

open for the prescribed three quarters. It is pleasing to notice that the percentage of roll-number presented in standards has again increased this year. The percentage of failures is slightly higher than in 1892, but this was to be expected considering the poor attendance due to the prevalence of sickness.

The following table summarises the results of each standard and for all standards in the district. Another table which gives information with regard to individual schools has not been printed, but it may be seen at the Board's office.

Number of Schools examined in each Standard.	Standards.	Presented.	Absent.	Ex-cepted.	Failed.	Passed.	Percentage of Failures.	Average Age of those that passed.
19	Above Standard VI. ...	32	...	...	...	...	...	Yrs. mos.
58	Standard VI. ..	255	15	12	56	172	24.5	14 6
66	" V. ...	463	39	37	119	268	30.7	13 7
83	" IV. ...	835	100	77	244	414	37.1	12 10
85	" III. ...	1,174	149	92	249	684	26.6	11 8
84	" II. ...	1,122	100	79	140	803	14.8	10 7
88	" I. ...	1,288	124	82	180	902	16.6	9 3
87	Preparatory ...	2,662	...	...	...	...	...	...
*	...	7,831	527	379	988	3,243	23.3	12 1†

* Number of schools examined in one standard or more, 89.

† Mean.

The average ages in the last column of the foregoing table are materially raised by lately opened schools in back districts, and really are misleading as far as the majority of schools are concerned.

Instruction.—The school work of the year was seriously interfered with by the prevalence of measles for several months, and diphtheria in some parts of the district. Many schools were closed for several weeks, and in many others which were kept open the majority of the pupils in the various classes were absent for a considerable time. At Campbell Street School, Palmerston, several pupils attended on the examination day for the first time for five or six weeks, as they had been kept at home either through illness or through fear of infection. In a somewhat less degree the same thing was found in other schools. It is pleasing to note, in passing, that the school did particularly well under such disadvantageous circumstances. Had the epidemic happened in the early part of the year the effect on the school work would have been bad enough, but, taking place as it did during the latter half of the year, and generally about the usual examination time, the effect was much worse. To both teachers and Inspectors considerable inconvenience was caused by the frequent changing of examination dates, rendered necessary on account of the sudden closing of certain schools upon the appearance of the epidemic. Also, in our attempt to examine as many schools as possible we were put to a considerable amount of extra travelling and extra expense. We were unable, however, to overtake nine schools. Three of these, indeed, were visited for examination, but one was found closed, at another only two pupils were present, and at another so many pupils were absent that it was thought useless to hold the examination.

In Standards I. and II. the number of failures is proportionately higher than it has been for the past three years. This, no doubt, is partly due to the prevailing illness during the examination months, and partly due to the regulation now in force for two years requiring presentation in Standard I. of pupils eight years old unless reasonable excuse for keeping them back can be shown. In Standards III. and V. the failures are fewer by 3.3 per cent. and 4.1 per cent. respectively; while they are higher in Standard VI. by 2.5 per cent. and in Standard IV. by 2.2 per cent. By far the highest percentage of failures is in Standard IV. This is to be expected, for, as it appears to us, the syllabus for this standard is comparatively more difficult than that for any other standard. Also, as soon as a pupil leaves Standard III. he finds that a large portion of the work now necessary for a "pass" is much less mechanical, and demands a greater amount of ability, thoughtful discrimination, and sustained effort. The fact of grammar being a pass-subject in Standard IV. as well as composition brings many a pupil to grief.

As regards the work done in the various subjects, there is not much new to record.

Reading will never be as good as it ought to be while only one reading-book is read in each class during the year. The book in use in Standard V. and the book in use in Standard VI. are far from satisfactory either in style of matter or in amount of matter. They could not reasonably be expected to be satisfactory, for each of these books forms only one of a set of three used in each standard in England during the twelve months. In small schools the difficulty a sole teacher has to contend with is that, with so many classes, he is unable to find sufficient time for the actual teaching of reading. If more were done in the direction of establishing school libraries, reading would, no doubt, materially improve. Also, we should gladly welcome the periodical issue by the department of a school newspaper to the various schools in the colony.

Spelling improves slowly. Carelessness in writing the dictated passages is frequently responsible for errors. Pupils that sent in good dictation papers often made very bad errors in spelling on other English papers. We are of opinion that too much of the mechanical work of correction is done by the teachers. The pupils should be trained during the school year to read aloud their own dictation, composition, &c., and to point out errors in spelling and errors in grammar in each other's work, and to suggest improvements in the style and arrangement. They should