

January of this year a new school was opened at Hakateramea, in the Sandhurst Township. The number of schools now in operation is fifty-seven.

All the schools except one were examined before Christmas. The following table will show the general results of the examinations :—

Classes.	Presented.	Absent.	Excepted.	Failed.	Passed.	Percentage of Passes on No. examined.	Average Age.	
							Yrs.	m.
Above Standard VI. ...	66	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Standard VI. ...	192	6	5	42	139	74.7	13	7
" V. ...	342	19	16	116	191	59.1	13	0
" IV. ...	550	29	25	156	340	65.2	12	0
" III. ...	734	38	46	174	476	68.3	11	0
" II. ...	666	32	31	78	525	82.8	10	0
" I. ...	654	15	9	29	601	94.0	8	11
Preparatory ...	1,585	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Totals for 1890 ...	4,789	139	132	595	2,272	75.7	...	...
Totals for 1889 ...	4,765	133	99	539	2,265	78.8	...	...

The number of pupils presented on the examination schedules was 4,789, of whom 66 had already passed the Sixth Standard, 1,585 were in the preparatory classes, and 3,138 belonged to the standard classes. Of the 3,138 presented in the standard classes, 2,999 were at school on the day of examination, and 2,272 passed the standard for which they were presented. This gives a percentage of passes of 75.7, as compared with 78 for last year. The decrease shown here is common to all the standards except the first, in which the percentage of passes has increased from 92 to 94. The official percentage of failures, estimated on the standard class rolls, exclusive of absentees and exceptions, is 20.7, being 1.7 per cent. over the figure for last year. The average percentage in class-subjects is 55, the same as last year, and the average of additional marks has fallen from 54 to 53.

Four years in succession it has been pleasant to me to point out the steady improvement denoted by the gradual rise in the percentage of passes, and, though this year we have experienced a check, it has not come upon us unexpectedly. One of the drawbacks which we have to contend with in a district with so many small schools is the frequent changes of teachers. After two or three years of successful work in a small school our teachers pass on to better charges, either in our own or in other districts, and teachers who have been unsuccessful pass out of our service. During the past year we have had more than the usual number of changes. In eighteen schools the teachers had been less than a year in charge at the time of the annual examinations. In half of these the results were under the average, and in one or two cases they were very poor indeed. With so many schools in an unsettled state for longer or shorter periods during the year, the lowering of the percentages for the whole district was almost certain to follow at the first examination; but I look forward with confidence to the district as a whole regaining if not advancing beyond the position from which it has temporarily receded. Besides the schools that showed bad results which could be directly traced to this cause, nine others failed to get a satisfactory pass. In most of these the teachers will have further opportunity of showing whether it is wise to intrust them with the education of children, the success and happiness of whose lives largely depends on the training they undergo during their brief school course.

READING.—The Board's regulations with regard to the introduction of a uniform set of textbooks for this district have been so loyally observed by Committees and teachers that I do not think one school can be found where any other than Chambers's Readers are in use throughout the classes. On the whole they are very well adapted to the requirements of the syllabus, though some objection might be taken to the Second Standard Reader on the ground that it does not afford sufficient reading matter for those who have mastered the earlier books of the course. The reading in the lower standards has improved in fluency and naturalness of tone in all but a few schools. Good reading is by no means uncommon in the upper classes too, and, where defects have had to be pointed out, these have usually arisen from undue haste.

SPELLING.—In this subject more pupils have come to grief than in any other of the pass-subjects. The teachers must accustom themselves and their pupils to perfect accuracy in spelling as the only satisfactory end to be attained in this subject; and if the pupil's own preparation is honest, and the teacher is careful and conscientious in the supervision and correction of all written work, there will be little danger of a school breaking down through weak spelling.

WRITING.—The writing shown in copybooks is usually very fair, and slate-writing in the First and Second Standards is often very good. I have frequently had occasion during my inspection visits to impress on teachers the importance of making the slate-writing of the junior pupils conform to the style of writing which they will be required to practise when they begin to write in copybooks; this might be thought an unnecessary precaution, but I have over and over again seen the pattern-writing on the blackboard quite distinct in style from that of the copybooks in use.

ARITHMETIC.—This subject has been improving year by year, and, except in the Fourth and Fifth Standards, really good results are obtained in most of our schools. The method of introducing new rules and problems through a series of carefully-graduated exercises to be worked mentally