshops of a most severe type, but the great wants of to-day are adaptive education, better school appliances for objective and technical instruction, and better opportunities for teachers to prepare themselves in science and art. When these are forthcoming the schools will be able to send out into the world of specialisation children with better aims and capacities than now, and with a higher ideal than the prevailing one of to-day, which is, I regret to observe, how best to utilise the schools for commercial purposes, as if all virtue, and knowledge, and goodness were measurable by the standard of gold.

Pass Subjects.—Among the pass subjects which are compulsory for all standard pupils reading is generally taught with fair success. Few localisms are met with in the schools, the misuse of the particles "a" and "the" has very nearly disappeared, the aspirate is not overlooked, and the only real and growing defect is the substitution of the sound of "en" for "ing" in words like running, talking, &c. This defect is much more common in the town than in the country schools. I am afraid that the standard system does little to foster the habit of reading among children. Home lessons also, it seems to me, are a great bar to reading, as the time which might be spent on this subject is taken up with the preparation of work which ought, in a great measure, to be done in school. As now conducted, the reading lesson has little or no attraction for learners. The old exposition lessons have almost disappeared from the schools, and one seldom finds pupils, even in the highest standards of a good school, able to give in their own words the paraphrase or interpretation of an ordinary sentence or paragraph after reading it. A wider range of reading is called for, and the interest of the pupils should be aroused as much as possible by the help of attractive Readers. It has sometimes occurred to me that a love of reading might be fostered among children

in this district at very little expense. Libraries are to be found in most of the towns and settlements, and if these were subsidised by the Government to a small amount on condition of their being made free to all young persons below seventeen or eighteen years of age I am inclined to the opinion that a greater love of reading and a taste for literature among the pupils attending the schools would quickly follow.

WRITING.—Some of the schools have reached a high standard of proficiency in this subject, and generally it may be said that fewer failures occur here than in any other of the pass subjects except geography. Vere Foster's books, Palmerston Series, are mostly preferred by the teachers, although in several schools the series issued by Whitcombe and Tombs, of Christchurch, have been adopted. Teachers, however, may use any book they please so long as the instruction is systematic and the writing legible. My writing tests above Standard III. have hitherto been on foolscap paper, but, as all copy books and exercise books are examined and marked by me, I intend for the future marking for a pass the copy-book writing in all standards except the highest.

ARITHMETIC.—Perhaps no school subject receives more attention than this one, and in some schools the results give evidence of efficient teaching. Generally the tables are well known. The examination tests above Standard I. are given on printed cards. There are five questions, three of them presenting little or no difficulty to children of ordinary intelligence, and who have attended with fair regularity at school. Since the new regulations came into force a great improvement has taken place in the mental arithmetic, but much remains to be done before the subject can be marked as good. Rapidity in mechanical processes, like the multiplication of numbers by 5, 25, 125, 111, and so on, squaring numbers, and the price of dozens or scores, is a useful and desirable acquirement, but what is of much greater importance is training the children to apply the tables in daily use to the quick and ready solution of ordinary every-day problems. Judicious exposition and questioning are needed to bring this about, and it is in this direction that improvement is mainly desirable.

GEOGRAPHY.—One of the most popular and certainly one of the best-prepared subjects in my district is geography. I have often been surprised at the ready intelligence displayed by the children when conducting an oral examination in this subject. Nor do I think that my test is a simple one. In Standards II., III., and IV. my examination is carried on by the employment of a blank map of the world and a mariner's compass, which are placed upon the schoolroom floor, and the children are fully tested in every detail which the syllabus requires to be known. I think the subject on the whole is better taught in the country than in the town schools, more especially the topographical geography, which is generally excellent in the country schools. In the towns the children in Standards V. and VI. excel in mapping.

GRAMMAR AND COMPOSITION.—This subject appears to receive a good deal of attention in the larger schools, and the paper work sent in by the pupils in the two highest standards is in many cases equal to that done by first-year pupil-teachers. On the whole the general level of the work may be set down as very fair. In this subject I think it would be better if teachers gave less time to instruction in analysis of sentences and more to composition and paraphrase.

DRAWING.—This, the most recently introduced among the pass subjects, is already established as a great favourite among the children. The formation of Saturday drawing classes by Mr. Blair has done great good to the district, as his methods have been introduced into a number of schools in the instruction of the children. Drawing is the only pass subject in which the requirements, as laid down in the Standard Regulations, are not demanded by me, nor do I see how a subject like practical and solid geometry is to be taught in the schools without proper instruments. Teachers complain that these cannot be obtained by the children, the expense being too great, and a difficulty arises as to what course to adopt in such cases. Good work is being done in freehand, and even in practical geometry and model drawing, in several schools, but I fear one must be satisfied with freehand and model drawing for some time to come, if these continue to be well and efficiently taught. I have seen no other school where such a high standard has been reached in drawing as at the Gisborne District High School.

SEWING.—The lady examiners of the needlework continue to send in excellent reports as to the manner in which the subject is being taught. As far as I am aware, no instruction is given in sewing in the infants' department, as is the case in England; nevertheless the girls are making good progress, and some of the schools are marked "excellent" by the examiners. I am informed that no pass subject requires so much constant and patient attention as sewing, and that some of the lady teachers spend hours beyond the ordinary school day in placing work ready for their pupils on the morrow. Such being the case, it seems to me that girls ought to be exempt from examination in one of the pass or class subjects. I have recommended the adoption of this course before, and if the good work already done is to be continued some such concession must be made. The reports of the lady examiners are worthy of careful perusal, as they contain valuable suggestions for the further improvement of the work.

SUPERANNUATION OF TEACHERS.—Before closing my report I desire to bring under the notice of the Board a subject which closely concerns the welfare of teachers and the success of education. The Board is aware that the large majority of the teachers are in charge of schools or occupy positions from which the income obtained is none too large to sustain a family in comfort and provide a death-contingency in the way of life insurance. Very few, I fear, among the teachers in the smaller schools are able to make any provision for coming old age. Within the past three years two sad cases have come under my notice as occurring in Hawke's Bay. In one case the master had to resign his appointment in consequence of loss of eyesight, and he is now a poor old man subsisting on the charity of friends. In the second case the master had a serious complaint which really incapacitated him as a teacher, but his circumstances were such that he was forced to remain in charge of a school until the grave almost closed over him. These men possessed satisfactory qualifications, and their moral character was of the highest and best. Is it not possible for something to be done to help such a class of deserving men in time of need? Some years ago the ques-

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.

I have, &c.,

The Chairman, Board of Education, Napier. 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

rehearsed. Here, again, a wider latitude might with advantage be conceded to the examiner. All such limitations—made, it would almost seem, in the interests of teachers, and intended as a safeguard against the exactions of unreasonable Inspectors—tend to defeat the object of an examination—the ascertaining by every available method what a child really knows. I am not wholly satisfied either with the spelling of our scholars or with the methods of teaching it. Much time is habitually wasted in giving out easy words, in which it is almost impossible to go wrong, while sufficient pains are not bestowed on mastering those words—really not very numerous—in which every experienced teacher knows blunders will constantly be made. If a list of the well-known words, such as "separate," "business," and "believe," which are habitually misspelt, were hung up in a conspicuous place in every schoolroom, and added to from time to time as fresh mistakes were made, the scholars might be so drilled as to the proper spelling of this black list that the blunders so exposed would in a few months be laughed out of the school. What may be termed grammatical mistakes rather than misspellings, such as the substitution of "their" for "there," stand on quite a different footing. No cure for this class of errors can reasonably be looked for until the children have reached the higher grades, and are able to understand for themselves wherein lie the right and the wrong of the matter.

Writing.—As in reading, I am able to report a certain, though not very striking, advance upon last year's performance in writing. The approach to uniformity in the kind of copy book used has probably contributed somewhat to this result; the efforts of our teachers to remove a well-merited reproach have doubtless done more. I have still to regret that simultaneous lessons are never given in several schools, and that the use of the blackboard in giving a writing lesson is persistently neglected. The schools in which pupils are regularly trained to sit in the right posture and to hold their pens properly may still be counted on the fingers of one hand.

Arithmetic.—No fault can reasonably be found with the way in which, as a rule, arithmetic is taught in the district. This opinion is put forward in spite of the fact that year after year more scholars fail in this than in any other branch. For the subject itself, however carefully explained, is essentially a hard one, especially where problems are involved, and is, besides, so wide that it cannot be fully tested by a paper the scope of which does not extend beyond half a dozen questions at the outside. So limited an area of inquiry may well shut out much that a child really knows. And it is notorious that in every school there is a certain proportion of children—and those among the brightest—who are deficient in the arithmetical faculty. I have long held that a disproportionately high place has been assigned to arithmetic in our schools, to the exclusion of much that will be found of at least equal practical value in after life. Beyond a certain moderate standard, not very difficult of attainment, the study of arithmetic is nothing more than a mental whetstone—and a whetstone of a somewhat coarse type. A skilful teacher can, indeed, draw from an ordinary reading lesson more varied and more elevating matter for thought than can ever be extracted from the wearisome variations of the theme, "If fifteen horses can plough eleven acres, &c.," which now absorb something like a third of the scanty school hours during which so many other important things must be taught, or, at least, attempted.

English.—Formal grammar, as a rule, gets quite as much time and attention as it is entitled to, letter-writing receiving somewhat less than its due share if the great practical value of the art of putting one's ideas into clear and connected English be taken into consideration.

Geography and history are generally efficiently taught. Comparatively little is exacted in these subordinate branches, though even that little is not invariably forthcoming.

Drawing seems to be a popular study with the children, the specimens submitted to me being generally respectable, and in some instances most creditable.

Needlework, so far as I can judge, is efficiently taught.

After an inexplicable delay a beginning has at last been made in the direction of improving the system hitherto followed of supplying the children with books and other school requisites. A list of books the use of which alone is sanctioned by the Board has lately been published, and circulated among the teachers. But the question of providing an ample and readily available stock of books remains just where it was. A single instance taken not from a remote district, but from a town school, will serve to show that the present method cannot be regarded as satisfactory. Six months after the burning of the borough schools I examined a class of twenty-six boys in Blenheim who could muster among them no more than half a dozen reading books. Under the Nelson system, the adoption of which I have so long and so ineffectually urged, every pupil in the borough schools would have been supplied, within a week of the disaster, with every school requisite.

I see no reason for altering the favourable opinion expressed in last year's report as to the discipline and manners of the children throughout the district. That, in common with most other colonial children, they have far too much of their own way at home is undeniable. But this fact redounds all the more to the credit of their teachers, who, in spite of the notorious laxity of parental control, contrive to maintain good order among those who in too many cases have to learn their first lessons of prompt and implicit obedience in the schoolroom. If all those whose duty it is to exercise a reforming and restraining influence on the young were to perform their part half as well as our public school teachers do, there would be little to complain of in the morals of the generation now growing up.

A far more serious drawback to the Marlborough schools than the dearth of books—for which a skilful teacher will to a certain extent make up by oral teaching and by other well-known expedients—is irregularity of attendance. During the past year 220 children have attended less than half the time during which their schools have been open. Nor does this way of putting it by any means show the full extent of the mischief. Fully half as many more scholars whose names appear as regular attendants have made little more than the minimum of attendance that causes a child to be excepted, and thus to be fairly classed among the "half-taught." Yet it is by no means easy to discover a remedy. So stringent a compulsory clause as would be really effective would not at present be tolerated by colonists, nor could School Committees be induced to put in motion

machinery that would bear hardly on their neighbours for what is generally held to be a comparatively venial offence. Until public opinion is so far educated that it will be held as disgraceful to rob one's children of the education to which they are entitled as to rob them of their daily bread, little amendment in this respect can be looked for.

I have, &c.,

The Chairman, Board of Education, Marlborough. W. C. Hodgson, 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	9	...	...	...	...	...
S 6	78	5	...	10	63	14 0
S 5	136	18	8	33	77	13 0
S 4	185	7	13	39	126	12 2
S 3	245	14	13	52	166	10 8
S 2	247	16	25	34	172	9 2
S 1	208	2	9	13	184	8 3
P.	580	...	...	...	...	...
Totals	1,688	62	68	181	788	*

* Mean of average age, 11·2 years.

NELSON.

Sir,— Nelson, 31st December, 1888.

I have the honour to submit to you my annual report on the Nelson public schools for 1888.

Eighty-six schools have been examined. Visits of inspection have also been paid to seventy-eight schools, several of these having been inspected twice. On examination day 5,444 scholars were on the roll, 5,054 being present. There were 390 children, 175 of whom belonged to standard classes, absent from examination. For the absence of fully a third of these no satisfactory excuse was given. Taking as a basis the proportion of failures to passes, it is undeniable that our schools, on the whole, have fallen considerably short of the standard reached last year. The percentage of failures has risen from 14·4 to 22·7—more than a third. Without laying undue stress upon the standard test, it is clear that any school where more than 40 per cent. of the candidates for standards fail to show the minimum of attainment required by the regulations is in sorry case; but in twenty-four of our schools the failures range from 40 to 100 per cent., a full third more approaching closely the lower of these two numbers. In several instances I have set down recent changes in the teaching staff as an extenuating circumstance, but not without misgivings, as it is obvious that this kind of apology must not be pressed too far. If it comes to be generally accepted that the departure of a fairly capable teacher a few weeks before the examination is to result, almost as a matter of course, in the falling to pieces of his past work, it will assuredly become a question whether work of so fragile and ephemeral a kind is of much practical value. Nor is it exactly the duty of an examiner to be constantly racking his brains in search of almost undiscoverable excuses for blank failure—excuses, it may be added, that are rarely, if ever, needed by those who really understand their business.

It affords me much pleasure to be able to record a marked and very general improvement in the two subjects to which special and most unfavourable reference was made in last year's report—reading and writing. It will be remembered that I found it necessary to condemn in strong terms the inefficient manner in which these all-important arts were being taught in a large proportion of our country schools, and that a distinct warning was given that a severer test would be applied in future. The warning has evidently been taken to heart in all but those few instances where all warnings are thrown away. In spite of the stringency of the new test, no more than 143 out of 3,746 standard scholars have fallen short of what was required of them in reading, the number of those whose handwriting was condemned being only 101. It is not too much to assert that if the same tests had been applied to last year's work the number of failures would have been far more than doubled. As it was in the junior classes that the deficiencies in reading and writing were most marked, so it is in these same classes that the greatest improvement has been effected. It must not, however, be inferred that the highest degree of excellence attainable by the application of even a moderate amount of skill and industry to the teaching of these two subjects has yet been reached. Some, indeed, of the most obvious means that I have repeatedly pointed out as lying at the very foundation of success are still systematically disregarded. Comparatively few schools, for instance, are even yet supplied with what has been for some time insisted on in England—two alternative reading books; while the grouping of words, without which the true sense of a passage is quite undiscoverable by a listener, is still insufficiently attended to. The

proper position of the scholar while writing is almost universally neglected. Children who are carefully drilled out of doors as to the right carriage of the body still sprawl in the awkwardest postures while going through a writing lesson under the eye of their unobservant teacher, the pen being held in every way but the right one. And yet the majority of our teachers have passed examinations in "school management"! None of these matters will be overlooked at next year's examination.

With regard to the other subjects included in our school course, it may be affirmed that, generally speaking, this year's arithmetic was not by any means so satisfactory as that of the previous year, the failures in the Fourth and Fifth Standards being nearly twice as numerous as they were in 1887. I cannot pretend to account for this falling off. There was certainly no increase in the difficulty of the papers set.

Grammar, also, seems to have got less than its due share of attention, if any reliance can be placed upon the formidable array of bad marks in this subject. There appears, indeed, to be some misapprehension as to the necessity for teaching formal grammar. It may be an open question whether it is worth while to bestow much pains upon instilling into children who have so many other things to learn, and so short a time to learn them in, the exact difference between a noun clause and an adverbial clause. The time thus taken up may, conceivably, be better spent in modelling little figures in clay, or in "developing the pupils' sense of form and beauty" by fashioning (on purely scientific principles) wooden joint stools—a process much recommended, and dignified by the title of "slöjd." But it is by no means an open question whether the pass subjects specially laid down in the department's syllabus shall or shall not be taught. Whatever the law enjoins must, until the law is repealed, be carried out. On the other hand, the essays and letters of the more advanced scholars are more simply written, and show fewer traces of what may be styled pedagogic English.

In geography, as no attempt is made to exact from the children the names of obscure places, my examination not going beyond the broader outlines of the subject, the modicum demanded is usually fairly well supplied; this subject, formerly far too prominent, being now reduced to its comparative unimportance.

History is treated in much the same fashion. The small fraction of the school day that can be spared for this matter is mainly devoted to the more salient and picturesque points, such as are likely to strike a child's imagination, and are therefore not so liable to be utterly forgotten as "the provisions of the Constitutions of Clarendon," or "the articles of the Treaty of Utrecht." All my examinations in history, and many of those in geography, are now taken orally.

What is somewhat ambitiously termed "science" gets its fair share of attention. The same may be said of drawing.

Singing by note is now more generally and more systematically taught than it was, especially in the town of Nelson, the results being most satisfactory.

Needlework is generally very carefully taught.

Recitation of poetry (in listening to which I have this year devoted more time than could well be spared from more important work) is very unequally taught, the performances ranging between excellent and execrable. With regard to the quality of much of the stuff committed to memory, I will simply say that it is pitiable that such pure doggrel as "The Two Crossing Sweepers" and "Little Jim" should still find a place in "Nelson's Readers," and that it is still more pitiable that so many of our teachers should have no better taste than deliberately to choose such sorry rhymes for recitation.

What may seem to an outsider a very trivial matter has for some time seriously cramped the work of many of our schools—the want of a sufficient (in some instances of any) supply of foolscap for the use of the older scholars. Without some practice in paper work, independently of writing in copy books, scholars cannot possibly acquire that neatness and orderly arrangement of their work which will prove of such service to them in after life. Much of the slovenly paper work that I see on examination day is due solely to this deficiency. The modicum of writing paper to be supplied to each scholar ought no longer to be left to the discretion of the School Committees, who can hardly be supposed to be fully acquainted with so purely technical a matter. The minimum really needed having been fixed by the Board, no school should be left unsupplied with what is really one of "the tools of the trade."

The discipline of our schools, with scarcely an exception, still deserves warm commendation, while little fault can reasonably be found with the manners of the children, either when in school or (so far as my own observation has extended) when they are out of doors.

There is one evil practice on the part of our teachers so general and of such long standing that a reference to it ought no longer to be withheld. On meeting a newly-appointed teacher for the first time I am greeted, almost as a matter of course, with the stereotyped formula, "I found the scholars very badly grounded, and generally backward," and this, no matter how capable or successful the speaker's predecessor may have been. The want of *esprit de corps*, of generosity, nay, in some cases even of truthfulness, shown by such disparaging statements need hardly be insisted on. It is indeed fortunate for themselves that our teachers are not judged by their fellows, but by an independent examiner who has no sinister interest in depreciating their work. Otherwise it might be shown out of the mouths of the teachers themselves that almost every one who has left a school was incompetent, and that it is highly probable that the selfsame verdict will be passed by his successor upon every one who is still in office. Closely allied to this, though more venial, is the habit of extenuating the breakdown of a school at examination by the most frivolous and irrelevant excuses. A few of these, culled from last year's abundant experiences, will serve to illustrate my meaning. The following are among the pleas gravely put in: "That only eleven months and a half had intervened between the two examinations;" "that only four days' notice of an intended examination had been given, rendering the children nervous;" "that a particular class had not been examined on the precise day expected, but was taken two days later, whereby the scholars were

demoralised." Such futilities impose on no one, and, if nothing better can be said, then would it be better to say nothing. The unwillingness to accept frankly an adverse decision with which our colonial youth have been charged would seem to have extended to some of those of a larger growth.

I have, &c.,

The Chairman, Education Board, Nelson. W. C. Hodgson, 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	96	...	...	...	...	...
S 6	298	13	8	64	213	13 7
S 5	500	29	30	146	295	12 9
S 4	673	40	30	159	444	11 10
S 3	709	37	44	178	450	11 0
S 2	760	30	36	130	564	9 9
S 1	718	26	16	80	596	8 9
P.	1,698	...	...	...	...	...
Totals	5,452	175	164	757	2,562	*

* Mean average age, 11·2 years.

GREY.

Sir,— Education Office, Greymouth, 31st March, 1889.

I have the honour to present my third annual report upon the schools of the district.

The number of schools to be examined this year was twenty; the number at the end of 1887 was eighteen. The new schools are at Richardson and Ngahere, on the line of the Greymouth and Reefton Railway, and the construction of the line may be considered the principal cause of their necessity. Owing to the very inclement and unseasonable weather which prevailed at the end of last year I was compelled to postpone the examination of two of the schools—viz., Kynnersley and Teremakau Settlement—the two outposts of the district, at opposite extremities—until this year. The following table gives a means of comparison with the work of the previous years:—

	1885.	1886.	1887.	1888.
Roll number on day of examination ...	1,383	1,484	1,513	1,724
Number of above who have already passed the standard course (Class S 7)	14	28	27	9
Within standard classification	872	994	1,058	1,158
Number enrolled in standard classes present at examination	828	830	972	1,050
Number promoted to a higher standard ...	579	594	676	808
Percentage of promotions—				
On roll number of school	41·87	40	44·6	46·8
On roll number of standard classes ...	66·4	59·7	64	69·7
On number present in standard classes	69·93	71·5	70	83·8
Mean of average age in standards ...	...	11y. 1m.	11y. 4m.	11y. 6m.
Mean of average age of those who passed ...	...	11y. 6m.	11y. 5m.	11y. 7m.
Percentage of passes in standard pass subjects	...	85	78	78

The result of the comparison may be considered decidedly satisfactory, especially when due allowance is made for the impediments to good progress. Taking the widest comparison allowed by the table—viz., that between the years 1885 and 1888—we find the following increases: In roll number, 341; in number of scholars within standard classification, 286; in number enrolled in standard classes who were present at examination, 222; in number promoted to a higher standard, 229. Comparing the two years as to the percentage of promotions the result is very favourable, as reference to the table will show.

The various appendices attached to this report supply a large amount of information in detail, and the following table gives particulars concerning class and additional subjects:—

—	1886.	1887.	1888.
Percentage on class subjects—			
Drawing	48·9	64·0	68·9
History	49·9	35·0	37·2
Geography	54·0	42·0	50·8
Elementary science and object lessons	55·6	53·0	62·0
Mean percentage on class subjects ...	52·1	48·5	54·7
Average of marks for additional subjects (possible total, 20 for 1886, 25 for 1887, 40 for 1888)—			
Repetition and recitation	13·5	15·0	16·0
Drill and exercises	15·0	16·0	12·5
Singing	17·5	18·0	22·0
Needlework	16·5	17·8	22·5
Subject matter	15·0	12·0	...
Mean average	14·8	15·8	...

I am glad to be able to record a considerable improvement in the condition of Classes P. I. and P. II. I have always expressed to the teachers my approval of what may, in contradistinction to the forcing process, be called the retarding process for these classes; and results testify to the correctness of the opinion. In some schools Class P. II. took the principal part of the work of Standard I., and acquitted itself most creditably. By sending the scholars into Standard I. well prepared for the work of that class, greater security is furnished for effective progress in the subsequent standards, and a safeguard also is provided against a child being tortured through the upper standards while in too immature a condition of mental development. Where results have been weak in these classes the matter has generally been beyond the teacher's control. Take, for instance, the Taylorville School as a case in point. Here we have nearly a hundred young children in a room very much overcrowded, and under the charge of a lower-class pupil-teacher. No conditions can be imagined likely to be more productive of not only unsatisfactory but also injurious and mischievous consequences, or to tell with more fatal effect upon the work of the standards. No infant class of such size should be trusted to any but a thoroughly-qualified female assistant. Dobson and Greymouth Schools have also suffered during the past year from the overcrowding of the lower divisions, but less than the Taylorville School from lack of teaching power. In both the latter schools excellent work has been done in spite of their drawbacks. In the Greymouth School the headmistress needs the help of an assistant, her staff being composed exclusively of pupil-teachers.

I would strongly recommend the Board to adopt the following plan, by which both the Greymouth and the country schools would be benefited: That female teachers having charge of the lower divisions in the larger country schools and those having sole charge of small schools be allowed to spend three months in the Greymouth School. By this means these teachers would acquire a knowledge of the best methods, thereby benefiting their own schools, and the Greymouth School would secure the services of another teacher. For this purpose the appointment of an extra assistant teacher would be necessary, who would be unattached to the staff of any particular school, but would temporarily occupy the position of the teacher going through the course of training. By this means also Miss Weaver's capabilities as a kindergarten teacher could be made of service to our country schools. A person who had never heard of the kindergarten system of teaching would, after seeing the work performed by very juvenile fingers at the Greymouth School, recognise the patent influence of such a mode of training, not only in its bearing upon ordinary school work, but as a means of promoting patience, industry, skill, ingenuity, and cleanliness. That teachers having charge of small schools produce good results in their infant classes without neglect of their higher classes is proof of their industry and skill, and, comparing the general work of the smaller schools with that of the larger, the former suffer nothing by the contrast.

Reading.—In very few cases is an adherence to the exploded "alphabetic method" of teaching reading to be found, it being generally superseded by the "look and say" method. The latter system is, however, in the majority of cases but imperfectly used, sufficient importance not being given to a thorough classification of words, or to the value of exercises in word making by the scholars. In the upper classes there is decided improvement perceptible in the style and manner of the reading, but the necessity for reform still exists. Of fluency and audibility there is little to complain. I was unable to thoroughly test the "knowledge of the subject matter" as I should like to have done; but evidence was forthcoming of much deficiency in this respect. Questions put with the intention of testing the knowledge of the pupil as to the meanings of the words met with in the reading lesson too often were responded to with entire silence or ludicrous plunging. This is no doubt attributable partly to imperfect and perfunctory methods of teaching, but quite as much to the character of the books used. The Royal Readers are doubtless good books, and full of very useful information, but for the ordinary primary scholar they are not by any means as interesting as they might be, and in many chapters their flight is altogether too high. Wrong emphasis upon syllables and upon words in sentences are two common defects, arising, however, from totally different causes. The first is usually a habit contracted in the early stages, and may be corrected and overcome by careful and diligent drill. The latter is intimately connected with that want of knowledge of the subject matter to which I have already referred. Pattern reading by the teacher

will remedy the first defect. The latter requires more skill for its correction. There must be capability on the part of the teacher of a graphic presentation of the subject, and the power of fixing the attention and actively interesting the minds of his scholars. During the past year the Board adopted my suggestion to introduce Geographical and History Readers. From the use of these books I expect favourable results in the reading and the subjects of which these books specially treat. Referring again to the necessity for giving pattern examples of reading, I would strongly impress upon some teachers the necessity of first amending their own imperfections. For a teacher to read defectively means that the fault will be fixed almost ineradicably with the scholar.

Writing.—In this subject also I have pleasure in noticing improvement, though a great deal yet remains to be done. The introduction of ruled slates, and making their use compulsory, have been productive of benefit in the lower classes and will bear good fruit in the upper. The New Zealand copy books are now generally used, and teachers express themselves satisfied with them. At my first examination of the schools I found pretty generally that the writing of Standard III. was nothing but a cramped and often illegible scrawl. The use of the ruled slates and of the copy books referred to has been productive of much benefit in this standard, and some of the writing presented was exceedingly good. By insisting on the use of double lines until Standard IV. is reached, and the initiation of that standard gradually into single-line writing, scholars leave Standard III. with a large bold style of writing, and there is room then in the progress to Standard VI. for the processes of improvement in quality and diminution in size which appear to naturally go together. These precautions are, however, insufficient of themselves to procure good writing. Blackboard demonstrations and corrections cannot safely be omitted, and the posture of the scholar and the manner of holding the pen must be attended to. In Classes P. I. and P. II., and Standard I., good slate writing is generally found, but when the scholar proceeds to the use of the pen a complete change takes place. This can only be prevented by very thorough and painstaking drill in posture, holding the pen, &c., before an attempt to write is made. When writing is begun the teacher should teach stroke by stroke and letter by letter with the aid of the blackboard. Painstaking care at this stage would prevent much after trouble, and we should see a much greater absence of such imperfections as badly-made letters, grotesque-looking capitals, incomplete joinings, strokes not touching the lines, &c. In the upper standards the scholars should be practised occasionally in writing a dictation exercise on paper without lines.

Drawing.—In this subject the district must suffer from the absence of the opportunities for training enjoyed by teachers in more favoured districts. Still, on the whole a good measure of success has been achieved, and the work produced bears testimony to laudable effort. I am of opinion that in the smaller schools the time which can be devoted to the subject is insufficient to produce a good standard of excellence, but if only a small minority of the scholars have a latent talent developed the result may be considered satisfactory. I have examined the drawing books in the same way as the copy and exercise books. The work is, generally speaking, quite as good as can be expected, and the books in most of the schools are neat and clean.

Arithmetic.—In this subject the results as a whole are not by any means disappointing. As may be expected, considerable variation exists, not only between different schools, but between different classes in same school. For the two last examinations I have given a part of the questions for the lower standards in words, and with good effect upon the notation and numeration; for there is decidedly less of that stumbling noticeable at my first examination. The introduction of slates ruled in squares for the lower classes, and exercise books ruled in the same way, has been beneficial in causing greater care in arrangement, and the figures are much better made. I have in extremely few cases had to complain of anything approaching illegibility. Standards I. to III. have, generally speaking, done excellent work. With much good work Standards IV. to VI. exhibit a considerable degree of weakness. Problems and variation in the statement of sums were the principal stumbling blocks to the lower classes. For instance, if the question were, "Subtract 27234 from 98267" the sum would be worked quite correctly; but if it were stated, "What is the difference between 98267 and 27234?" inability to grasp the meaning of the question caused failure. Again, if the question were, "If a farmer bought twenty cows for £180, how much did he pay for each?" multiplication would often be used instead of division. The principal causes of failure in this subject appear to be, for the lower classes, incorrect notation and imperfect knowledge of tables, with want of sufficient exercise in simple mental calculation; in the upper classes, the want of sufficient mental practice and too great a dependence upon test cards. Blackboard work with right methods is decidedly more valuable than the exclusive use of test cards. In Standard III. the principal difficulty experienced seemed to be the statement of a compound addition sum, the figures being often copied incorrectly and placed under a figure of a higher or lower value. The following question was seldom managed successfully: "A boy put in the savings bank 2s. 6d., 4s. 6d., 9s., and 3s. 11d., and drew out half a crown: how much was there left in the bank?" Thorough mental exercise would rob this sum of its difficulty. Practice and reduction were strong features with the Fourth Class. Bills of parcels caused failure, because it is not shown that they are merely a practical application of practice; and how indifferently they are taught in the Fourth Class is proved by the frequency with which the Fifth Class also fail to work them correctly. The misstatement of a proportion sum often given by Fifth Class scholars exhibits a misconception of facts which would, I think, be less liable to occur if less reliance were placed on the rule of three. I would strongly recommend a more common use of the method of unity, which helps to train and develop the mental faculties, a virtue that can hardly be claimed for a mechanical process. In fractions there would be less bungling if diagrammatic methods of teaching them were more generally adopted. In "Gladman's School Method" there is a very good representation of the process, and such a diagram placed upon the blackboard and carefully explained would give a grasp of the subject which no amount of lecturing will produce. If fractions, divested of technicalities, were introduced in Standard IV., the progress of that class would be materially helped. The chief evidence of how far arithmetic is a merely mechanical process is to be found in the difficulty experienced by scholars of

the Sixth Standard in dealing with sums in the lower rules. This also shows how little the necessity for constant revision is realised. Though I am compelled to call attention to some imperfections, I can with pleasure testify to the fact that the general work shows strong tendencies toward improvement. Mental arithmetic was decidedly better done, and the practice of finger counting is much less common. Mental work, combined with a judicious use of the blackboard, is the true remedy for the existing defects; and teachers would find benefit from a less exclusive attention to such problems as are likely to be given on examination day, and the substitution of systematic exercises in general principles, by means of easy examples. I strongly recommend to the notice of teachers Gardiner's "How to teach the Method of Unity," and "How to teach Arithmetic," by J. T. Livesey, as books which can furnish invaluable suggestions upon the subject.

Spelling and Dictation.—The spelling of the lower classes was uniformly good, reaching in some schools to a very high degree of excellence. The classes above the third were less perfect. The Fourth Class was on the whole fairly good; but weakness in Standards V. and VI. was too often perceptible. Scholars in the Sixth Standard should certainly be capable of writing a short letter without making any serious mistakes in spelling; but I am afraid that many scholars pass through this standard who could not write a letter upon ordinary topics without danger of disfigurement in this respect. It is not altogether from words which may be considered difficult that the danger proceeds. The mistakes found in the work of the Fifth and Sixth Classes consisted too often of placing "there" for "their," "where" for "were," "to" for "too," &c. Such mistakes as these are the outcome of the substitution of mechanical work for mental development, and of the absence of proper stimulation of the faculty of attention. Carelessness also has its part in the matter. The number of corrected words met with in the dictation papers is a proof of this. The only effectual remedy is for the teacher to regard and treat every alteration as a mistake. Words having the same sound but spelt differently should be more frequently used as exercises, and always used in sentences contrasting the two words. Upper class pupils should always have a fairly good dictionary as part of their book equipment, and should be strongly enjoined never to write a word when they are uncertain as to the spelling.

Grammar.—The work in this subject shows strong contrasts. Standard III. in some schools acquitted itself remarkably well; in others it was decidedly weak. Standard IV. on the whole did very good work. The parsing was generally full and accurate, and in some schools compared favourably with the work of the upper classes. Standard V. exhibited generally a very good knowledge of the subject, and Standard VI., with a few notable exceptions, did its work fairly well. Weakness in derivation, and knowledge of prefixes and affixes, shows the necessity of greater practice in word analysis. Some time ago I sent out to the schools a sample table showing how words may be broken up; but results would show that my suggestion met with little appreciation. Adoption of the plan would, I am sure, be productive of good effect upon both spelling and grammar. Composition, while showing considerable improvement, still exhibits many points of weakness. Incorrect spelling, absence of capital letters, and clumsiness of expression are too often met with. Paraphrasing was given to Standard V. with most unsatisfactory results, the majority of the scholars not attempting to alter the exact wording or arrangement of the piece of poetry given. This is an invaluable exercise for teaching children to write clearly and correctly, and should be more diligently and carefully practised. I would strongly advise an introduction to the adverb in Standard III., and simple analysis in Standard III. or IV. I would also impress upon teachers the value of constructive exercises. A sensation of power is created when a child sees on the blackboard before him a sentence or word of his own building, which is of great value and effect. Though derivation is allotted only to Standard VI., the teacher who thoroughly understood his work would begin in Standard V. to give lists of the principal prefixes and affixes, with their meanings, to be learnt, and also the most commonly-used Latin roots. For this anticipation of the requirements of the programme he would find himself well paid in the effect upon the spelling and composition of the Sixth Standard.

Geography.—Standards II., III., and IV. did well in this subject. The weaknesses in Standards V. and VI. were principally shown in the difficulty experienced in connecting events or information of any kind with places, and when given it was generally in a very meagre form. Physical geography showed great lack of knowledge. Even where there was some approximation to the knowledge there was great want of lucidity in giving expression to it. Geography is one of those subjects which may be most easily prevented from becoming mere memory work, and yet memorising is still the most noticeable feature of the work. It is a subject which can to the child be made intensely interesting, especially where the natural features of the country are a part of the everyday scene; and it may be used as a training subject in habits of observation. The Board has sanctioned the introduction of the Geographical Readers, the series to be used being Longmans's. I anticipate benefit from their introduction, provided they are used in a proper manner. They should be treated not as containing particulars to be committed to memory, but as aids to oral lessons given before the map, and if a blank map be sometimes used so much the better. The spelling of geographical names is much better than formerly, but there is still need for reform in this respect. Mapping is generally well done; but in one or two schools there was great trouble taken to make a display by outlining with coloured pencil, and the location of places was extremely defective.

General.—In class subjects most satisfactory results are shown, while in additional subjects the standard of last year is barely maintained. History is a very weak subject in all classes, the work best done being the list of sovereigns, with dates of accession, it being also the least important. Marcus Ward's History Readers have been introduced this year, and from their use I anticipate improvement in the mode of treating the subject. The existence of a carefully-chosen school library would have considerable effect in promoting a taste for history. A child who has read "Harold," "The Last of the Barons," "The Fair Maid of Perth," "Waverley," "Ivanhoe," "The Talisman," "Westward Ho," &c., will have derived more benefit than from any mere cramming of dates and disjointed facts, inasmuch as he will see that history has its attractive aspects, and be

influenced accordingly. In one or two schools a branch of science has been taken up with moderate success. The Science Readers published by Thomas Hughes are to be introduced, and are admirably adapted for use in our primary schools. In a few schools object lessons have been given, the best results being observable at the Greymouth School, the observation and interest of the children having been enlisted. Recitation is very well done in some schools; in others the memory work is good, but style very defective. Mrs. Greenwood kindly undertook the examination of the sewing, and her report speaks favourably of the work. Drill is attended to. A few schools only practise anything like an extended method, the majority confining the work to the simplest movements. Taylorville School still maintains pre-eminence as attempting the whole programme. In that school singing is well taught, and the time passed in listening to the rendering by the combined standards of some pieces from the "Blackbird Series" furnished a pleasant experience; and the same can be said of the action songs by the lower classes in the Greymouth School. In both schools much skill is shown in the teaching of this subject. Unfortunately, the subject is too seldom attempted. Considering the discouragements experienced by our teachers during the year by reduction of staffs and salaries, they are to be complimented upon the proofs of earnest and painstaking effort supplied by the examination.

Of the discipline of the schools and the behaviour of the scholars there is not much complaint to be made. The weakest in these respects is the largest and most important school in the district, as evidenced by the amount of wanton mischief to the school property which has been committed. The Totara Flat School deserves honourable mention not only in these particulars, but for the general quality of the work and the position it occupied at the scholarship examination. It is hardly necessary to say that good work is impossible without thorough discipline; but I may point out that in a school where the classes are composed of mixed sexes the discipline has an important bearing upon its morality. I had in only one or two cases to exercise a very strict watchfulness during the progress of the examination, and that I had only once to insist upon the repetition of a lesson—on account of liberty taken during my absence—may be taken as proof of the generally good tone which prevails. Our teachers evidently recognise that their responsibility is not limited to the proper performance of the requirements of the syllabus, but that they have also the higher duty of moral training to attend to. In connection with this I may point out that example is more powerful than preaching.

Reports are attached upon the scholarship, pupil-teachers', and Watkins's medal examinations, and it must be admitted that little pleasure is derivable from their perusal. Several reasons can be found for this result. I must take my share of blame in the matter, in that I allowed the dispute which arose two years ago in connection with the Greymouth School to influence me in relaxing my requirements for the upper standards. That a person high in authority at the time adopted the views expressed by the malcontents may be accepted as some palliation of my error. Concerning the pupil-teachers, I hope that the new Education Bill, if it become law, will lead to some provision being made for giving pupil-teachers a wider and more liberal training. At present the narrowness of the groove in which they move must act injuriously upon the youth of the colony. I am of opinion that to make the system a success it will be found necessary to shorten their working time, and allow more time for study with less jaded faculties. It is almost too much to expect young people to do a hard day's teaching and then proceed to their own studies. The matter is one which cannot be successfully dealt with under the present system of administration. I would advise the Board to dispense with pupil-teachers so far as the country schools are concerned, and substitute monitors. The Greymouth School properly managed and conducted can alone furnish the instruction necessary to enable pupil-teachers to meet the requirements of the Government programme. To insure the obtaining of the best possible material I would recommend the Board to throw open to the whole district the position of pupil-teacher in the Greymouth School, fitness to be decided by the marks obtained at the Sixth Standard examination, coupled with the Inspector's report as to the suitability of the candidate in other respects. Such a provision would, I feel sure, prevent any after revision of the pupil-teacher lists, and would obviate the injury sustained by those who have been induced to enter a profession for which they have no special aptitude. It would also prevent the disappointment and mortification experienced by the diligent teacher who has expended his trouble upon hopeless material.

I am glad to be able to record the success of the Board's attempt to establish a District High School in Greymouth. It is barely two years since the change took place, and already good work has been done and satisfactory results achieved, as reference to the special report attached hereto will show. I hope that an improved financial position will enable the Board to give the teachers a substantial token of appreciation of their efforts in the shape of an amended schedule of salaries. It is matter for surprise and congratulation that, with the very inefficient payment given in many cases, such satisfactory results should be produced. I acknowledge with pleasure the assistance I have generally received from Committees in any efforts I may have made for the improvement of the schools. At the same time I must express the opinion that the passing of the Bill proposed by the present Minister of Education would be productive of a purer administration of educational affairs. At present, if an Inspector finds it necessary to report unfavourably of the management of a school, either Committee or Board takes up the cause of the teacher, with, in some cases, calamitous results to the scholars, whose interest, I need hardly say, should be paramount to all other considerations.

I have, &c.,

EDWARD T. ROBINSON, Inspector.

The Chairman, Education Board, Greymouth.

SUMMARY OF RESULTS FOR THE WHOLE DISTRICT.

Standard Classes.	Presented.	Absent.	Excepted.	Failed.	Passed.	Average Age of those that passed.
						Yrs. mos.
S 7	10	...	...	...	...	...
S 6	64	6	1	20	37	14 5
S 5	136	10	2	35	89	13 3
S 4	206	27	7	68	104	12 6
S 3	234	25	8	35	166	11 0
S 2	265	19	5	37	204	9 11
S 1	252	21	4	18	209	8 7
P.	557	...	...	...	...	...
Totals ...	1,724	108	27	213	809	*

* Mean of average age, 11 years 7 months.

WESTLAND.

SIR,—

I have the honour to submit my fourteenth annual report on the primary schools in the Westland District:—

The number of schools in operation during the past year was the same as at the date of my last report—namely, twenty-four, all of which, with one exception, have been examined, and nearly all have received one or more visits of inspection. The Lower Kokatahi School was closed by the Committee at the time fixed for the examination, and the circumstances under which it was closed are well known to your Board. The number of children on the rolls of the schools examined was 1,790, and of these 1,181, or 66 per cent., were presented in standard classes. This is about 1 per cent. more than the proportion existing between the corresponding figures for 1887. The percentage of passes on the roll number this year was 45·2, as against 45·7 in 1887; and the percentage of passes on the number actually examined was 77, as against 79 for the year 1887—a decrease of 2 per cent. As it is manifestly impossible that an improvement can be recorded every year (or otherwise our schools must by this time have approached absolute perfection), it is not necessarily a subject of regret that so much (I might almost say so little) of the educational results of the year's work as comes within the grasp of mere statistics should exhibit the decrease above indicated, or even a greater one. If it could be shown that this, or any slight lessening of the percentage of passes, was fairly distributed throughout the schools of the district, there would be room for nothing but satisfaction, since so small an increase might easily occur through a slight difference in the nature of the examination. It will, however, be found, upon a careful consideration of the detailed statements appended to this report, that this is far from being the case, the percentage of failures (leaving out very small schools) ranging from 5 per cent. at Woodstock to 86 per cent. at Upper Kokatahi.

Now, although, in common with all who have had many years' experience in the examination of public schools, I have always felt, and frequently expressed in my reports, that the most carefully-contrived system of examination by standards is, after all, but a rough and ready test of the amount of instruction imparted, and only affords indirect evidence of the value of the true education enjoyed by the pupils, yet I have rarely or never found satisfactory evidence of the latter to be attended by a serious falling off in the results of the application of the examination test; and I think it is not unreasonable to expect that under ordinarily favourable conditions no school should be considered as having given satisfactory proofs of its practical efficiency that produces more than 25 per cent. of failures, as calculated under the Government regulations, in which provision is made for the exception of children failing whose attendance has been very irregular. This is supposing that the class and additional subjects have also received a fair amount of attention; otherwise a much lower percentage of failures should be expected. Judging by this standard, and exclusive of any extenuating circumstances, there are ten schools that have failed to come up to even these moderate requirements. Of these, however, six are very small schools under sole teachers, some of whom are so miserably paid that one is almost tempted to say that the results are quite equivalent to the amount paid for them. But, although the individual teacher's remuneration is wretched, yet the cost to the State of the scholars that pass is comparatively enormous. As a rough method of illustrating this, let us suppose that the cost of the scholars who pass is nine-twentieths of the amount paid in salaries (and this is about the ratio of the passes to the roll number), then the cost per pass at the different schools is approximately as follows, where the schools are arranged according to the ascending scale of cost: Kumara, £2 2s. 3d.; Hokitika, £2 7s. 2d.; Gillespie's, £2 11s. 7d.; Okura, £2 16s. 3d.; Stafford, £3 2s. 11d.; Waitangi, £3 15s.; Wanganui, £4 10s.; Bruce Bay, £4 10s.; Rangiriri, £4 17s. 6d; Upper Kokatahi, £21 5s. 3d.; Ross, £2 4s.; Woodstock, £2 7s. 8d.; Donoghue's, £2 12s. 10d.; Blue Spur, £3 1s. 10d.; Goldsborough, £3 4s. 7d.; Kanieri, £4 7s. 7d.; South Beach, £5 12s. 6d.; Waikukupa, £5 12s. 6d.; Arawata, £14 12s. 6d; Lake Brunner, £33 15s. This comparison, so far as it goes, is, if anything, somewhat in favour of the smaller schools, on account of the number of children in Class P. at the larger schools, which also

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., 6½ 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

previous years are also given. To pass in any subject it is necessary for the scholars to obtain at least half the maximun number of marks assigned to it. From this table there would appear to be a decline of 3 per cent. in drawing, 5 per cent. in arithmetic and writing, and 10 per cent. in spelling. While grammar has improved 10 per cent., and geography 5 per cent., on last year's results, writing remains the same. A fluctuation of 5 per cent. on these percentages is not a matter calling for any remark or explanation, teaching, like every other occupation, being liable to periods of prosperity and depression. Spelling is the only subject that seems to call for special remark, as the percentages show an apparent decline during the last two years of 18 per cent. This is mainly due not to any real difference in the quality of the work done, but to the greater severity of the examination in this subject which I found it necessary to introduce, partly on account of its intrinsic importance and of the weakness too frequently observable in the spelling of the other written papers of the examination, and partly as an additional check upon the premature promotion of scholars who, while weak in several subjects, often manage to escape failure, though really quite unfit for promotion. Such scholars would no doubt be left in their old classes if the teachers were allowed the use of their own discretion. I am quite sure that no scholar who failed through the severity of the spelling test was really fit for promotion to a higher class. The weakness or, possibly, the carelessness of the candidates for the scholarship in the matter of spelling has been remarked on by the examiner more than once, and is more or less noticeable in all the written work of the examination, but particularly in Standards III. and IV., in which mistakes in the spelling of the simplest and easiest words are abundant. Leaving out the seven smaller schools, where as a rule only the lower standards are at present represented, Table 5 shows the percentage of passes gained in each school in all the pass subjects.

Tables 6 and 7 give particulars of the marks for class and additional subjects gained at each school, and require no explanation. Table 8 gives information respecting the work of the class above Standard VI.

I will now make a few remarks upon the treatment of the principal items of the syllabus in this district.

READING is on the whole the most satisfactory subject of the programme. There are, however, a few cases in which little attention appears to have been paid to it, and where pattern reading—the only way in which reading can be taught—is but an occasional occurrence. The fault, much complained of by writers on school method, of teaching discursively several subjects along with reading, has no place in our schools. Perhaps the error is rather in the opposite direction, for the questions asked to test the children's comprehension of the subject of their reading lessons were but poorly answered. In the First Standard the reading book is gone through so often during the year that some of the children read (?) as well with the book shut as open. This will be remedied by the resolution recently passed by the Board requiring Standard I. to read out of both the First Reader and the Sequel.

WRITING gives a higher percentage of passes than reading, yet it is not, in my opinion, quite so satisfactory, in consequence of its limited practical application. I mean that, while the passage for transcription, by which the marks are awarded, is generally very well written, the other papers are sometimes positively disgraceful as specimens of handwriting. The orthodox method of holding pens, and the proper sitting position during the writing lesson, are seldom attended to with strictness, and, although very good writing is occasionally produced by scholars holding their pens in every conceivable manner, there is no doubt that better general results would repay attention to this particular.

ARITHMETIC, as usual, stands last with regard to the percentage of passes, and is on the whole the most disappointing item of the examination. And yet this cannot generally arise from defective methods of teaching, as all the scholars of any one class necessarily receive the same kind and amount of instruction, and in every class in the generality of schools there are some very well-executed papers in the subject. The disappointment experienced in this case must, I think, be attributed to one or both of two faults in the scholars which are partially traceable to the teachers. The first of these is carelessness in the work itself, and slovenly writing and figuring, to which numberless mistakes can easily be traced; and the other I imagine must be a habit of copying carried on during the year, thus concealing from the teacher a weakness which might otherwise have been discovered and rectified. I fear, also, from what I occasionally notice during my inspection visits, that the teacher does not make a practice of satisfying himself that the work overlooked by other scholars has been correctly marked. The bill given in Standard IV. was more successfully dealt with on some former occasions. Mental arithmetic is not so much utilised as it might be in the ordinary school work. I very rarely saw at my inspections any practical application of mental to ordinary arithmetic. A few scholars in each standard received nearly full marks for this subject at several schools, but the majority were decidedly weak.

GRAMMAR exhibits some improvement, but the explanation of passages from their reading books given by scholars in Standard V. and Standard VI. was as a rule very poor. The introduction of this matter in the grammar paper was a novelty in this district, though I believe it has frequently been given in other parts of the colony. The fact is, as observed before, the Fifth and Sixth Royal Readers contain too much matter of interest and importance to be mastered in a single year each, though not too much to afford the necessary amount of practice in reading. I shall therefore next year take all matter for the examination, excepting the actual reading, out of the first half of each book. The composition of the upper classes was very good, what there was of it, but there was sometimes so little as hardly to afford a fair criterion as to the capability of the scholar for this branch of the subject. The attempts by the scholars in Standard VI. to give the derivations of words taken by themselves from a given paragraph in their reading books were not in many cases successful, and some were mere random guesses.

GEOGRAPHY.—The questions in this subject were frequently answered incompletely. If asked to give the names and positions of a few towns, mountains, &c., the names only would be given;

and in questions having reference to places of historical interest the historical fact would often be mentioned, but the geographical fact omitted, as, "Corunna, a battle in George III.'s reign." A conspicuous fault of many geography papers of the Third, Fourth, and even occasionally of the Fifth Classes is the abominable spelling of the names. "Edinburgh on the Further Forth," "Cotts in China" are examples. The mapping from memory was very well done by some scholars at schools of all kinds, but for good "all round" map drawing Kanieri was as usual decidedly first, followed closely by Kumara, Woodstock, and Ross. The mapping at Hokitika is as a rule very poor, although a collection of well-drawn maps was always to be seen in some of the class rooms: these, however, must have been copied, and not drawn from memory.

History as a class subject was fairly well dealt with in the higher classes, though it does not make so good a show in these as it does in the Third Class, where teachers have the privilege of selecting the events, &c., upon which their pupils are to be questioned. But in spite of this the answers of the Third and Fourth Classes frequently gave the impression of being the result of learning by rote, and evidently were totally destitute of any meaning in the minds of the scholars. In fact, in many cases the children might have spent their time to as much advantage in committing to memory a column of advertisements from any old newspaper. Here are some answers: "The feudal system lived in the reign of William I.:" "Magna Charta, a fleet formed in the reign of John to invade England, &c.:" "The discovery of America took place in the Stuart period; it was that the people signed a paper to have William III. for their king." Perhaps the following answer from a Fifth Standard scholar may have been intended for a pun: "Wolsey was for many years Henry VIII.'s soul adviser." On the whole I am inclined to doubt that any benefit is derived from the presence of history in the syllabus for classes below the Sixth and Seventh.

Drawing was a compulsory subject in the three lower standards, and was as a rule very fairly accomplished at most of the schools. Some of the smaller schools, as might have been expected in a subject requiring so much individual attention, and in its earlier stages, were even more successful than the larger ones. As a class subject, drawing was taken up by half the schools in the district, and with very fair results at one-fourth of them. At Stafford the higher classes made an attempt at geometrical drawing, but the simple problem set was but imperfectly dealt with by the majority of the scholars, although, judging from the condition of the freehand drawing, a large proportion of the time allotted to this subject must have been devoted to that branch. The attempt, however, showed a praiseworthy endeavour to comply with the full requirements of the regulations. Drawing for the current year is a compulsory subject in the Fourth Standard, and geometrical drawing is included in the syllabus. It will therefore be necessary to provide the schools with proper drawing instruments. I have, with the sanction of the Board, taken steps to provide a supply of the indispensable articles, and should be glad to be authorised to obtain a set of models of the simpler solids for each of the principal schools, as without them the teaching of drawing plans, sections, and elevations cannot be intelligibly taught to young children. I have written to the Secretary of the Science and Art Department at South Kensington for particulars as to the cost of those generally used in England.

Elementary Science and Object Lessons.—Elementary science is taught at most of the larger schools, and in the Fifth, Sixth, and Seventh Classes with a very fair amount of success. The scholars of the Fourth Standard do not seem capable of even remembering correctly, much less of understanding, what they have been taught, and this not necessarily through any fault in the teaching, for the upper classes at most of the schools, which are taught either with the Fourth or by the same teachers, give abundant indications of sound and intelligent instruction. The comparative failure of the Fourth Standard is partly due to the immature condition of the intellectual faculties at the early age at which the standard is passed, partly to the absence at some schools of any apparatus, or even illustrative diagrams, and partly to the very limited time which it is possible to devote to the subject. The answers given to questions set at the examination frequently display a confusion of ideas indicative of an entire absence of any intelligent conception of the simplest physical and physiological facts, occasionally relieved by a gleam of unconscious humour. The following are a few specimens: "Sound is conveyed through the air by a number of books stood upon their ends at equal distances, so that if you knock the first down," &c. "Wind is air in a hurry." "The chief forces in nature are solid liquids and gases." "When the diaphragm is pulled down the muscles of the arm stop contracting." "Because the arterial blood changes into venous blood, that is why the skin is sometimes moist." "Blood vessels, veins and artilleries." "The sternum is at the back." "The gas trick juice." "Digestion is the machine that keeps the stomach rolling round and round." One scholar, in answer to the question, "Describe the action of the heart," made answer, "The heart is deceitful above all thing." The foregoing examples are sufficient to bear out my assertion that, unless under exceptionally favourable circumstances, science cannot be advantageously taught to classes below the Fifth. A little instruction in bookkeeping, with the easier cases of mensuration, such as are required in land measurement and house work, together with plenty of practice in mental and commercial arithmetic for boys, with dressmaking and domestic economy for the girls, would seem to be a more rational preparation for scholars who may shortly be compelled to turn their backs upon the work of the schoolroom to enter upon the harder work of the world. The object lessons, so called, are in many cases merely lessons of instruction, without any "object," or sometimes without even a picture of an object, before the class. At one of our best schools I was certainly surprised to find an object lesson on "cotton" being given in this way, although two boxes of Oliver and Boyd's object-lesson cards had been in the school for years, and "cotton" was one of the set illustrative of the vegetable kingdom. The Third Standard children were required to give a full account of one of the "objects" contained in the syllabus presented by the teachers, and the result was on the whole fairly satisfactory as to the facts reproduced, but at nearly every school this exercise abounded with ill-spelt words—not long and difficult words only, but the very easiest and simplest. It is to be hoped that this does not indicate disregard of the spelling by the teachers when examining these lessons on ordinary occasions.

MILITARY DRILL is taught at Stafford, Kumara, and Ross only, being especially good at the first-named two. At all schools excepting the very smallest there is sufficient practice of ordinary class drill to insure promptness of movement and orderly entrance and dismissal.

NEEDLEWORK.—The form of teaching needlework is gone through at all schools having female assistants or sewing mistresses, but at three only does it appear to be taught in a satisfactory manner. These are Kanieri, Stafford, and Woodstock. The sewing at most of the other schools is, generally speaking, either inferior in quality, or the full requirements of the programme are not complied with. I hear frequent complaints of the great length of time occupied in completing pieces of work, and of parents being compelled to unpick and refix work that has been badly done or improperly "fixed" at school. Excepting the three named, no school has received more than half the marks allowed for this subject. I should be glad if I could believe that want of time is the only cause of this shortcoming, but I fear, seeing that the work is well done at some schools, where, owing to the smaller staffs, the time is even more limited, that there must be somewhere a want of interest, not to say zeal, in this part of the school routine, which results in a somewhat perfunctory performance of it. At Hokitika, where the sewing is certainly below the average quality, it seems a pity that the Committee should have thought it advisable to shorten the weekly school time by two and a haff hours. In view of the almost universal outcry for technical education, I think the time has arrived when the claims of the girls should be considered. Now that there is scarcely a cottage in the land without its sewing machine, the programme for sewing might be amended by confining the work to such operations as cannot be performed by that useful implement—*e.g.*, mending, patching, darning, &c., for the junior classes, and by introducing dressmaking (including all kinds of garments). It is a well-known fact that in even the poorest families much money is spent annually in paying for the making of the clothing of the children and their parents, which might be just as well and far more economically made at home, where there are girls in the family. Dressmakers are now so plentiful that there should be no difficulty in obtaining the services of a thoroughly competent person to attend at all the principal schools within easy distance of any given centre, on certain fixed mornings or afternoons, to give instruction to the elder girls and female pupil-teachers in the mysteries of measuring, cutting out, and fitting on. The sewing might very well be divided into three classes for plain work, mending, &c., under the charge of the ordinary teachers, with an advanced class to be instructed by the visiting mistress in the subject before mentioned. At the larger schools the addition of a sewing machine to the school apparatus would be attended with great advantage, and might be the means of removing one of the causes of complaint mentioned above; and expertness in the use of this now universal piece of domestic mechanism would be of practical value to the girls in after life.

PUPIL-TEACHERS.—It has been pointed out to me by the friends of several pupil-teachers that their examination, if held at the usual time, would virtually deprive them of the benefits of the greater part of their holidays, since they felt obliged to continue their studies up to the day of examination, whilst some might also desire to sit for the E certificate, which they could not do if the two examinations were held simultaneously. To meet this reasonable objection I fixed upon an earlier date, and I believe that the change has given general satisfaction. Three pupil-teachers were examined for admission to the first class, and all passed with credit. Eight passed the examination for the second class, three with credit. Four were entered for the third class and passed, two of them gaining credit marks. Two came up for the fourth class, one passing and one failing. In addition to the ordinary compulsory subjects of the examination the pupil-teachers of the Hokitika School took up Latin as an optional subject; but the result was not equal to last year's work at the same school. The pupil-teachers at Stafford also entered for Latin, but, judging from the very meagre results, the time occupied would have been better employed by one of the two in a more thorough attention to arithmetic, in which subject she was very weak. The performances of the pupil-teachers, as will be seen by the table attached, were on the whole very satisfactory. The pupil-teachers' exercise books were inspected during the examination, and I noticed considerable improvement in most of those that gave occasion last year for some adverse criticism. There was only one pupil-teacher whose books called for severe censure, some of the exercises being written in so hasty and slovenly a style as to be barely legible, particularly those on algebra, which I had the utmost difficulty in deciphering. I took an opportunity of privately speaking to the writer on the subject, and I hope there will be no cause for complaint on this head at the next examination.

I have been informed that certain pupil-teachers have been compelled to obtain and pay for assistance in their studies from a teacher outside their own school. This course, if necessary to enable the pupil-teachers to succeed at their examination, may be a very prudent one so far as the interests of the pupil-teachers are concerned, but it is attended by a great disadvantage—namely, that it has the effect of screening the alleged incapacity of the head teacher, who is paid by the Board for giving the instruction demanded by the Regulations. It is, of course, quite impossible to distinguish between the results of this dual instruction; consequently, whether entitled to it or not, the credit of success or the discredit of failure can only be assigned to the person responsible to the Board. The following passage, extracted from my report for the year ending the 31st December, 1882, has a direct bearing upon this matter: "For reasons into which I entered very fully in a letter to your Board in May, 1881, I consider that certain conditions should be complied with before the Board burdens itself with the responsibility and expense of training up young persons for the office of teacher. One of these conditions is that the head teacher of the school be thoroughly competent, not only to teach, but to train in good methods of teaching, the pupil-teachers committed to his charge. Another should be that the school itself be sufficiently large to afford ample opportunity for the practice of every branch of instruction required under the Standard Regulations, and that the person proposed for appointment be not merely the most suitable that can be selected from amongst the scholars, but absolutely fit for the position. These desiderata might be secured by some such regulations as the following: (1.) No head teacher to be intrusted with the teaching or training of pupil-teachers whose certificate is of a lower class than D. (2.) That no school

having less than sixty scholars on the roll shall be allowed a pupil-teacher. (3.) That, in cases where it may be deemed necessary to provide assistance to schools not entitled under the foregoing regulation to the services of a pupil-teacher, stipendiary monitors be employed, as in England, under regulations and at a rate of pay to be fixed by the Board." If these suggestions had been adopted, such a case as that referred to above could scarcely have occurred. I beg therefore to once more urge upon the Board the propriety of adopting the above or similar regulations. To avoid unnecessary hardships to individuals a clause might be added providing for the payment for the instruction of pupil-teachers being made to any other competent person if, after a certain time to be fixed, any head teacher should have failed to qualify himself as required by the proposed regulations.

Another question in connection with pupil-teachers has recently been brought under the notice of the Board, and that is the teaching of drawing as a compulsory subject. As you are aware, a resolution to that effect is still under the consideration of the Board. It is, however, a difficult question to deal with, as drawing, to the full extent required by the Government syllabus, is, in a minor degree perhaps than music, a subject which some otherwise excellent teachers would be quite incapable of teaching, and it would be a very harsh measure to compel such teachers either to pay for such instruction elsewhere or resign their appointments. It seems to me that the only remedy must be found in limiting future appointments to persons who are prepared to undertake the instruction of their pupil-teachers in every subject of the programme.

There is a remarkable difference in the interest apparently taken by head teachers in the welfare and progress of their pupil-teachers. Some, I know, carry on their instruction up to the very day of examination, thus sacrificing a considerable portion of their own well-earned holidays; others seem to think that, having fulfilled the letter of the regulation, they have done all that can be reasonably demanded, and as soon as the vacation arrives leave the pupil-teachers to their own devices. There can be no doubt as to which course is calculated to affect most beneficially not only the pupil-teachers but the school, and through it the teacher himself. The men who so unmistakably show that they take a wide and liberal view of their duties and responsibilities will in the long run be amply repaid not only by the consciousness of a duty heartily performed, but in the earnestness and zeal with which such pupil-teachers will endeavour to co-operate with them in the work of the school, if only to show their appreciation of the sacrifices thus made for their benefit. The influence, too, of such an example of self-denial and earnestness can scarcely fail to develop and encourage the same earnestness in the other members of the staff.

Scholarships.—The last report of the examiner of candidates for the scholarship draws attention to several shortcomings in some of the candidates, which have been noticed more than once in my own reports. The nomination of candidates by any one but the head-teachers of the schools is, in my opinion, a very grave mistake, and, while it deprives the teacher of the power of distinguishing deserving scholars, it adds considerably and vexatiously to the labour of the examiner, and has a tendency to reflect undeserved discredit upon the schools and upon the district generally. It would be manifestly contrary to the interest of any teacher to hold back any candidate who had a reasonable chance of doing well at the scholarship examination, and the idea that he would do so under any circumstances could only exist in the morbid suspicion of some few parents possessed with an overweening opinion of the transcendent abilities of their own offspring. I would therefore again beg to suggest that, in future, nominations for the scholarship be received from the head teachers of public schools, and from no other persons whatever. My opinions as to the present method of distributing scholarships throughout New Zealand have been so often expressed that there is no need to repeat them here, more especially as they were adopted by your Board and embodied in your report for last year and the year before.

Some alteration is evidently necessary in the Board's scholarship regulations. Experience has shown that two years' attendance at secondary schools is insufficient, as a rule, to give scholarship holders under the present regulations the full benefits of secondary education. At present the successful competitors are for the most part quite ignorant of subjects outside the ordinary standard course, so that their attainments, however respectable in the ordinary subjects of the primary schools, do not fit in with those of any class at the High School, and at least a year's time is lost in gaining a good position therein. A remedy for this might be found by including some of the subjects of secondary education in the competitive examination. This, however, would practically limit the competition to the few schools whose teachers are competent to give instruction in such subjects. So that it would appear that a better course to adopt is to extend the currency of the Board's scholarship to three years. This might be effected without any increase of the present scholarship grant by dropping the competition every third year, which would then leave two scholarships always current, as at present. Before the end of the third year the holders would probably be able to secure some of the numerous scholarships open for competition at most of the secondary schools.

I have often thought that something might be done to supplement the small fund available for scholarships in this district by opening a subscription for an additional scholarship, to be awarded to the second in order of merit at the annual scholarship examination. It ought not to be impossible to raise £50 a year by subscriptions for this purpose from amongst those who take, or profess to take, an interest in the future prosperity of the rising generation in Westland. Perhaps if the Board notified its willingness to receive such subscriptions or donations, and to apply them exclusively to this purpose, the suggestion might be received with favour by the public. Any person who is blessed with a sufficiency of this world's goods, and who desires to live in the memory of his fellow citizens and their descendants, could scarcely find a more effectual and beneficial method of gratifying this honourable desire than by giving or bequeathing a sufficient sum of money to endow a scholarship to be called by his name. In other parts of the colony there are many instances of such foundations. I beg therefore most respectfully to commend this suggestion to the consideration of all who are well on the "right side" of their banker's ledger.

The approaching termination of the second septenniad of my inspectorship naturally suggests a retrospective glance at the educational condition of the district at the commencement of my tenure of office, and a comparison of the nature of the school work during the earlier portion of that period and at the present time. My earliest report having reference to a full year's work was that for 1876, when there were only twenty-two schools in the whole district (exclusive of those under the 40th clause of the old Westland Education Ordinance), and the roll number was 1,795. This, as you are aware, includes the whole of the Provincial District of Westland, since unfortunately divided into two, so that in the present small district we have two schools more than the whole province then possessed, with an attendance about the same. The average daily attendance, which was then only 71 per cent., is 78 per cent. of the roll number, the increase being no doubt partly due to some extent to the erection of bridges and improvements in roads and tracks. It is not, however, to such statistics that I wish to direct your attention, but to the state of elementary education before the Act of 1877 came into force and at the present time. In my report for 1878 I expressed a doubt as to the possibility of introducing the new syllabus in its entirety without danger of considerable deterioration in the work of the ordinary subjects of the Board's old programme, and my experience since has fully confirmed the opinion then expressed as far as the falling off in the results is concerned. The following table shows the percentage of passes in standards for the year 1879—the year after the introduction of the new standards—and 1888:—

—	1879.	1888.
S 6	85	75
S 5	89	74
S 4	91	75
S 3	89	71
S 2	97	81
S 1	97	92

The difference in the percentages is of itself remarkable, but in addition to this a comparison of the examination papers then set, particularly in the higher standards, with those used this year, would show that a much higher state of efficiency was expected in 1879 than we could venture to hope for at the present time. I am confident that if the same papers were put before the several standards at the next examination the results would fall far below those recorded this year. The work then required from the scholars was limited in the number of subjects as compared with the standards of to-day, and the whole time of the teachers and scholars could be devoted to those subjects with a thoroughness that it is vain to expect in any but the very largest and best schools, and under the most favourable circumstances, at the present day. It is only fair, however, to remind you that the increase of the syllabus was followed by a large diminution of the Board's income, and that this necessitated a considerable reduction in the staff at the larger schools, and in salaries at all. As a consequence, many excellent teachers, who had been attracted to Westland by the liberal salaries then offered, soon sought and obtained situations elsewhere. The services of pupil-teachers were substituted for those of an assistant teacher at most of the large schools; and all these circumstances, in conjunction with the increased demands of the syllabus, operated in gradually weakening the results of the teachers' efforts in the "pass" subjects, without, in my opinion, affording anything like an equivalent for the thoroughness which was once undoubtedly the characteristic of standard work in Westland.

I do not know how far my experience resembles or differs from that of the other Inspectors who had charge of school districts before the Act of 1877 came into force, but I have very little doubt that the same result, though perhaps in a minor degree, has followed throughout the colony. I do not wish it to be supposed that the difference is as great at the few largest schools as it is in the district generally. Such schools, having several adult teachers and a corresponding staff of pupil-teachers, have been better able to bear the additional burden by division of labour. Nor do I think the depression will be permanent. No doubt, in the course of a few years, when all teachers will probably be holding certificates in D and upwards, and when the pupil-teacher system (as well as the general tendency of the whole course of instruction in public schools) shall have filled to overflowing the teaching profession, very able teachers will be found willing—or unwilling—to take charge of even the very small schools, which are at present necessarily in the hands of young, inexperienced, and inefficient teachers, and then perhaps it will be possible in such schools to give a smattering of elementary science, drawing, &c., without the sacrifice of solid attainments in the remainder of the programme. At all events, we can but hope and strive for the best, and wait until a reflux of public opinion shall bring about a reconstruction of the standard syllabus on lines better calculated to equip the future generations for the industrial occupations of life, for which the great majority of the children attending our public schools are in all probability destined.

Since the foregoing report was written, the question of adopting a uniform series of text books for the whole of New Zealand has been brought under the notice of your Board by a circular from the Southland Board, which refers to one issued by the Education Department, calling attention to complaints of frequent changes of books in the public schools. The Board's opinion is asked, first, as to the desirableness of adopting a uniform set of books; second, whether the Board approves of certain books recommended by the Southland Inspector. With regard to the first question, I am of opinion that a stereotyped uniformity in the educational work of the colony is on many accounts by no means desirable, and as long as Boards are in existence is, as a matter of fact, fortunately well nigh impossible. The efforts of intelligent teachers are already sufficiently cramped by the hard and fast rules of the standard, and, in addition, to compel them all to use exactly the same reading books, for instance, would deprive the youth of the colony of the manifest benefits of variety, and would be

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.

I have, &c.,

The Chairman, Board of Education, Hokitika. 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.

The condition of the schools examined by me, as far as progress and attainments in the pass subjects are concerned, can be most readily estimated by exhibiting in a tabular form the results of examination. For the purpose of comparison wherever a comparison might prove instructive, the corresponding results of the previous year for the whole district are also given in the subjoined tables. Appendix I. to the Inspectors' reports contains tables for the North Canterbury District as a whole.

TABLE A.—PASS SUBJECTS.

Classes.	Number presented.	Number absent.	Number excepted.	Number failed.	Number passed.	Proportion presented per Cent. of Total School Roll.		Proportion passed per Cent. of Total School Roll.		Number of Schools presenting.
						Northern Division, 1888.	Whole District, 1887.	Northern Division, 1888.	Whole District, 1887.	
S 7	30	...	...	...	...	0·44	0·42	...	...	12
S 6	149	4	1	43	101	2·19	2·00	1·49	1·45	40
S 5	370	8	20	133	209	5·45	5·67	3·08	3·07	48
S 4	706	41	43	196	426	10·39	10·08	6·27	5·73	55
S 3	1,110	60	50	323	677	16·34	16·10	9·96	9·25	58
S 2	1,070	56	49	150	815	15·75	15·29	11·98	11·25	59
S 1	1,035	45	32	109	849	15·23	14·44	12·48	12·21	58
P.	2,324	...	...	...	...	34·21	35·95	...	...	59
Northern Division, 1888	6,794	214	195	954	3,077	100	...	45·29	...	59
Whole district, 1887	19,447	635	590	2,796	8,353	...	100	...	42·95	153

TABLE B.—PASS SUBJECTS.

Proportions calculated in Percentages.	S 6.		S 5.		S 4.		S 3.		S 2.		S 1.		Ss 6—1.	
	Northern Division, 1888.	Whole District, 1887.	Northern Division, 1888.	Whole District, 1887.	Northern Division, 1888.	Whole District, 1887.	Northern Division, 1888.	Whole District, 1887.	Northern Division, 1888.	Whole District, 1887.	Northern Division, 1888.	Whole District, 1887.	Northern Division, 1888.	Whole District, 1887.
Proportion absent of class roll	2·68	2·31	2·16	4·90	5·81	6·12	5·41	6·13	5·23	4·74	4·35	4·22	4·82	5·13
Proportion excepted of class roll	0·67	2·31	5·41	4·62	6·09	5·41	4·50	6·29	4·58	5·62	3·09	2·13	4·39	4·78
Proportion failed of class roll	28·86	22·83	35·95	36·36	27·76	31·58	29·10	30·15	14·02	16·08	10·53	9·40	21·49	22·60
Proportion passed of class roll	67·79	72·49	56·49	54·13	60·34	56·89	60·99	57·43	76·17	73·56	82·03	84·24	69·30	67·50
Proportion failed of the sum of passes and failures	29·86	23·99	38·89	40·18	31·51	35·70	32·30	34·43	15·54	17·94	11·38	10·04	23·67	25·08

Since the group of schools for which these statistics are compiled can in no way be considered exceptionally favoured when compared with the rest of the district, it thus appears from Table A that improvement is very general. The percentage of presentation shows an increase on that of last year in each of the standard classes, with a corresponding decrease of infants. It further appears that the percentage of passes reaches a general result 2·3 above last year's. In point of absentees and exceptions also the results are better. The second of the above tables gives more detailed information on the matters summarised in the first, and from it too may be easily gathered the gratifying fact that a distinct advance has been made on the results of the previous year. In only two cases could an unfavourable comparison be instituted, and in these the falling off is more apparent than real. That the rate of failure in the First and Sixth Standards should be higher for a section of the district, composed in the main of country schools, than for the whole district is only what might be expected, for it is exactly in these two standards that the returns for the four large town schools most perceptibly raise the average of attainment.

The position occupied by class subjects is still one of little merit, though it is gratifying to note improvement in drawing and geography. The percentages in the various subjects are: Drawing, 38 for fifty-six schools; history, 39 for fifty-eight schools; geography, 57 for fifty-nine schools; and science and object lessons, 39 for fifty-nine schools. The general result is 43·45, as compared with 40·93 last year.

The average marks in the separate subjects of the additional group are almost identical with those of last year. Poetry receives 11·8 marks for fifty-nine schools; drill, 11·1 for fifty-seven schools; singing, 10·5 for fifty schools; sewing, 13·8 for fifty-eight schools; and subject matter, 12·1 for fifty-nine schools. The average of the sum of the additional marks for each school is 57.

Discipline continues to be satisfactory on the whole. The majority of our teachers insure obedience, attention, and regularity in the ordinary work of their schools without any exercise of undue severity.

This record of the past year's work is, then, one that may fairly be said to afford sufficient evidence of substantial progress. It will, however, be seen, on referring to the schools classed as unsatisfactory, that a yet higher degree of efficiency may not unreasonably be expected in this district. It is not in the small schools that the most pronounced cases of failure occur. In ten of the sixteen schools in which attainments fall below the lowest level that can be recognised as satisfactory the staff is numerically so strong as to make the defects of instruction all the more inexcusable. One is staffed with five certificated teachers and six pupil-teachers; another with five certificated teachers and three pupil-teachers; three with a master, mistress, and three pupil-teachers; two with a master, mistress, and two pupil-teachers; and the remaining three have a master, mistress, and pupil-teacher each. And the most disappointing feature in each case is that the breakdown invariably takes place in the upper division of the school, where the best-remunerated labour is employed. Of 669 pupils presented in Standards VI.–III. only 315, or 47 per cent., passed the standard test, the rate of failure varying from 45 per cent. in the best of the ten to 64 per cent. in the worst. There were, of course, extenuating circumstances to account for the shortcomings in some instances, and these were duly set forth in the school reports; but it would be idle to pretend that our system of administration is anything like perfect when it allows so large a proportion of important schools to exist in an inefficient state. The fault seems to me to lie in the exercise of a dual control by the School Committees and the Board in appointing and removing teachers. At the moment of writing a disagreement has arisen between the two powers in making an appointment to the one post in the ten schools specified above from which a teacher has been dismissed in consequence of bad reports. The Board, on submitting the complete list of applicants to the School Committee, suggest that the election should lie between certain candidates. The Committee decline to have their choice limited, and recommend an outsider, whose appointment the Board refuse to confirm. And so the matter stands, with some probability that an inferior selection will eventually be made. Of even greater importance is the question of dismissing teachers. There are in the Board's service some teachers—few in number, I am glad to say, but occupying by no means insignificant positions—who year after year, in the performance of their duties, sail so perilously near the lowest water mark of meritorious effort that some day they must surely find themselves stranded high and dry without any chance of their being retained in office. Too frequently this contingency is removed beyond all reasonable limits of time owing to the want of unanimity between the Board and the Committee concerned. To remedy such defects of administration the Board must, in my judgment, practically retain in their own hands the control of appointments and dismissals.

The merits and demerits of the work of instruction in the various subjects prescribed by the syllabus have been so fully discussed in the reports of the three preceding years that I refrain on the present occasion from offering any further criticism of these topics.

I have, &c.,
L. B. Wood, M.A., Inspector.

The Chairman, Education Board, North Canterbury.

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2. Dr. Anderson's Report.

Sir,— Christchurch, 15th March, 1889.

I have the honour to present a report on the work of the past year. The usual duties have been undertaken in connection with the inspection and examination of schools, the compilation of results, and the examination of pupil-teachers and candidates for scholarships.

Inspection.—The discussion of certain matters of exceptional importance to the district, either referred by the Board to its Inspectors or otherwise arising, left the work of inspection late in beginning. In the distribution of schools for the year, forty-six, having a roll number of 9,181 children, and consisting of the city schools, a small group in the neighbourhood of Lincoln, and those to the south of the Rakaia, were assigned to me. These, with the exception of one closed for diphtheria, were inspected in accordance with the Regulations, the reports dealing with the subjects of distribution of staff, time-tables, methods and quality of instruction, order and discipline, buildings, registers, &c. Special recommendations were also periodically made on the organization of the Normal School.

Examination.—The examination of schools occupied substantially the second half of the year. The schools inspected and the schools examined, roughly speaking, correspond. In all fifty-four schools were examined by me—forty-seven separately, and seven, including the five largest schools of the district, in conjunction with my colleague, Mr. Hogben, the total roll number at the time of examination being 9,919. Of the forty-seven schools examined separately four, with a total of 256 attendants, were not under the Board's control, and were examined merely through the courtesy and by the direction of the Board. They are therefore not included in the tables of results given below. These tables are accompanied by a few comments; but I purpose referring in this report to matters in connection with inspection chiefly. The customary liberty is taken of including suggestions or opinions not strictly of the nature of a report.

Teaching Staff.—The necessity of retrenchment led in the early part of the year to a review of the basis on which our school staffs were organized, and to the adoption of an amended scheme, the chief features of which were: (1) An increase in the proportion of adult teachers as compared with pupil-teachers; (2) a relative improvement in the status of mistresses in charge of infant departments, and the substitution of second masters for what were called "head mistresses" in certain classes of schools; and (3) a small rise in the increment of average attendance entitling the

school to the employment of an additional teacher or pupil-teacher. Special provisions were also made for the employment of mistresses as sole teachers in small schools. The increase in the proportion of adult teachers in the larger schools, the expediency of which has been recognised by the Board for the past two or three years, and towards which the Board in its appointments had consequently been working as opportunities occurred, was early completed, and has proved of very great advantage. These schools have during the past year occupied a more favourable position in regard to the possibilities of efficient instruction than ever before. Only two of the schools with which I have had to do during the year come within the range of the second of the features I have mentioned, and in their case the new arrangement is only now introduced. In only one instance, as far as I am aware, has the failure to reach the average attendance provided in the new rule justified the removal of a second teacher, and in that case the person's services were retained. The district has hitherto been distinguished for the liberality with which in small schools a second adult teacher has been granted at an early stage of the growth of attendance, and even if such schools were affected to a much greater extent by the change no impairment of efficiency need ensue. Six schools were taught by females as sole teachers, probably on the whole with much greater benefit to the school districts in which they were placed than if masters had been employed.

Time-tables.—Time-tables of fair working character, making provision for all regulation subjects, are almost invariably exhibited in the schools. In one or two instances a good time-table, procured from an external source, appears to have been provided more for the gratification of the Inspector in his periodical visits than for the guidance of school work; but at least an approximate adherence is the rule, and for the most part the criticisms I have had to make during the year concern only points of distribution, on which occasionally even some difference of opinion would be allowable. It is rarely, however, that I find side by side with the time-table an analysis showing the amount of time given to each subject weekly. Such an analysis would save an Inspector an immense amount of trouble, and for that reason I wish our teachers would always be good enough to make the addition, distinguishing carefully the time spent in direct teaching and the time spent in practice at desks, while the teacher is otherwise engaged. The distinction is essential in all but very large schools, in which the teacher is never to be "otherwise engaged;" but if one teaching period, say, of half an hour, or in arithmetic one hour, has to be broken up, as in most small schools, into partly oral and partly silent work by different sections of a group, the whole may be regarded as time of direct teaching for the group in the subject concerned.

Questioning.—Oral teaching relies mainly on questioning, and the success of the teacher depends not only on the skill shown in the nature and direction of the questions, but on the selection of the answerer, and on the readiness with which the sequence is adapted to the exact form which the answer assumes. Yet to some teachers, despite repeated criticisms, simultaneous answering, in which it is impossible to recognise either the exact form of the answer or the distribution of the capacity to answer at all, still presents irresistible attractions. Further, where simultaneous answering is avoided—and most of our teachers do avoid it—I find very generally a most imperfect answer—not, in fact, forming a real answer, but merely giving some indication of a glimmering of knowledge or comprehension—accepted with a "Quite right" by the teacher, who then passes on to the next question or statement. Simultaneous answering utterly spoils a lesson. The other fault reduces its effectiveness, but, what is of still more importance, a grand opportunity is thus lost of training the children to express themselves clearly as well as promptly in suitable language. I look upon the latter as one of the most important duties of the teacher, and wherever any difficulty is found in oral examination of getting at the knowledge which the children possess, I am justified in concluding some radical defect in the method of teaching adopted.

Home Exercises.—In the inspection of schools, whatever estimate of the teacher's capacity may be derived from lessons given in the presence of the Inspector, reliance must to a great extent be placed on the written work, especially on the home exercises, for evidences of continued diligence, and also, in part, of the state of school discipline. Written exercises to be worked at home are usually given in our schools, and, notwithstanding that difficulties occasionally occur in connection with them, and smouldering fires are here and there found which have a tendency to break out at times into the flame of a public discussion, I look upon the practice as a good one, certain limitations and conditions being observed. My notes tell me that one of these conditions, perfect correction, is violated with sufficient frequency to justify a general reference to the matter. Teachers say generally that time does not permit, and a cursory correction appears to be all that is made in many schools. If teachers cannot find time to examine regularly and carefully all the home exercises in person or by a deputy on their staff, such exercises had better be omitted altogether. The difficulty sometimes springs from the choice of matter unsuitable in amount or character. In character the work should be easy and definite, without, however, becoming merely mechanical, and should consist either of the reproduction of lessons already given or be such as the immediately preceding lessons have prepared the child to do without any difficulty. "The best teachers," say the Instructions to Inspectors of the English Education Department, "use such exercises rather to illustrate and fix in the memory lessons which have already been explained in school than to break new ground or to call for new mental effort."

Infant Teaching.—*Reading.*—The method most commonly employed in our schools is that of word-building, which is used by some mistresses with marked success. A beginning should probably be made on the "look and say" method by teaching with the aid of pictures a small group of words, the names of common objects, and also a few relational words so as to form a variety of little sentences. Next should come the analysis of these words so as to teach their elementary sounds, next the recognition of the letters by their names, and next abundant practice in building up words, the children supplying the materials, and the work throughout being conducted on the blackboard. The word-building may be continued indefinitely. The grouping of words will be gained by imitation and principally by suitable questioning on sentences read as the vocabulary extends. As soon as possible connected narratives should be introduced.

Writing.—I have been very much impressed during the year with the ease and rapidity with which skill in forming letters in Vere Foster's style may be acquired by very young children, and, at least in those schools where Vere Foster's copy books are in use, the infants should from the beginning be taught the special forms and junctions applicable to them. I see little good in teaching in the lower department of a school anything that has to be unlearnt afterwards. I may add that, on a similar principle as applied to the relation of school teaching to the business of life, any style of writing adopted in our schools should, in my opinion, exhibit with reasonable consistency the quality of "continuity," which forms a characteristic of Vere Foster's, and of certain other Irish and such American series as I have seen.

Arithmetic.—There is no part of initiatory work in which the teacher of higher classes has a greater interest than the teaching of arithmetic. If finger counting or any other form of unit counting be encouraged by the methods adopted in the early stages, its eradication—an essential condition of soundness—will be a labour of difficulty. The infant departments of the schools visited are mostly on the track of right method, whatever variety may exist in intelligent application; but it seems to me that something may be done in the way of establishing a better common understanding of the order of development, of the relation of oral and slate arithmetic, and generally of the ground to be covered. I therefore venture, though with some diffidence, to suggest the following scheme: Stages 1 and 2 are meant to give the minimum requirements of infant classes; Stage 3 goes a little beyond the minimum requirement of the First Standard, but should be regarded as partly infant work and partly the work of Standard I.

Stage 1.—Analysis of numbers to 9, done by the use of concrete illustrations, such as pencils, marbles, beads, and dots or other marks on blackboard, or picture symmetrically arranged. (The use of the concrete is necessary for comprehension; the symmetrical arrangement will assist the memory, so that when a question is put the visual impression will at once dictate the answer. The immediate perception in a concrete form of the sum, difference, product, or quotient of any two numbers making together not more than 9 is the principal object to be aimed at. The idea of number apart from objects also to be introduced, and the results of analysis as regards addition to be embodied in a table: thus, $7+1=8$, $6+2=8$, $5+3=8$, $4+4=8$, and $1+7=8$, $2+6=8$, $3+5=8$, $4+4=8$; the additions to be practised in the table and independently. Consecutive counting to be avoided in this and succeeding stages, lest it encourage a habit of unit counting. Constant use of problems, thus: If John has 6 marbles and I give him 3 more, how many marbles will he have? Out of 9 pennies I spent 4 pennies: how many pennies have I left?

Stage 2.—Extension of analysis to 20 done in a similar way. Similar embodiment of additions in table, and ample practice until the readiest possible association of any two numbers with their sum has been obtained. Constant use of suitable problems illustrating all relations of the numbers concerned. Introduction to notation, including knowledge of 20, 30, 40, &c., to 100, and practice in reading; thus, 43=four sets of ten and three, wanting seven to make five sets of ten. Application of previously-acquired knowledge of additions to these higher numbers, the unit figure and the increment being kept the same: thus, $5+4=9$, $15+4=19$, $25+4=29$, $3+5=8$, $13+5=18$, $23+5=28$, &c. Sums on slates of two columns, involving additions for which the oral work has prepared the children.

Stage 3.—Extension of notation to thousands, oral addition by 2, 3, 4, 5—9 to 50, and subsequently to 100; the practice to be given first with the aid of Sonnenschein's picture ring until facility is acquired, the starting figure varying and the increment remaining the same: thus, by fours, 3, 7, 11, 15, &c.; 4, 8, 12, 16, &c.; 5, 9, 13, 17, &c. Embodiment of results of like additions in multiplication table. Oral additions from blackboard of numbers already treated with the aid of the picture ring, but with varying increments. Slate sums and multiplications involving knowledge acquired orally, the numbers employed not exceeding hundreds, but the columns in addition to be of any suitable depth. Constant use of problems in which money tables and measures of length are to be introduced.

The analysis of numbers, as far, at least, as Stage 2 goes, must be considered the proper work of an infant department, as providing the basis of all mechanical processes, a specialisation in the direction of addition and multiplication being the chief work of the First Standard, and, in the direction of subtraction and division, the chief work of the Second. But specialisation must also proceed a certain length among the infants, and I think it is not too much to seek that the highest class not presented in a standard should approximately include the following portions of Stage 3: Extension of notation to hundreds, oral additions by 2, 3, 4, 5, to 50, with regular and irregular increment; slate additions combining this knowledge with analysis previously done; and corresponding multiplications orally and on slates—that is, practically, to five times. Generally throughout the teaching it is to be understood that the most sparing use of simultaneous practice must be observed, that slate work should always follow, never get ahead of, what has been treated orally, that mechanical proficiency and intelligent application must be equally regarded, and that a smaller programme thoroughly done is of infinitely more value than a wider programme of uncertain results.

BUILDINGS, ETC.—The buildings are generally good; but the Inspector does not often visit a school without having his attention called to sundry small matters, such as leakages and the need of repairs to spouting, fencing, &c., which one would think ought to be one of the first cares of the local School Committee, or, at any rate, come before the annual supply of prizes, cakes, and tea. "Closets require attention" is a remark which has very commonly to be made in inspection reports on schools in the country.

REGISTERS, ETC.—The proper keeping of the registers is one of the most important points in our system of school government, and no keeping can be considered a proper keeping which is not perfectly accurate and complete down to the smallest detail. In point of accuracy I have no criticism to make. General accuracy must be conceded. But in point of completeness and strict adherence to rules of more or less importance I do not find it satisfactory to have had in about one-

fifth of the schools visited to report omissions such as the following: "Totals not checked in column 'Times Present' for current quarter," "Daily totals not entered for last day of previous week," "Daily totals not summed for past three days," "Total not entered for morning of day of inspection, and spaces left blank,' "Summary not entered for two months," "Entries of progress not made for previous year in Register of Admission, Progress and Withdrawal." The most serious of these faults is, of course, the failure to enter immediately the totals of daily attendance, and teachers who allow themselves a little laxity in this respect may occupy a very awkward position, especially as the instructions do not, as they should, direct the filling up of blank spaces when children are absent. The instructions I refer to are printed on the back of the Register of Daily Attendance furnished by the Education Department. What authority these instructions have I know not—whether, for instance, the instruction that the register must be marked not less than one hour and a half after the opening of the school must necessarily be taken as a definition of the gazetted regulation that the attendance shall be registered at a convenient time within the school hours. At all events, teachers are supposed to obey them. Besides the Register of Admission, Progress, and Withdrawal, which gives the history of attendants from the opening, no record exists in our schools of a school's history—of changes of teachers, of alterations in the distribution of the staff, of summaries of examination results, of visits made, of books introduced or abandoned, of subjects chosen for instruction and examination for the year, as in elementary science, &c., or of the grouping of classes for examination, as in the geography of Standards IV. and V. The last two points are of considerable practical importance, as the form and estimate of the following year's examination depend to a certain extent on them, and an Inspector can scarcely be expected to keep the facts in mind or even to know them. The omission should be supplied by providing a log book.

TABLE A.—PASS SUBJECTS, TABLE OF NUMBERS EXAMINED.

Class.	Presented.		Absent.		Excepted.		Failed.		Passed.	
	(*a*)	(*b*)	(*a*)	(*b*)	(*a*)	(*b*)	(*a*)	(*b*)	(*a*)	(*b*)
S 7	43	7	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
S 6	182	76	13	2	3	3	26	21	140	50
S 5	389	160	14	3	9	9	109	63	257	85
S 4	765	288	30	12	21	17	147	91	567	168
S 3	1,032	493	53	27	38	28	233	125	708	313
S 2	878	543	40	19	29	23	92	65	717	436
S 1	831	523	28	27	6	9	18	40	779	447
P.	2,066	1,387	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
	6,186	3,477	178	90	106	89	625	405	3,168	1,449
Totals in schools examined	9,663		268		195		1,030		4,667	
Totals for district ...	19,727		555		476		2,490		9,283	

TABLE B.—PASS SUBJECTS, PROPORTIONS IN PERCENTAGES.

Class.	Absent of Class Roll, (*a*) and (*b*).	Excepted of Class Roll, (*a*) and (*b*).	Failed of Class Roll, (*a*) and (*b*).	Passed of Class Roll, (*a*) and (*b*).	Presented of School Roll, (*a*) and (*b*).	Passed of School Roll, (*a*) and (*b*).	Failed of Sum of Passes and Failures: "Percentage of Failures."			
							(*a*)	(*b*)	(*a*) and (*b*)	Whole District
S 6	5·8	2·3	18·2	73·6	2·7	2·0	15·7	29·6	19·8	23·08
S 5	3·1	3·3	31·3	62·3	5·7	3·5	29·8	42·6	33·5	36·20
S 4	4·0	3·6	22·6	69·8	10·9	7·6	20·6	35·1	24·5	29·26
S 3	5·2	4·3	23·5	67·0	15·8	10·6	24·8	28·5	26·0	29·73
S 2	4·2	3·7	11·0	81·1	14·7	11·9	11·4	13·0	12·0	13·55
S 1	4·1	1·1	4·3	90·5	14·0	12·7	2·3	8·2	4·5	8·19
Ss 6–1 ...	4·3	3·2	16·7	75·8	63·8	48·3	16·5	21·3	18·1	21·15

RESULTS OF EXAMINATION.—In the tables here given the columns marked "(*a*)" stand for the schools examined with my colleague, and the columns marked "(*b*)" for those examined separately, the columns marked "(*a*) and (*b*)" standing for the joint result. Detailed and summarised results for the whole district are contained in the appendices.

A comparison of the general return for the district with that of the previous year will show a very considerable advance in all but the Sixth Standard, which remains the same; and, as the results for 1887 were again in advance of those for 1886, we are doubtless justified in concluding a steady improvement in our schools, although something must be set down simply to greater familiarity with the requirements of examiners. The differences in the results for groups (*a*) and (*b*) above and the general return for the year may be regarded as due to the different proportionate influences of large schools.

The relative positions of the standards for the third time since the introduction of the present Regulations remain substantially the same, the only variation being interchanges of position in

Standards III. and IV. It should be noted that in any comparison of class with class the adjustments of the syllabus have to be kept in view. In Standards I. and II. the grant of a pass, as involving little more than fair mechanical proficiency in a limited group of subjects, is to be considered almost a matter of course, and the number of passes has therefore little meaning if an estimate be sought of the quality of the teaching. When we come to Standard III. a pass means more. The range of subjects is much wider, and in some of them fair proficiency makes much greater demands on the intelligence of both teacher and pupil. In this class drawing has for the first time been made a pass subject during the year. The addition thus made to a body of work already sufficiently heavy has seldom been allowed to affect the result; but I am happy to say that the occasions for the exercise of indulgence have been much fewer than I had anticipated.

One point of contrast in schools of group (*a*) and group (*b*), as shown in the column "Percentage of Failures" above, cannot be overlooked. The schools of the latter group hold their own very fairly up to the Third Standard, but show a difference of nearly 14 per cent. in the higher standards. Without assuming that the number of passes and failures is the full measure of a school's efficiency even in pass subjects, this may be taken as indicating that the schools are more generally on a level at the Third Standard stage; but I cannot admit that it marks a necessary distinction between the very large school and the school of average size in the higher standards. Group (*a*) occupies the position of a selected few; group (*b*) is a much more varied assortment in size and quality. It is, however, somewhat remarkable that if we subdivide group (*b*) the proportion of failures in schools with one hundred attendants and upwards, though 5 per cent. lower in Standard IV., is 8 per cent. higher in Standards V. and VI. alike than in schools with fifty to one hundred on the roll. A type of school with one hundred to two hundred children ought not only to have a much larger proportion in the higher standards than is generally the case in this district, but in respect of these classes ought to take a higher position in examination records.

TABLE C.—AVERAGE MARKS IN CLASS AND ADDITIONAL SUBJECTS.

Class Subjects—Marks, 0-100.			Additional Subjects—Marks, 0-20.		
Subject.	(*a*) and (*b*)	Whole District.	Subject.	(*a*) and (*b*)	Whole District.
Drawing	39·7	39·41	Recitation	12·6	12·5
History	44·2	40·00	Drill	11·7	11·2
Geography	56·8	54·93	Singing	12·1	10·2
Science, object lessons, &c.	42·1	41·71	Sewing	14·2	13·8
			Subject matter of reading lessons	12·0	12·1
			Extra drawing ...	7·5	6·8
Average "percentage on class subjects"	46·2	44·46	Average "additional marks"	58·5	57·24

In Table C are given the average marks in class and additional subjects for the schools examined and for the district respectively. The class marks are higher than they were in 1887; in the additional marks there is no material difference.

I have, &c.,
W. J. ANDERSON, M.A., LL.D., Inspector.

The Chairman, Education Board, North Canterbury.

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3. MR. HOGBEN'S REPORT.

SIR,— Christchurch, 26th March, 1889.

I have the honour to present my report for 1888 on the following schools, forming a portion of the North Canterbury District:—

Schools examined.—(*a*) In conjunction with Dr. Anderson—Seven schools, namely, Akaroa, Ashburton, Christchurch East (Gloucester Street), Christchurch West (main), Lyttelton (main), Normal School (Sydenham); (*b*) By myself alone—Forty-seven schools, namely, Annat, Aylesbury, Broadfield, Brookside, Burnham, Charing Cross, Chertsey, Christchurch East (Phillipstown), Courtenay, Dunsandel, Fendalton, German Bay (main), German Bay (side), Glentunnel, Gough's Bay, Greendale, Halkett, Irwell, Killinchy, Kimberley, Kirwee, Kowai Bush, Kowai Pass, Kyle, Lakeside, Le Bon's Bay, Leeston (main), Leeston (side), Little Akaloa (main), Little Akaloa (side), Malvern, Okain's Bay, Pendarves, Pigeon Bay (main), Pigeon Bay (side), Little Rakaia, Riccarton, Robinson's Bay, Russell's Flat, Sedgmere, Selwyn, Southbridge, South Malvern, Wainui, Weedon, West Melton, Yaldhurst. Total of (*a*) and (*b*), fifty-four schools. Of the above schools the four town schools, with Ashburton, Chertsey, Kyle, Pendarves, and Phillipstown, were inspected by Dr. Anderson; the remainder, with two exceptions, but with the addition of St. Albans (main) and (side), Barry's Bay, Darfield, Duvauchelle's Bay, French Farm, Hororata, Lyttelton (side), and Papanui, were inspected by me in the first part of the year. Some of the schools were visited more than once. Total number of schools inspected, fifty-two.

The first of the tables given below shows the numbers of children presented, &c., in the several standards for each of the groups (*a*) and (*b*) just enumerated. The second table gives the corresponding proportions calculated in percentages; but the separation between the groups (*a*) and (*b*) is made only in the percentages of failures.

PASS SUBJECTS—TABLE I.—NUMBERS EXAMINED.

Class.	Presented.		Absent.		Excepted.		Failed.		Passed.	
	(*a*)	(*b*)	(*a*)	(*b*)	(*a*)	(*b*)	(*a*)	(*b*)	(*a*)	(*b*)
S 7	43	4	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
S 6	182	76	13	1	3	1	26	15	140	59
S 5	389	221	14	6	9	13	109	78	257	124
S 4	765	351	30	11	21	14	147	128	567	198
S 3	1,032	495	53	20	38	36	233	157	708	282
S 2	878	556	40	23	29	11	92	72	717	450
S 1	831	505	28	12	6	11	18	56	779	426
P.	2,066	1,062	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Totals ...	6,186	3,270	178	73	106	86	625	506	3,168	1,539
	9,456		251		192		1,131		4,707	

PASS SUBJECTS—TABLE II.—PROPORTIONS CALCULATED IN PERCENTAGES.

Class.	Absent of Class Roll.	Excepted of Class Roll.	Failed of Class Roll..	Passed of Class Roll.	Presented of School Roll.	Passed of School Roll.	Failed of Sum of Passes and Failures—*i.e.*, "Percentage of Failures."		
							(*a*)	(*b*)	Total (*a*) and (*b*).
S 6 ...	5·4	1·6	15·9	77·1	2·7	2·1	15·7	23·4	17·1
S 5 ...	3·3	3·6	30·7	62·4	6·4	4·0	29·8	38·6	32·9
S 4 ...	3·7	3·1	24·6	68·5	11·8	8·1	20·6	39·3	26·4
S 3 ...	4·8	4·8	25·5	64·8	16·1	10·7	24·8	35·8	28·3
S 2 ...	4·4	2·8	11·4	81·4	15·2	12·3	11·4	13·8	12·3
S 1 ...	3·0	1·3	5·5	90·2	14·1	12·6	2·3	11·6	5·8
Ss 6 to 1...	4·0	3·1	18·1	74·9	66·4	49·7	16·5	24·7	19·4

S 7. Percentage of school-roll, 0·5
P. " " 33·1 } (*a*) and (*b*) combined.

For groups (*a*) and (*b*) combined the proportion passed per cent. of the school roll is in every standard higher than the corresponding percentage for the whole district last year, the official percentage of passes for the fifty-four schools being 49·7, as compared with 42·95 for the whole district (153 schools) last year. The percentage of failures on the sum of passes and failures is also lower for every class: the percentage for Standards VI.–I.—that is, the official percentage of failures—is 19·4; for the whole district last year it was 25·08. No separate return has been made for these schools before; nevertheless, it is safe to say that we have in the facts just stated sufficient evidence of an advance upon the whole in the quality of the work in pass subjects.

A qualification to this judgment must be made when we compare the percentages of failures for the groups (*a*) and (*b*) respectively in the second of the above tables. The difference between them is very marked in all the standards except Standard II. In Standard VI. and Standard I. very plausible reasons may be urged for this difference: in the largest schools of group (*a*) special provision is made for the instruction of Standard VI., and a more careful selection is made by the teachers of the pupils presented in Standard I. There remain Standards V.–III.: and it might be thought that there also the disparity is due to essential differences in the circumstances of the schools. Such a conclusion would, however, be unfair to at least half of the schools in group (*b*). If, for example, we roughly divide the schools of group (*b*) presenting pupils in Standard V. according to the results of the examination, we find that one half of them (including schools of all sizes) have an average percentage of failures of 21, the other half an average percentage of failures of 64. Similarly dividing Standard IV., one half of the schools have an average percentage of failures of 19, the other half 58; and for Standard III. the average percentage of one half is 24, of the other 49. It will be noticed in each case that one half of the schools in group (*b*) do as well or better than the corresponding standards of schools in the group (*a*); and the other half very much worse. The differences are far too great, and, after carefully discriminating schools for which special allowance must be made during the year, one is forced to the inevitable conclusion that for about one-third of the schools in group (*b*) the instruction given in the important classes Standards III.–V. is decidedly inferior in character. As I had different districts for 1887 and 1888, an exact or detailed comparison is hardly possible, and my remarks on the several subjects must be chiefly confined to criticism of existing faults. It must not be supposed that these faults are present in all cases.

Reading and writing call for little remark: they are generally of passable quality, but in perhaps the majority of schools the amount of comprehension of the subject matter displayed leaves something to be desired. Arithmetic is generally the best-taught subject, though the attention given as yet to the amount and character of the oral lessons is less than they should claim. An improvement manifest in the accuracy of the bills of parcels set in Standard IV. is counter-

balanced by a want of power to apply the compound rules when the form of the question is varied in the slightest degree. Grammar and composition show best in Standards III. and IV. In Standards V. and VI. the composition exercises presented are generally too short to admit of any plan in writing them. The maps I have seen this year have been on the whole better than before: I am convinced they would be better still if in each map one meridian and one or two parallels (not more) were selected as "construction lines." In Standard III. the positions of places are less vaguely defined. The want of definiteness and accuracy in Standards IV.–VI. is probably due to the fact that too many names are taught, as well as to the omission to link the facts of physical and political geography with one another and with the facts of every-day life as recorded in the newspapers.

Class Subjects.—The average marks obtained by schools in groups (*a*) and (*b*) are—for drawing, 41·4; history, 39·6; geography, 51·3; elementary science, object lessons, &c., 46·1. The average percentage on class subjects is 45·1.

In all but three schools freehand drawing alone was attempted in Standards IV.–VI., and for this the Inspectors did not feel warranted in assigning the full marks (100). Accordingly, for the fifty-four schools concerned, the average maximum obtainable was about 68, so that 41·4 would represent about 61 per cent. on the drawing actually taught, making it in this sense the best of the class subjects. Many of the teachers deserve great credit for the courage and success with which they have faced a comparatively new subject. Apart from its inclusion among the subjects of the pass group, and the question of classification involved therein, I view the obligation to teach drawing to every child as an almost unmixed benefit, tending to counteract the somewhat too bookish effect of much of the rest of the syllabus, and to satisfy in some degree the demand (vague at times, but founded on a real want) for a greater amount of technical instruction. The same demand, it appears to me, would in the case of the elder girls in our larger schools be more appropriately met by the substitution for geometrical and model drawing of systematic lessons in "cutting out," &c., to supplement the lessons in needlework already given.

It cannot be said that many teachers are successful in the lessons on elementary science. The demand for technical instruction naturally becomes in country districts a demand for instruction in agricultural chemistry; and this may be thoroughly reasonable if the boys concerned are old enough to benefit by such lessons. But if the demand is to be satisfied it will certainly be necessary to train our teachers. At present, as far as my experience goes, agricultural chemistry is the least satisfactory form the science lessons can take. Whether any argument for requiring from country teachers a sound knowledge of agricultural chemistry would not hold equally well for town teachers in regard, say, to the principles of the textile manufactures, is probably another question.

Additional Subjects.—The average of the additional marks for groups (*a*) and (*b*) was 58·8. The average marks (0 to 20) for the several subjects were—Repetition, 13·7; drill, 11·8; singing, 9·2; needlework, 13·6; subject matter of reading lessons, 12·4; extra drawing, 10.

There is perhaps more variety in the quality of the infant instruction in the different schools than in anything else connected with them. While the conduct of some infant departments is excellent, in others the progress made at the early stages is extremely small. Teachers are too apt to overlook the necessity for frequent change of occupation and position, short lessons, and oft-recurring intervals of rest. As to the methods in vogue, there is rather more system in the teaching of reading (the chief subject) than in that of elementary arithmetic (which is probably next in importance). The proper use of tables is to systematize knowledge by grouping acquired facts: it is a common thing to hear children repeating in chorus table after table containing facts they have not acquired. Again, it would seem obvious that the knowledge of numbers should precede the working of sums based on those numbers: it is much more usual to find the sums given first and the principles postponed or left entirely to chance. In a note appended to this report I have ventured to sketch out roughly a suitable (though not the only possible) programme for the instruction of preparatory classes in the rudiments of the knowledge of numbers.

The art of speaking is not set down as one of the subjects of the syllabus; if it were, there would probably be more attention paid to the form of the answers given by the children even in the lowest classes, and in the upper classes answers consisting of single words or half-phrases (or of a verb where an adjective is wanted, or of either of them in place of a noun) would be less common than they are. It would hardly seem too much to ask that an answer should in general be either a complete sentence or a phrase such that with the affirmative form of the question it would make a complete sentence. Some lessons—as lessons on objects, oral composition, and the subject matter of the reading books—lend themselves to this in a peculiar degree. Imperfect questioning, simultaneous and indiscriminate answering, are, on the other hand, the indirect sources of a large amount of the slovenly answering that exists.

Of the miscellaneous topics that suggest themselves I will only allude to two that have been noticed from time to time in my reports to the Board upon particular schools—viz., the numerous instances of imperfect registers, and the frequent neglect by the local authorities of the sanitary arrangements of the school premises. In conclusion, I may say that the moral tone of the schools appears to be generally good; and I may take this opportunity of thanking teachers for receiving advice—or even unwelcome truths—in as kindly a spirit as that in which they are intended to be given.

I have, &c.,

George Hogben, M.A., Inspector.

The Chairman, Education Board, North Canterbury.

Note.—*Rough Sketch of Lessons on Numbers.*

(*a*.) Numbers one to nine. The use of actual objects, as cubes of wood, to show the analysis of each number by addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division. No number to be taken

until the preceding numbers are thoroughly mastered. Same numbers in the abstract: no figures to be used. Application to easy oral problems.

(*b.*) Meaning of the figures 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9. Recapitulation of (*a*), with use of figures and increased stress on abstract questions—*e.g.*, How many twos, threes, in six? Half of six?

(*c.*) Numbers nine to fifteen, treated as in (*a*), in the concrete, abstract, and in problems, but without using figures. Grouping of eleven, twelve, ... fifteen into a set of ten and one, two, three, four, or five more. Same repeated with ball frame.

(*d.*) Show with the ball frame one ten, two tens, three tens, ... up to, say, twelve tens. Names of these—ten, twenty, thirty . . . . . to ninety; not of intermediate numbers. [In (*c* and (*d*) the gaining of familiarity with groups of ten is an essential feature.]

(*e.*) Figures for numbers ten to fifteen, based on latter part of (*c*). Recapitulation of (*c*), with use of figures.

(*f.*) Treatment of numbers fifteen to twenty as in (*a*) and (*c*). [Ball frame or cubes.] Notation of these numbers.

(*g.*) Extension of (*a*) to numbers above twenty, thus—Two tens and one to be known as twenty-one; three tens and one, thirty-one . . . . . nine tens and one, ninety-one; two tens and two, twenty-two; and so on. [On ball frame, followed by notation.] This will give notation of all numbers to ninety-nine. Also additions within these limits—*e.g.*, 23 and 5=two tens and three and five=two tens and eight, or 28.

(*h.*) Extension of (*c*) and (*f*) to numbers above twenty—*e.g.*, 9 and 5=14, that is, one ten and 4; 19 and 5=ten and 9 and 5=ten and 14=two tens and 4, or 24; 29 and 5=34; and so on. (Ball frame.) [Grouping into tens and units the prominent feature throughout.]

(*i.*) Regular series of additions by 2, 3, 4, 5 ("counting" proper)—*e.g.*, 1+4=5, 5+4=9, 9+4=13, &c.; 2+4=6, 6+4=10, &c.; 3+4=7, 7+4=11, &c.; 4+4=8, 8+4=12, &c. Tables of addition, and perhaps of subtraction, to correspond; tables of multiplication based upon the additions.

(*j.*) Irregular additions, separate numbers not exceeding 9, and total not exceeding 99—*e.g.*, 9+8=17, 17+5=22, &c.

(*k.*) Ten tens=one hundred. Extension of notation to 999 or even to 1,999. [Hundreds above 900 may be known at first as ten hundred, eleven hundred, and so on.]

N.B.—The ball frame is not a suitable instrument for the first lessons. The most appropriate objects are cubes of wood (all the better if painted in various bright colours), because of the facility with which they can be placed on the teacher's table in view of the children, and arranged in rows, piles, or groups as required. The cubes might be supplemented by counters, pencils, nuts, dots, stars, circles, squares, drawn upon the blackboard, &c. There should be constant revision of earlier work; the grouping of acquired facts at any stage to form tables, especially of addition and multiplication; easy oral problems and sums on the blackboard and on slates, based upon the knowledge gained, but not going beyond it. I would warmly recommend to infant mistresses "Numbers Illustrated" (Appleton, New York), a book in which ideas somewhat similar to the above are admirably set forth in concrete form.

SUMMARIES OF RESULTS FOR THE WHOLE DISTRICT.

TABLE A.—PASS SUBJECTS.

Classes.	Number presented.	Number absent.	Number excepted.	Number failed.	Number passed.	Proportion presented per Cent. of Total School Roll.	Proportion passed per Cent. of Total School Roll —"Percentage of Passes."	Number of Schools presenting	Average Age of those that passed.
									Yrs. mos.
S 7	84	...	...	...	...	0·43	...	27	...
S 6	483	20	8	105	350	2·45	1·77	96	14 2
S 5	1,140	31	51	383	675	5·78	3·42	129	13 2
S 4	2,110	94	95	562	1,359	10·70	6·89	141	12 3
S 3	3,130	160	152	838	1,980	15·87	10·04	151	11 3
S 2	3,047	138	112	379	2,418	15·45	12·26	156	10 2
S 1	2,894	112	58	223	2,501	14·67	12·68	149	9 0
P.	6,839	...	. .	...	...	34·67	...	156	...
Totals for 1888	19,727	555	476	2,490	9,283	100·00	47·06	156	11 8*
Corresponding totals for 1887	19,447	635	590	2,796	8,353	100·00	42·95	153	11 9*

* Mean of average ages.

TABLE B.—PASS SUBJECTS.

[Proportions calculated in Percentages.]

Classes.	Proportion absent of Class Roll.	Proportion excepted of Class Roll.	Proportion failed of Class Roll.	Proportion passed of Class Roll.	Proportion Failed of the Sum of Passes and Failures—*i.e.*, "Percentage of Failures."
S 6	4·14	1·66	21·74	72·47	23·08
S 5	2·72	4·47	33·60	59·21	36·20
S 4	4·45	4·50	26·64	64·41	29·26
S 3	5·11	4·86	26·77	63·26	29·73
S 2	4·53	3·68	12·44	79·36	13·55
S 1	3·87	2·00	7·71	86·42	8·19
Ss 6–1 ...	4·33	3·72	19·45	72·50	21·15

TABLE C.—CLASS AND ADDITIONAL SUBJECTS.

Class Subjects.			Additional Subjects.		
Subject.	Percentage	No. of Schools.	Subject.	Average Marks.	No. of Schools.
Drawing	39·41	144	Repetition and recitation	12·5	156
History	40·00	151	Drill and exercises ...	11·2	146
Geography	54·93	156	Singing	10·2	129
Elementary science, object lessons, &c.	41·71	155	Needlework	13·8	151
General result	44·46	156	Subject matter of reading lessons	12·1	156
			Extra drawing	6·8	4
			Average of additional marks	57·2	156

SOUTH CANTERBURY.

SIR,— Education Office, Timaru, 9th March, 1889.

I have the honour to submit my third annual report on the schools in this district.

During the year all the schools in this district were examined except the new one at Beaconsfield, most of the pupils of which had been in attendance at neighbouring schools where the examinations for the year had just been completed before its opening. Visits of inspection were paid to all the schools except the outlying one at Hakateramea, where for several years a small but gradually increasing number of children have been taught in the kitchen of a dwellinghouse. As soon as a suitable site can be obtained and other matters arranged, it is proposed to erect a small school in the district, and the children who have been cooped up so long will work under conditions as favourable as their more fortunate friends in the better-settled parts of the country. The new school building at Glenavy was begun towards the close of the year, and it will be opened after the harvest holidays. The following table will show the general results of the examinations for the year :—

Standard Classes.	Presented.	Absent.	Excepted.	Failed.	Passed.	Percentage of Passes on No. examined.	Average Age of those that passed.
							Yrs. mos.
S 7	48	...	...	...	...	...	...
S 6	128	3	5	22	98	78	13 10
S 5	356	21	15	100	220	65	12 10
S 4	549	29	23	110	387	74	12 0
S 3	690	39	43	165	443	68	11 1
S 2	641	20	22	74	525	84	9 11
S 1	640	24	15	50	551	89	8 9
P.	1,558	...	...	...	...	...	...
Totals for 1888 ...	4,610	136	123	521	2,224	77	...
Corres. do., 1887	4,505	188	135	625	1,946	72	...

With the same number of schools as last year, there were on the rolls at the time of examination 4,610 children, an increase of 105 for the year. Deducting the preparatory pupils and those who had passed Standard VI., there remained 3,004 to be examined in the standard classes. Of these 136 were absent from the examination, the percentage of absentees being 4·5. For 1887 the percentage was 6·4, and for 1886 it was 8·5. The steady improvement which these figures indicate is deserving of special mention, and the teachers of this district can quote them as evidence that they are freeing themselves from the suspicion of conniving at the absence of those who are unprepared for the test of examination by reason of their irregularity, their laziness, or even their mental weakness. There are really very few children in good health who of their own free will would stay away from school on the examination day. It is a general remark that the worst attenders on the roll make a point of turning up on that day.

A fall in the number of "exceptions" from 135 to 123, and in the number of those "entitled to exception" from 346 to 306, is a result to be expected from the greater regularity shown in the quarterly returns of attendance. For this year the average attendance, stated as a percentage of the mean average weekly roll number for the four quarters, is 77·7—that is to say, out of every 100 children on the rolls there were 77·7 present every school day. The percentage, similarly calculated, for 1887 was 74·9, and for 1886 it was 72·8. The steadiness of this rise promises well for its continuance, and we must see that it does continue, for it has not reached the stage when we are to be satisfied with it. In past years the district as a whole has kept about the average of the colony; but it may well be asked why we have been so far behind the neighbouring district of Otago. Will the people of South Canterbury plead that they experience worse weather than they have across the Waitaki? Or will they assert that the children there are of less value than they are here in helping their mothers on washing days, in picking potatoes, in minding the baby, or in keeping the birds from the strawberries? Are we to be forced to the conclusion that the parents in this district do not so keenly realise to what extent their children suffer in their progress and their education in its widest sense from the unsteadiness of their attendance? No doubt a great deal of blame attaches to the parents for their apathy in this respect; but many of the teachers who find in this an excuse for their bad results had better consider how much of this irregularity is due to themselves. Assuredly I do not attach the extreme importance to this excuse which some teachers would seem, from the bitterness of their complaining, to expect me to do. I would have them bear in mind that it is a matter of experience that good teaching secures a good attendance, and that it is a common way of complimenting the teacher on his management of the school for parents to declare that they can scarcely keep their children at home when they really want them.

On the rolls there were 3,004 belonging to the standard classes, and 2,224 obtained passes. The official percentage of passes, estimated on the roll number of the schools examined, is 48; and the official percentage of failures, estimated on the standard class roll, exclusive of absentees and exceptions, is 19. The corresponding percentages for 1887 were 43 and 24. So great an improvement as the fall in the percentage of failures from 24 to 19 indicates must be gratifying to all interested in the welfare of our schools. It would have been still more gratifying had the proportion of schools whose results contributed to the lowering of this percentage been greater. As it happens, the four largest schools—whose united rolls fall short of half the number of all the children in the district by less than 250—have each been credited with a percentage of failures of less than 20; and there are sixteen schools in the same list. This leaves twenty-nine schools with a percentage of failures of over 20, as against eighteen schools for last year. It is remarkable, however, that the number of schools—thirty-three—whose percentage of failures ranges from 0 to 30 is the same as last year. It will be found that if we take the child as the unit this percentage has fallen from 24 to 19, but if we take the school as the unit it has risen from 24 to 25.

In Standards II., III., IV., V., and VI. the percentage of passes on the number examined shows a decided improvement, the most noticeable advance being in Standard V., but this has not been sufficient to raise it from holding the worst position among the standards, as it did last year. Next to it, but slightly better, is Standard III. My own opinion is that these are the hardest standards to pass, and I think this opinion will be supported by a comparison of the results obtained throughout the colony. In Standard I. the percentage has gone back from 91 to 89. For all the standards together—with 2,224 passes out of 2,863 examined—the percentage is 77, as against 72 for last year. The average percentage in class subjects is 55, the same as last year; and the average of additional marks is 57, as against 56 for 1887.

All the pupils of Class S 7 were examined in the work of Standard VI., and their papers showed that they had made good use of their time in revising the work of the previous year. In several schools algebra, Euclid, and Latin had been taken up by this class as additional subjects. The children in the preparatory classes were examined in whatever work they were reported to have overtaken during the year.

READING.—Taken all round the statistics of the year show that the efficiency of the instruction in the standard classes has reached a higher level than in any past year. This remark holds good, too, with regard to each subject. In my former reports I have laid stress upon the necessity of cultivating a better style of reading in all the classes, and that it was to what could be done in the lower classes, among those who had not yet fallen into a bad style, or, at least, to whom a bad style had not become a habit, that the teachers were to direct their best energies. From the improvement I have found in the grouping of the words, in the distinctness of utterance, and in the tone of the reading in most of the lower classes, I am satisfied that the teachers have not been appealed to in vain. There are still some small schools, and one large one, where a monotonous singsong prevails. In one large infant department I found the modulation of voice rather overdone; but for this the teacher is deserving of praise if we look to the future of the children, for this tendency will most likely disappear as they grow older without leaving any bad effects. In the higher classes good reading is by no means exceptional, but still it is not as prevalent as it might be. In the important matter of intelligent explanation of passages from the reading lessons there is still

room for great improvement. The value of this exercise can hardly be overestimated, and in the face of all that has been done in the past to impress this upon the teachers it is astonishing how little effect it has had on most of them. Over and over again, on my visits of inspection, I have seen a reading lesson taken, and the only approach at dealing with this part of the work was the asking of the meanings of a few big words as they are given in the list at the end of each lesson. A variation of this plan was to give a word out of the list for oral spelling, and out in one breath would come the spelling of this big word, with its bigger meaning thrown into the bargain.

SPELLING.—The spelling of the First and Second Standards was generally good, and sometimes it was excellent. Hitherto I have strictly confined myself to giving words from the reading books used during the year, but I should just like to remind the teachers of those standards that I am not bound to limit my choice of words in this way—and the warning may be of some service to those who persist in presenting their pupils for examination in the First Standard in no higher a reading book than the old "First Royal Reader." From the Third Standard upwards the attainments of the children in different schools varied in this more than in any other subject.

WRITING.—To any one accustomed to see children at desk work a visit to many of our schools would yield a surprise. The children in the upper classes would be found for the most part sitting with the right side to the desk, the writing on slate or paper being done at right angles to the direction of the desk instead of parallel with it. The explanation is that this is the only attitude a boy or girl of average growth can remain in with ease. The desks are very narrow, and the shelves underneath take up so much space that there is no room left for one's knees. The forms, too, that have been made to go along with these desks are so very narrow that I am sure the children would often be glad to stand up to rest. Fortunately desks and forms of this pattern have not been supplied to all the schools. In some of the oldest schools the desks take up too much room and are ugly to look at, but they are comfortable; and during the past two years desks of an improved pattern have been introduced. The matter is so important that I would recommend the Board to have all the obnoxious desks altered. The cost would be considerable, but the money would be well spent. Even where there is no hindrance to the children assuming and keeping a good position at desk work I do not find a good position always taken; and I have very frequently to find fault with the way in which the pen is held. These are points which, in the teaching of writing, cannot be too carefully attended to. In the small schools where one teacher has to attend to all the standards good slate writing in the First and Second Standards is not general; but in the larger schools it is usually very good. Some of the schools deserve praise for the writing of the upper classes, but from too many this praise must be withheld. In many cases it would seem as if the teacher had yielded his place to the engraved headlines.

ARITHMETIC.—The improvement in arithmetic which we are anxiously looking for from year to year is slow to come. The results are a little better in Standards I. and II., and in the other standards no ground has been lost. I do not feel myself called upon to say much here as to the best means to be employed by the teachers in their treatment of this subject—it would merely be a repetition of what they will find for themselves in the Inspectors' reports for years past. The whole matter resolves itself into this: Train the children to be accurate and expert in the simple rules, cultivate their intelligence, and—well, let the teacher now and then read the lesson, "With Brains, Sir."

GRAMMAR.—In Standard III. the grammar was well done in the majority of the schools, but the same cannot be said of the results in any of the other classes. Though still far from satisfactory, it has improved to some extent in Standard IV.; and, while the parsing in Standards V. and VI. is seldom better than more or less skilful guessing, good analysis of sentences has become more general. To judge from the exercises in composition that I have to examine in school after school, one is forced into the belief that it is the most neglected of all the subjects taught in our schools. It is true that in the course of the examinations I come upon a good many exercises that are neatly written and that show correct spelling and punctuation, but they are few compared with the number of those that are made almost worthless from bad spelling, neglect of pointing, and want of neatness and care in the handwriting. I am always prepared to let a good composition exercise count for a pass in the case of any child whose grammar paper is in other particulars of a very indifferent character; but such a combination is very rare. As a rule, I find that where the composition is good, grammar has been well taught.

GEOGRAPHY.—The geography of the Second Standard is now very satisfactorily treated in nearly all the schools. Failure in this subject in the Third Standard is, with a few exceptions, confined to those pupils who are very irregular in attendance. Geography is a class subject in Standard IV., but I cannot say that I have found less attention paid to it than in the standards in which it is a pass subject: indeed, except Standard II., no class has shown to better advantage. In Standards V. and VI. there is generally a very fair knowledge of the positions of places of importance, and the children are frequently word-perfect in telling what their books say about their industries, &c.; but when an attempt is made to get the children to account for the localisation of certain industries, silence usually settles down on the class. In a few of the schools map drawing is very well done, but there are still many schools where it does not seem to receive the attention which it deserves. Some of the teachers are acquiring greater facility in the drawing of outline maps on the blackboard during the geography lessons. This can always be relied on as the surest way of impressing the facts on the minds of the scholars, and the good teacher of geography will not depart from this method, however excellent his wall maps may be.

HISTORY.—In forming a judgment on the character of the work done in history during the year I have relied almost wholly on the appearance made by the classes during the oral examinations, partly conducted by myself and partly by the teacher. The most noticeable feature was the readiness with which, in many schools, the children would recite bits from their text books which would have formed the answers to the stock questions of the ordinary written examinations.

DRAWING.—In Standards I., II., and III. drawing was a pass subject, and in the higher standards a class subject. The books of Standards I. and II. showed that a great deal of trouble had been bestowed on the training of the children, and with results that in a few cases exceeded my expectations. In Standard III. the books exhibited some very rough work, but I was very lenient with the marking wherever there was unmistakable evidence of honest endeavour to succeed, although the execution fell far short of what it may be expected to reach when all our teachers have acquired greater skill in dealing with this subject, and when they enter on their task with less doubt as to what the average child, if properly guided, may reasonably be hoped to accomplish. In Standards IV., V., and VI. freehand was professed in all the schools, and in a few the pupils have been taken through a course of geometrical drawing. Whenever I had time I tested the children's skill in geometrical drawing, and I was quite satisfied with the neatness and accuracy of their work.

OBJECT LESSONS AND SCIENCE.—These now form a part of the regular course of instruction in all our schools. I have noted only five or six instances where the science lesson, as given by the teacher, was worthy of the name. A good object lesson was not quite so rare.

ADDITIONAL SUBJECTS.—*Drill* is taught in thirty-seven of our schools, and in about a third of these the movements are done with commendable precision.

Singing, taught in thirty-three schools, has much improved in all the large schools. In most of the schools some attention is given to the practice of singing from notes, but I am sorry to say that it will be only from two or three schools that the children will carry away with them the power of singing at sight even the simplest songs. For the sweetness of their singing and the prettiness of the movements introduced in their action songs the children of the Timaru (main) Infant Department deserve special mention.

Instruction in *Needlework* is given in all but eight of our schools. In the majority of the schools the teachers strictly follow the programme of work as it is laid down in the regulations. The specimens of work are nearly always quite satisfactory, and very often they merit the highest praise.

I have, &c.,

JAS. GIBSON GOW, M.A., Inspector.

The Chairman, Education Board, South Canterbury.

SUMMARY OF RESULTS FOR THE WHOLE DISTRICT.

Standard Classes.	Presented.	Absent.	Excepted.	Failed.	Passed.	Average Age.	
						Yrs.	mos.
S 7	48	...	...	...	...	...	...
S 6	128	3	5	22	98	13	10
S 5	356	21	15	100	220	12	10
S 4	549	29	23	110	387	12	0
S 3	690	39	43	165	443	11	1
S 2	641	20	22	74	525	9	11
S 1	640	24	15	50	551	8	9
P.	1,558	...	...	...	...	...	
Totals ...	4,610	136	123	521	2,224	*	

* Mean of average age, 11 years 5 months.

REPORT ON DISTRICT HIGH SCHOOLS.

SIR,— Education Office, Timaru, 22nd February, 1889.

I have the honour to submit the following report on the district high schools of Waimate and Temuka. In both schools an encouraging increase in the number of secondary pupils has to be recorded. The numbers for 1888 are nine at Waimate and thirteen at Temuka, the corresponding numbers for 1887 being three and ten. Besides those examined several had been working for a great part of the year, but had left before the examination. The following tables show the subjects taught, the marks gained by each class, and the amount of work done.

Waimate District High School.

Subject.	Course.	Number of Pupils.	Average Marks per Cent.	Amount of Work done.
English ...	...	9	51	(1) Grammar (Mason's Outlines); (2) Composition (Nichol's Primer, pages 1–43); (3) Acts I. to IV. of "Henry V."
Latin ...	Second ...	1	70	Abbott's "Via Latina," pages 1–142, with Appendix I., of irregular verbs.
" ...	First, Sec. II.	1	72	Abbott's "Via Latina," pages 1–83.
" ...	" Sec. I.	4	80	Abbott's "Via Latina," pages 1–39.
Euclid ...	Second ...	2	75	Books I. and II., with deductions.
" ...	First, Sec. II.	1	78	Book I., with deductions.
" ...	...	3	63	Book I. to Proposition 15 (three months' work).
Algebra ...	Third ...	1	85	Quadratic equations, problems, evolution, and surds.
" ...	Second ...	1	100	Fractions and simultaneous equations.
" ...	First, Sec. II.	5	77	Factors, G.C.M., L.C.M., and easy simple equations.

Temuka District High School.

Subject.	Course.	Number of Pupils.	Average Marks per Cent.	Amount of Work done.
Latin ...	Third ...	1	48	Abbott's "Via Latina;" Virgil's "Æneid," Book V.; Cæsar's "Invasion of Britain" (Macmillan).
" ...	Second ...	5	43	Abbott's "Via Latina," pages 1 to 142; with Appendix I., of Irregular Verb.
" ...	First, Sec. II.	2	60	Abbott's "Via Latina," pages 1 to 79.
" ...	" Sec. I.	1	75	Abbott's "Via Latina," pages 1 to 39.
French ...	Third ...	1	50	Molière's "Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme;" Grammar; easy passages for translation into French.
" ...	Second ...	2	57	Bué's Second-year French Course.
Euclid ...	Third ...	3	25	Books III. and IV.
" ...	Second ...	3	78	Books I and II., with deductions.
" ...	First, Sec. II.	6	56	Book I., with deductions.
Algebra ...	Third ...	2	82	Quadratic equations, problems, evolution, and surds.
" ...	Second ...	4	30	Fractions, and simultaneous equations.
" ...	First, Sec. II.	5	53	Factors, G.C.M., L.C.M., and easy simple equations.

In addition to the class percentages given above, I add a few notes on the quality of the work.

Waimate.

ENGLISH.—Most of the pupils in this class did their written work creditably, and in the oral examination on passages from "Henry V." nearly all answered well.

LATIN.—The quality of the work in all the classes was remarkably good, the best features being the almost faultless translation of Latin sentences and the careful rendering of English into Latin.

EUCLID.—In the highest class one paper was excellent and the other fair. In the other classes very good marks were obtained by all the scholars except one. Great credit is due to all for the neatness of the papers.

ALGEBRA.—This subject has been very successfully taught. One pupil gained a percentage of 50, but the percentages of the others ranged from 72 to 100, this latter being gained by two pupils, one in the middle and one in the lowest class.

Temuka.

LATIN.—The papers of the only pupil in the highest class possessed very little merit. A large amount of work was professed, but the knowledge of it seemed too superficial to stand the test of this examination. In the other classes two pupils did very well, and two fairly; but the work of the rest was so unsatisfactory that it will be advisable for them to spend another year at the same course.

FRENCH.—In this subject one very good paper was done. The girl who took the third course showed considerable facility and commendable accuracy in translating from French into English, but she made some sad blundering in her attempts to render some easy sentences into French.

EUCLID.—None of the papers in the highest class were even fairly well done. All the papers of the middle class and two of the lowest were very good. The other papers were fair with one exception.

ALGEBRA.—There was one excellent paper in the highest class, and the other was very good. The percentage of marks in the middle class was very low in every case. The lowest class made a good appearance on the whole, their average, however, being spoilt by one boy, whose paper was of no value.

I have, &c.,

JAS. GIBSON GOW, M.A. Inspector.

The Chairman, South Canterbury Board of Education.

OTAGO.

SIR,—

We have the honour to submit our report for the year 1888.

During the year all the schools in the Otago District were examined except three. Two of these were found closed on the day fixed for the examination, and the examination of the other was changed from the end to the beginning of the year, at the request of the School Committee. The two former were examined since the year closed and the results have been included among those of the year. All the schools but one were visited for inspection, but two were found closed. The following table shows at one view the chief statistics of examination for the year:—

Standard Classes.	Presented.	Absent.	Excepted.	Failed.	Passed.	Percentage of Standard Passes.	Average Age.
							Yrs. mos.
P. ...	7,952	...	...	...	...	...	...
S 1 ...	2,962	61	23	206	2,672	90	9 0·6
S 2 ...	3,158	102	103	274	2,679	85	10 3·6
S 3 ...	2,888	116	103	492	2,177	75	11 4·2
S 4 ...	2,410	68	73	475	1,794	74	12 3·6
S 5 ...	1,642	53	49	408	1,132	69	13 2·9
S 6 ...	859	21	15	159	664	77	13 11·5
S 7 ...	173	...	...	...	...	...	...
Totals ...	22,044	421	366	2,014	11,118	...	*

* Mean of average age, 11 years 8 months.

Of the 22,044 pupils presented on the examination schedules, 13,919 were entered for examination in one or other of the standards, being 395 more than the corresponding number for last year. In all, 13,498 were present and were examined in Standards I. to VI. Of these, 11,118 passed the standard for which they were presented, a result which gives 80 as the percentage of passes in standards. This percentage is the same as last year's. The percentage of failures in standards (the exceptions being excluded in this computation) was $15\frac{1}{3}$, as compared with 18 for last year.

The average percentage in class subjects was 56, as against 58 in 1887; and the average of additional marks 66, as against 63.

In all the standards except Standard VI. there has been an advance in the percentage of standard passes, and in Standards II. and V. the advance has been considerable. The results in Standard VI. are the same as last year's. The following statement, showing for the last three years the percentage of the whole number of schools in which the percentage of failures lay within a certain limited range, supplies ample evidence of continued improvement in the efficiency of the schools in the district:—

Range of Percentage of Failures.	Year 1886.	Year 1887.	Year 1888.
0— 5	in 7 per cent. of the schools,	in 7 per cent.,	in 9 per cent.
6—10	" 9 " "	13 "	15 "
11—20	" 23 " "	32 "	41 "
21—30	" 29 " "	22 "	13 "
31—40	" 16 " "	16 "	10 "
41—50	" 9 " "	7 "	7 "
51 and over	7 " "	3 "	10 "

From this statement it will be seen that the percentage of the whole number of schools in which the percentage of failures was 20 or less has risen from 39 in 1886 to 52 in 1887, and to 65 in 1888. These figures show a highly satisfactory increase in the number of schools in which good examination results have been gained. The proportion of badly-managed schools remains much as it was. In Standard V. the results are higher than they have been for several years.

The figures in the age column are, on the whole, more satisfactory than usual. On the average, Standard I. has been passed at an age of a trifle over nine years. This is the lowest average age at which this standard has been passed here for a good many years, but we hope that the teachers will not rest content until they have lowered this record by several months. In Standard II. the age is five months higher than it was last year. The increase is due to the high age—nine years and three months—at which Standard I. was passed last year. In all the other standards except Standard III. the ages are slightly lower than they were last year, and the mean of the average age is nearly eight months less.

Though the age at which Standard I. is passed is higher in Otago than in most of the other districts of the colony, the age at which Standard VI. is passed is as low here as it is elsewhere. The interval between passing Standard I. and Standard VI. is, in fact, as nearly as possible five years, so that very nearly all those who pass Standard VI. must pass a standard every year.

During the year the teachers of the smaller schools have availed themselves more freely of the regulation allowing the grouping of certain classes in geography and history. It would be a distinct gain if this grouping were carried out wherever the same teacher has charge of the classes in Standards IV. and V.

In the teaching of the infant classes the improvement which we noted with satisfaction in last year's report has not been very well maintained. A good many teachers give too little attention to their reading, and thus fail to lay a broad and solid foundation for the heavier work of subsequent years. Great benefit would accrue if the reading lessons at this stage were more thoroughly taught, and revisal and repetition of old lessons were practised more regularly. Monitors are very generally utilised in helping to teach the infant classes, but they are seldom trained with any care to do the work intrusted to them. In taking reading they sometimes appear to do more harm than good. The slate and desk exercises, though still deficient in variety and in the power of amusing little ones, are, for the most part, looked after with satisfactory care. Easy drawing exercises are not so much used as they might be. The blackboard is now widely used in teaching the elements of

reading, and generally with excellent results. We should like to see a light ruled blackboard provided for this purpose in every school. It would not cost more than a set of reading sheets, and would last much longer.

In the standard classes the improvement in reading, which we noted last year, has been barely maintained. In a great many cases the pupils do not get sufficient practice in reading, and the lessons are left before they are properly mastered. Teachers are singularly blind to this defect, and even when aware of it show little ingenuity in devising a remedy. The difficulty which pupils experience in dealing with new lessons is very largely due to this want of a thorough mastery of the work already done. To one who sees the every-day teaching of a number of schools this difficulty is most apparent; indeed, it is now and then positively painful to witness the floundering helplessness of even the higher classes in dealing with new reading lessons. In such circumstances, interest in the work, and pleasure and profit from it, are out of the question. If the pupils generally find the new reading lessons difficult teachers will do well to suspect that this is due to superficiality in the previous work. To give the practice in reading that is so much needed revisal of old lessons (for reading only) would be found very useful; and simultaneous reading should be regularly practised, but only at the close of the lessons, after they have been taught on the individual method as thoroughly as time will allow. We think it important that simultaneous reading should be used only in this way. To use it before reading by the individual pupils is adequately practised tends to reduce the teaching of reading to parrot work, and sacrifices all training to make out and interpret by proper expression and emphasis new reading matter.

Explanation of the language and matter of the lessons receives a great deal of attention, but the results, though they are improving year by year and are here and there good, are, on the whole, disappointing. It is only in a minority of the schools that the pupils are trained to give full and intelligent answers to questions in the matter of the English and history lessons, and in the subjects of instruction generally. Too often snatches and fragments of answers are received and accepted without demur, teachers either not aiming at training their pupils to give complete and satisfactory answers or failing signally in the attempt. From the day a child enters school he is subjected to constant practice in answering questions, and it is natural to expect that he should learn to give his answers with increasing readiness, fulness, and intelligence. So long as teachers do not make it a constant aim to train their pupils to answer well, and to feel the difference between a full and satisfactory answer and a mere fragment of one, children will never attain facility in the exercise of consecutive thought or in the expression of it. The habitual use of questions that can be answered by "yes" or "no" or by a word or two also retards the acquisition of fulness and readiness of expression.

The English papers of the junior scholarship competitors, which should show the teaching of the schools at its best, give ample evidence of the prevailing indifferent training in English. Very few competitors answer intelligently and fully, and the majority betray ignorance of the language and matter of the lessons prescribed that gives us a fresh shock every year. We have on former occasions drawn attention to the very unsatisfactory training in English of these competitors, but our remarks appear to have been regarded as exaggerations. This is far from being the case, and we allude to the unpalatable truth because a recognition of our shortcomings is in itself an important step in the direction of improvement.

One of the chief reasons why the English lessons are so indifferently taught is that teachers so seldom prepare and study the lessons they are to teach. That this is the case is often perfectly manifest from the way in which the lessons are handled—from the slavish adherence to the questions appended to the lessons, and the want of a comprehensive grasp of the matter or story. A teacher who means to interest his pupils, and give them the best training he can from the language and matter, will find it indispensable to study the lessons beforehand, and this more especially in the subjects of English, history, and geography. Dr. Arnold, of Rugby, had a most intimate knowlege of Roman history, but he never neglected to study and prepare notes on every lesson in the subject. When asked why he did this he answered with profound insight, "I want my boys to drink out of a running stream rather than out of a stagnant pool." The objects of the teacher's preparatory study in English should be twofold—first to qualify himself to question skilfully on the matter, and second to save time in hunting up words or passages to be discussed for explanation. The latter he would do well to mark beforehand by underlining them. In most schools the use of this simple expedient alone would save many minutes a day, and often make it possible to give something like adequate practice in reading.

Spelling and dictation are nearly always well done, though errors in written papers that do not form part of the spelling test are more numerous than the excellence of the test exercises would lead us to expect.

Drawing continues to be fairly taught. The number of failures in the subject would be considerable were not a good deal of latitude used in judging the tail of large classes that are on the whole satisfactorily taught. We think it very desirable that the drawing should be judged by a special test given on the day of examination, and not as hitherto, by the every-day work shown in the drawing books. This method of testing the subject is used in some of the other districts of the colony, and we have good reason to believe that it encourages more thorough instruction. In most of the Otago schools the practice of drawing is insufficient to give freedom and readiness of execution, and the slate or blank-paper exercises that are recommended in the instructions contained in the drawing books are generally ignored. In many cases two short lessons a week are all that are given. These might suffice for the work done in the drawing books, but they need to be supplemented by practice on slates or on blank sheets of paper. To make the training of the hand and eye, which drawing is designed to impart, effective it is indispensable that greater freedom and quickness of execution should be secured than is now aimed at. The slow, blurred, and much-corrected work that is so often submitted gives evidence, not of free and rapid execution, but of the reverse.

The teaching of arithmetic has, we think, improved both in accuracy and intelligence. In this subject, Standard V. is distinctly weaker than the other classes. It is in dealing with fractions that the pupils are most liable to break down, and the treatment of the questions set frequently shows ignorance of simple principles as well as confusion in setting out the work. It is very seldom indeed that we get answers worth anything to such questions as the following: How do you know that $\frac{3}{5}$ is equal to $\frac{9}{15}$? How can you compare the value of two fractions having different denominators? How can you tell which of two fractions having different denominators is the greater?

Not a single operation can be performed with fractions without an implicit knowledge of the elementary principles to which these questions relate, but the knowledge, somehow, hardly ever becomes explicit. The routine is gone through thousands of times, we suppose, by every pupil, but it is not explained or shown to depend on principles almost as simple and obvious as those of decimal notation. The results in the Sixth Standard, excellent though they are in a fair number of schools, might easily be better.

We are glad to find that in most schools some of the pupils in every class make a good appearance in arithmetic. This appears to show that the teaching is, perhaps, not so much lacking in skill as in thoroughness and accuracy. It is very desirable that more time should be devoted to blackboard teaching, and that this time should be better utilised than it generally is. Here, just as in English, there is a noticeable want of training to answer quickly and fully, and the questioning is often diffuse and badly directed. Dozens of questions are sometimes put to elicit points which well-trained pupils would state as a matter of course in the working of the questions. A great deal of time is sometimes wasted by teachers and pupils in setting down on board or slate the full working of great numbers of simple operations in reduction which they should be trained to do mentally and without a moment's hesitation. The time set aside for arithmetic is in many schools longer than it need be. An hour and a half daily should be the maximum aggregate time devoted to it. At present this is not unfrequently exceeded. Mental arithmetic was tested in several of the classes in every school, and in all or most of the classes of the larger ones. We are glad to be able to report that it is, on the whole, well taught, and often contributes materially to the marks that entitle a pupil to pass.

Standards V. and VI. still show considerable weakness in parsing, and even greater weakness in dealing with questions in grammar. Such questions, for example, as "What does the inflection for person denote?" or "When is the passive voice of a verb used?" are seldom answered with any approach to accuracy. As the inflections are carefully taught, and their forms pretty well known, there should be no difficulty in getting pupils to understand their meaning and use. The fact is, parsing is commonly taken in a way that is much too mechanical, and the interpretation of the technical terms used in the exercise receives very little attention. Ask a boy why he says that "which" is a relative pronoun, or that "has written" is of the active voice, or that "he went" is third person, and you see at once that he says so because he has been told to say so—because he thinks it the correct thing, and not because he understands the meaning of the technical term, and uses it in a descriptive sense. If questions of this kind were more freely asked in connection with parsing the intelligence and accuracy of the work would be greatly improved. Elementary analysis is generally well done, but its bearing on composition is not as highly appreciated as it should be.

From Standard III. upwards every pupil does an exercise in composition. The exercises received are of unequal merit, but almost uniform brevity. The division of the matter into sentences is now much better managed, and, on the whole, the matter itself, both in quality and in arrangement, gives evidence of progress in the teaching of this difficult subject. Specific teaching of composition is becoming more general, though we do not see much increase of power in handling the lessons. Except in matters relating to syntax, arrangement, and division into sentences, direct teaching cannot here accomplish very much. The teacher has to depend rather on the training in giving full and connected oral answers to comprehensive questions on the matter of the lessons in reading, history, and object lessons. This training should be continuous from the first year of school life, and by the time the Fourth Standard is reached ought to prove a most important introduction and aid to formal composition. Unfortunately, it is only in a minority of schools that a progressive training of this character is given, and this is no doubt one of the chief causes of the moderate success with which composition is taught in this district.

Geography is in general answered with very fair accuracy, but the teaching is much more formal and uninteresting than it might be made. Few succeed in making the subject anything more than a dry grind, and those who aim at anything higher would not be hard to count. The spacious and lofty ideal of geographical teaching which Sir Archibald Geikie has brought before the present generation of teachers finds, we fear, but little sympathy among us. The limited time which can be devoted to it, indeed, makes handling on such a scale as he contemplates quite impossible, but it need not prevent the spirit of his method from pervading the brief treatment which we can afford. We sometimes find reason to think that the barrenness and formality of current geographical teaching are due to want of knowledge of the subject. To those who feel that this notion is not ill-founded, we would recommend a perusal of such works as Keith Johnston's School Geography, published by E. Stanford and Co., and the excellent School Geography of Mr. Chisholm, published by Longmans and Co. It is not too much to say that every teacher should possess a few works of this class, with the contents of which he should be familiar, and upon which he could draw to make his teaching stimulating and attractive. In recent years the aims of geographical teaching have been distinctly raised, and the means of carrying out these aims are becoming every year more perfect. With such helps ready to his hand, the intelligent teacher should have little difficulty in avoiding meagreness and dryness of treatment. The complaints that may be justly made about the teaching of geography are in part traceable to the language in which the scope of geographical teaching is defined in the official syllabus. Besides some physical geography, the position of places

of importance is all that is required to be taught in Standards V. and VI.; but if this is to be all we are to aim at, farewell to intelligent teaching. The unnatural severance of the physical features of a country from its political geography also tends to make the teaching unprofitable.

In the great majority of schools history is no worse taught than it was before it was ranked as a class subject, but there are some in which the teaching is deteriorating. A great and common mistake here is neglect of chronology. It is expected that the dates of the Sovereigns will be known, and that great events can be referred to the reign in which they occurred. This is the very smallest modicum of chronology that could be required; yet it is often wholly unknown, and rarely known with readiness and confidence. We think that every teacher who is to make the history lessons of any value to his pupils must teach this at least and teach it thoroughly. Much conscientious labour is now largely thrown away from neglect of this. It would also be well if the nature of historical events were more carefully explained and questioned on. It is not a very unusual thing to find, for example, a good deal of information as to how Free-trade became law, without any adequate knowledge of what Free-trade means. History is one of the subjects in which wide comprehensive questions can be given—questions the answers to which will tax and train the pupil's powers of expression. We should like to find it more generally handled, so as to impart a good training in the art of expression, and pave the way for more formal instruction in composition and essay writing. If these ends are to be attained teachers must prepare the lessons carefully.

With respect to object lessons and science we have nothing to add to what we said in our last report. The experience of another year has deepened our conviction that science would be much more effectively taught if the pupils had in their hands a suitable text book of the subject, and we hope that when the syllabus of instruction comes to be revised this course will be allowed, if not recommended.

The results of the year show that the great majority of the teachers discharge their duties with commendable diligence and attention. There are few who spare labour and application to satisfy the parents and the public; and, though in so large a service there is and must be a large amount of ill-directed and unskilful teaching, there is in the Board's service a large and increasing number of teachers who show great skill and ability in their professional work. Where skill is lacking attention and perseverance generally make fair amends for the defect. There might very well exist greater zeal to improve methods and to apply them better, but we cannot expect greater honesty and fidelity in the discharge of their onerous and important duties than most teachers show.

The order, behaviour, and manners of the pupils are still, as a rule, quite satisfactory. We would, however, like to see class movements conducted more quietly. When the lessons are finished there should be no outburst of talking or noisy preparation to leave the room. The daily government should foster habits of self-restraint, and make the pupils feel such behaviour unbecoming and unfavourable to study and discipline.

The attention of the scholars is seldom so satisfactory as their order and behaviour. Good attention is one of the things which honesty and fidelity cannot always command, and many meritorious teachers fail to secure it. The failure is naturally most conspicuous in the larger schools, and we think the headmasters of these might easily do more than they now do to improve the attention and tone of their classes. The steps that may be taken to promote this end can hardly be discussed here, but it may be doubted if headmasters fully realise their responsibilities in this matter, or urge its importance on their assistants with sufficient frequency and emphasis. In securing good attention downright earnestness and unfailing watchfulness are among the chief conditions on which success depends. When these are present success is rarely wanting.

The school records are nearly always correctly kept. All cases of serious neglect have been specially reported for the Board's information. Considerable variety obtains in the methods of marking the daily-attendance register, but we do not object to any so long as presence and absence are recorded by distinct marks, so that the total of those present can be found by adding the marks. Where absences alone are marked the number of attendances is found by subtracting from the roll number, a method that leads to frequent errors and violates the instructions for marking the roll.

Most teachers have now passed the department's examination in singing, but there is still a considerable number of schools in which the subject is not taught at all. Even where it is taught with considerable success it seldom forms a sufficiently prominent part of every day's work, enlivening the tedium of long confinement and lending variety to the day's occupations. In a few of the smaller schools the pupils sing when entering and leaving the schoolroom. When well done this has a most charming effect. In a number of large schools and in some small ones the subject is taught with great enthusiasm and success.

We have, &c.,

D. Petrie,
W. Taylor, } Inspectors.
P. Goyen,

The Secretary, Otago Education Board.

Report on District High Schools.

Sir,—

We have the honour to submit the following report on the Otago District High Schools for the year 1888.

The following tabular statements show the extra subjects taught, the number of pupils examined, and the amount of work done in each subject:—

Palmerston District High School.

Subject.	Class.	Number examined.	Amount of Work done.
English ...	I.	19	"Henry VIII." (Chambers's Edition).
Latin	I.	1	Livy, Book XXII.; Belcher's "Composit.," Part I.; and exercises on Books III. and IV. of the history in "Principia Latina," Part II.
"	II.	3	"Principia Latina," Part II.; Books III. and IV. of the Roman History; and Dr. Smith's Smaller Latin Grammar.
"	III.	6	"Principia Latina," Part I., 48 exercises; and Part II., Mythology and History, Book I.
"	IV.	9	"Principia Latina," Part I., 32 exercises; and the fables in Part II.
French ..	I.	1	Dejardin's Class Book; and Books IV. and V. of "Charles XII."
"	II.	2	Dejardin's Class Book, 265 exercises; and Reader to page 227.
"	III.	8	Dejardin's Class Book, 204 exercises; Irregular Verbs; and Reader to page 198.
"	IV.	7	Dejardin's Class Book, 150 exercises.
Geometry ...	I.	3	Hamblin Smith's Euclid, Books I., II., III., and IV.; and 100 exercises on Book I.
"	II.	6	Hamblin Smith's Euclid, Books I. and III.
"	III.	10	Hamblin Smith's Euclid, Book I.
Algebra ...	I.	3	To end of Equations and Indices; also, Surds, and Equations involving Surds.
"	II.	6	To end of Simult. Equations.
"	III.	10	As far as Equations with One Unknown Quantity; and easy problems involving fractions.
Book-keeping ...	I.	27	Chambers's Single and Double Entry.

Port Chalmers District High School.

Subject.	Class.	Number examined.	Amount of Work done.
English ...	I.	11	"Julius Cæsar," in Nelson's Series.
Latin	I.	2	Cicero, "Pro Lege Manilia;" and Book V. of the "Æneid;" also Latin Grammar.
"	II.	7	Cæsar's "Invasion of Britain" (Macmillan's Series); Book V. of the "Æneid;" and Latin Grammar.
French ...	I.	11	"Charles XII.," Books I. and II.; Chardenal, Part I.; and Irregular Verbs.
" ...	II.	11	Chardenal, 50 exercises; "Avoir" and "être" affirmatively.
Geometry ...	I.	4	Euclid, Books I., II., III., and IV.; and easy exercises on Book I.
" ...	II.	5	Euclid, Books I., II., and III.; and very easy exercises on Book I.
" ...	III.	2	Euclid, Books I. and II.
Algebra ...	I.	9	Hamblin Smith, 191 pages, except cube root.
" ...	II.	13	The four simple rules.

Tokomairiro District High School.

Subject.	Class.	Number examined.	Amount of Work done.
English ...	I.	24	"Merchant of Venice" (Blackie's Series).
Latin ...	I.	4	Sallust's "Catiline;" Cicero; "De Amicitia;" and easy translation into Latin.
" ...	II.	9	Cæsar's "Gallic War," Books II. and III.; "Æneid," Book II.; and easy translation into Latin.
" ...	III.		"Principia Latina," 85 pages; and Cæsar's "Invasion of Britain" (Macmillan).
French ...	I.	1	Macmillan's Second French Course, 152 pages; and Second French Reader, 75 pages.
" ...	II.	4	Macmillan's First French Course; First Reader; and Second French Course to page 31.
Geometry ...	I.	4	Euclid, Books I. to VI.; exercises on Books I. and II.
" ...	II.	8	Euclid, Books I., II., and III.; easy exercises on Book I.
" ...	III.	16	Euclid, Book I.
Algebra ...	I.	4	To end of Harmonical Progression.
" ...	II.	10	Hamblin Smith, 233 pages.
" ...	III.	13	Hamblin Smith, 126 pages.
Trigonometry ...	I.	2	Hamblin Smith, 111 pages.
Agricultural Chemistry ...	I.	14	Mechanical and Chemical Analysis of Soils.

Lawrence District High School.

Subject.	Class.	Number examined.	Amount of Work done.
English ...	I.	23	"The Tempest" (Nelson's Series).
Latin	I.	4	Cæsar's "Gallic War," Books I., II., and III.; Dr. Smith's Smaller Latin Grammar.
"	II.	5	"Principia Latina," Part II.; Books II., III., and IV. of the History; and Smaller Latin Grammar.
"	III.	12	"Principia Latina," Part I., to end of Passive Voice of the Verb.
French ...	I.	9	"Charles XII.," Books I. to VI.; Grammar and Composition of Dejardin's Class Book.
"	II.	11	Dejardin's Class Book, 150 exercises; and Reader, pages 181–212.
Geometry ...	I.	10	Euclid, Books I. to IV.; exercises on Book I.
" ...	II.	2	Euclid, Books I. and II.
" ...	III.	4	Euclid, Book I.
Algebra ...	I.	7	To end of Quadratic Equations.
" ...	II.	7	To end of Simple Equations, including Problems.
" ...	III.	9	To end of Fractions.
Trigonometry ...	I.	6	Hamblin Smith, to page 75.

The English, Latin, algebra, and agricultural chemistry were examined by Mr. Petrie, and the French, geometry, and trigonometry by Mr. Goyen. The following notes show the estimate we have formed of the quality of the work:—

Palmerston District High School.

ENGLISH.—In this subject the pupils read the whole of "Henry VIII." They showed an excellent acquaintance with the matter and action of the play, and most of them possessed a good knowledge of the meaning of different passages, and of the language generally. Derivation has received a great deal of attention, perhaps more than it deserved.

LATIN.—In Class I. the translation was good on the whole, but not quite accurate in a number of small points; the parsing was accurate and the composition good. In Class II. the translation was excellent, the questions in parsing and syntax were well answered, and the composition was very fair; the accidence, on the whole, was well known. Class III. translated well, and did the rest of the work set very fairly. Class IV. has made a very good start.

FRENCH.—Only one pupil gained less than 50 per cent. of the marks. Most of the rest passed an excellent examination in the work read during the year.

GEOMETRY.—Three pupils gained very low marks, but most of the rest passed an excellent examination.

ALGEBRA.—Class I. answered very poorly. Class II. did very well, there being only one inferior paper. Class III. also answered well.

BOOK-KEEPING was not specially examined.

Port Chalmers District High School.

ENGLISH.—In this subject the pupils answered with great accuracy and intelligence. Not a single inferior paper was received, and nearly all were of uniform excellence.

LATIN.—In both classes the translation was excellent; the accidence, parsing, and syntax were good, and the Latin composition was very fair.

FRENCH.—The work was very well done by Class I., and most of the pupils of Class II., and fairly by the rest.

GEOMETRY.—The quality of the work was excellent in all the classes.

ALGEBRA.—Class I. made a very good appearance in this subject, and Classs II. a very fair one.

Tokomairiro District High School.

ENGLISH.—The pupils made, on the whole, a good appearance in this subject. The matter was well known, and the difficult words and passages were very fairly explained. The majority of the papers received were good, and of the rest, all except two were fair.

LATIN.—Class I. translated the passage from Sallust well, and that from Cicero fairly; the parsing was most accurate; syntax and composition were very fairly done. In Class II. the translation of the prose was in most cases fair, and that of the verse good. The sense of the somewhat difficult extract from Cæsar was not quite accurately caught by any. Here also the parsing was accurate; the syntax and accidence questions were fairly answered; composition was moderate. Class III. translated well, and made a very fair appearance in the rest of the work, except in composition.

FRENCH.—The work was well done by Class I.; fairly by half of Class II., and only moderately by the other half.

GEOMETRY.—The work was well done by all the classes, but especially so by Class I., the members of which all gained full marks. Of the other classes, nine members gained full marks, and only three less than 50 per cent.

ALGEBRA.—Classes I. and III. showed a very thorough knowledge of the work read. In Class II. six pupils answered very fairly indeed, two did moderately, and two poorly.

TRIGONOMETRY.—The work was well done by one pupil and moderately by the other.

AGRICULTURAL CHEMISTRY.—The pupils examined showed a very good knowledge of this subject, which has been treated in a practical manner.

Lawrence District High School.

ENGLISH.—The pupils of this class showed a very good acquaintance with the matter, language, and incidents of the play. Difficult words and passages were in general clearly explained. Only three inferior papers were received.

LATIN.—The translation of Class I. expressed the sense of the original, but was marred by a mixture of Latin and English idioms, and by inaccuracies in the rendering of the tenses and moods, and even of the voices of the verbs. Only one paper showed what would be reckoned a satisfactory English rendering of the text. Parsing was well done, and syntax and composition fairly. In Class II. the translation had the same faults as in Class I., but not to the same degree. The meaning of one or two passages was not properly rendered by any; parsing was very accurate; syntax, accidence, and composition were fairly done by half the class, and moderately by the rest. Class III. consists of beginners, whom it was hardly worth while to examine; a few did fairly, and the rest moderately.

FRENCH.—Class I. passed a very good examination—the lowest percentage is 76 and the highest 95, the mean percentage being 84. The work of Class II. was well done by by about half the pupils, and very fairly by most of the rest.

GEOMETRY.—Of Class I., two pupils gained full marks, five 80 per cent., one 70 per cent., and one below 50 per cent. of the marks. The pupils of Class II. each gained 95 per cent. of the marks. The work was very fairly done by Class III.

ALGEBRA.—Class I. answered very well indeed, and Class II. did almost as well. In Class III. the mean percentage of marks gained was 80, and none fell below 70, per cent.

TRIGONOMETRY.—One pupil did well, three very fairly, and two moderately.

The Secretary, Otago Education Board.

D. PETRIE,
P. GOYEN, } Inspectors.

SOUTHLAND.

SIR,— Education Office, Invercargill, 20th March, 1889.

I have the honour to submit my general report for the year ending 31st December, 1888.

During the year I travelled 3,053 miles, and spent in the service of the Board 1,895 hours. At the close of the year there were in operation in this district 103 schools, six of which were of too recent erection to stand the test of a formal examination. Twenty schools were visited for inspection, and ninety-five were examined according to the regulations of the Education Department. A few of the smaller schools were inspected and examined on the same day. I must again express regret that I was unable more fully to comply with the regulation relating to the inspection of schools. In this regulation it is stated "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 the purpose of general inspection, and the other visit for the purpose of examination according to standards." Of all the duties devolving on an Inspector, the work of inspection is of first importance. In this district it has, for the last two years at least, been left

practically undone. At the unannounced visit the Inspector sees the school in its every-day attire, and he is afforded an opportunity of forming a judgment on its organization, methods, and discipline, of making suggestions and recommendations relating thereto, and generally of taking cognisance of those features in a school by which its success or failure may be more justly gauged than by tables of results. As a consequence of my inability to make a larger number of inspection visits I have experienced considerable difficulty in assigning to teachers marks for classification, the test of examination being for this purpose more or less fallacious. The following table shows at one view the examination statistics for the year:—

SUMMARY OF RESULTS FOR THE WHOLE DISTRICT.

Standard Classes.	Presented.	Absent.	Excepted.	Failed.	Passed.	Average Age of those that passed.
						Yrs. mos.
S 7	26	...	...	...	...	...
S 6	143	...	9	35	99	14 2
S 5	395	14	26	127	228	13 8
S 4	720	26	55	196	443	12 3
S 3	1,119	55	100	271	693	11 9
S 2	1,180	49	56	99	976	10 6
S 1	1,091	42	24	46	979	9 5
P.	2,913	...	...	...	...	...
Totals ...	7,587	186	270	774	3,418	*

* Mean of average age, 11 years 11 months.

From this table it is seen that, of the 7,587 pupils whose names were on the examination schedules, 4,648 were entered for examination in standards. A total of 4,462, or 96 per cent., attended; and of these, 3,418, or 77 per cent., passed in the standards for which they were presented. The percentage of failures in standards (the "exceptions" being excluded from this calculation) was 18. As compared with those of 1887, the gross results for the past year exhibit a slight increase in the general percentage of passes. The improvement indicated by this increase is common to all the standards except the highest. But the evidence of increased efficiency is really stronger than it appears to be from a statement of the percentage of passes. A comparison of the above table with that of 1887 shows that a relatively larger number of pupils have this year been presented for examination in standards. This important element of increased percentage of presentation must be taken along with the increased percentage of passes if we are to have a fair test of the efficiency of the work done in our schools. It is also a gratifying fact, and worthy of notice, that the number of children presented in the higher standards continues to increase from year to year. The number entered for examination in Standards V. and VI. is 104 in excess of that of the previous year, while the number of schools in which these classes are taught is also greater than formerly.

Of the pass subjects those generally taught with least skill and success are reading, writing, composition, and arithmetic. On each of these and on some of the class subjects it may be worth while to make a few remarks.

READING.—Sufficient time seems to be set apart for this subject, but the methods of teaching it cannot yet in every case be regarded as satisfactory. There is too frequently a total want of previous preparation alike on the part of teachers and of pupils. In too many instances it appears to be taught as if mere verbal accuracy were all that is to be aimed at. Measured by this standard, the reading may be called fairly satisfactory, though such faults as indistinctness of utterance and inattention to pauses occur with unwelcome frequency. But the number of schools in which the pupils show a sufficient comprehension of the language of the lessons is still exceedingly limited. In order that more attention may be given to the intellectual side of the reading lesson, I take this opportunity of informing teachers that in future a "pass" in reading will be conditional on a fairly accurate explanation of a few phrases or sentences selected from the year's lessons. With respect to the recitation of poetry, the best that can be said is that the children are fairly word-perfect, teachers evidently considering it their duty simply to hear the lines without in any way attempting to correct errors, explain difficulties, or set before their pupils a good model for imitation. The number of schools in which poetry is recited with taste and expression can be told on one's fingers.

WRITING.—The penmanship of a very large number of our schools, as judged from the copy books, continues to be very creditable, and the papers handed in by the scholars on examination day are, on the whole, neat and carefully written. The slate writing of the First and Second Standards has been gradually rising in quality, but nothing like the same care is taken with the writing in the exercise books. This is rarely satisfactory, and occasionally so inferior that I have had to recommend the discontinuance of such exercises as part of the home work. In like manner a good deal of careless scribbling and figuring on slates is to be met with in almost every school. The indifference of many teachers with regard to the neatness and style of the every-day written work of the school is almost beyond belief. They seem to forget that a habit is 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 during the formal writing lesson is very apt to be counterbalanced by the habit of writing and figuring carelessly, day by day and hour by hour, on slates and in exercise books.

COMPOSITION.—To this subject I attach much importance. Although there are still too many schools in which composition is merely practised, not taught, in a very considerable number I am

pleased to be able to report gratifying improvement in the methods adopted for imparting the art. Where improvement has taken place it has been most marked in the work of Standards III. and IV. From the most systematic teaching which the subject now receives in these standards higher proficiency throughout all classes may reasonably be expected. The essays of Standards V. and VI. are usually quite destitute of punctuation marks, and are often replete with gross errors in grammatical idiom and in spelling. I have occasionally prescribed for Standard VI. a few lines of poetry for paraphrasing. The indifferent success achieved by the scholars in this exercise shows it to be a novel one to them.

ARITHMETIC.—In Standards I. and II. the instruction in this subject may be regarded as satisfactory, the children doing what is required of them with accuracy and rapidity. Where failure occurs it is usually due to an inadequate knowledge of the addition and multiplication tables. Considerable attention is evidently paid in these classes to the teaching of numeration and notation. In the higher classes there is evidence of progress. In many schools these classes show increased ability to grapple with problems that call for an exercise of the reasoning powers; but in Standards III. and IV. the failures are still too numerous. In a large proportion of the schools examined the pupils of these standards perform the mechanical operations with very fair accuracy, but fail to attempt the simple problems set, or work them in such a way as to compel the conclusion that the teaching has been very unintelligent. They seem unable to grasp the meaning of the very simple language in which the problems are expressed, and exhibit a scanty knowledge of the principles of arithmetic and of their practical application. Mental arithmetic is at a very low ebb. Its value as a mental cultivator does not appear to be fully appreciated or understood.

OBJECT LESSONS.—These are given in nearly every school, and with considerable effect in some; but in the majority of cases they do not receive the amount of attention that they merit, the number of lessons given during the year being often ridiculously small. The main purpose of these lessons does not always appear to be understood. In most of those that have been given before me there has been too much lecturing and too little educative questioning; too much decanting of facts into the minds of the children, and too little effort to develop their observing and reasoning faculties. It cannot be too strongly impressed on the teacher that the value of these lessons will be proportionate to the degree in which they are made real mental processes of teaching, and engage the actual intelligent exercise of the senses on the object. The notes of lessons which I require on examination day very frequently deal with subjects that are quite beyond the mental ken of the children, and are often an exact transcript of those given in some text book. Many of these text books doubtless supply excellent models, but the notes of lessons contained in them must be recast in the mould of the teacher's own mind if the lesson is to be presented to the children in a form sufficiently interesting to command their attention. Where the text book is slavishly followed there usually results only a mechanical monotony of lesson-giving, spiritless in itself and deadening in its dull uniformity to the faculties of the children.

HISTORY.—In the upper standards fair knowledge of this subject is occasionally displayed, though the answers of the children not unfrequently show indications of "rote" work.

GEOGRAPHY.—So far as it is a pass subject, geography is taught with very fair success. Some teachers, however, seem to take too narrow a view of the subject, and direct attention almost solely to mere topographical detail, to the comparative neglect of such topics as the resources, physical features, peoples, &c., of the various countries. I would recommend more frequent practice in map drawing both on the part of teachers and of pupils. The work prescribed in physical and mathematical geography is on the whole fairly well known. With the geography lessons of Standard II., as they are given in many of our schools, I cannot express satisfaction. Definitions are committed to memory, but the children too often have only the most vague conception of the thing defined, and frequently do not know the import of the words that they repeat so glibly.

SINGING.—Singing receives more or less attention in a considerable number of schools. In most it consists in giving in very fair time and tune a number of school songs. In some of the larger schools good part singing is met with. But the theory of music is taught only in a very few. It is to be regretted that the subject is not more widely taught, for when well handled it exercises an influence on the pupils which the teacher would do well to have at his command.

SCHOOL FURNITURE, ETC.—The schools in this district are generally well supplied with maps, blackboards, &c.; but these articles, I regret to say, are not always so well taken care of as they should be. In some schools the desks are unnecessarily inked, scratched, and otherwise damaged; in others both children and teachers take an active interest in the preservation and tidy appearance of the school furniture.

DISCIPLINE AND BEHAVIOUR.—In most of the schools visited by me the discipline is satisfactory. Class movements are executed with fair precision and celerity, and generally without undue noise. The children are for the most part self-reliant during the examination, prompt in their obedience to orders, and respectful in their bearing towards their teachers. I append the usual tables.

I have, &c.,

The Secretary, Education Board, Invercargill. JAMES HENDRY, B.A., Inspector.

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