

In the matter of school supply it is satisfactory to find that a much-needed advance has been made during the year. The additions and repairs so recently completed have added largely to the conveniences of many teachers and children, and these are important aspects of school progress. School-sheds, which fulfil many useful purposes, have been provided in a number of districts, and I hope this form of school improvement will be continued until a like provision has been made for all schools. In a number of districts increased attention is being given by School Committees to what may be termed the artistic improvement of the schools. The training of children may be undertaken in many ways; but bright and cheerful surroundings are adjuncts which cannot be overlooked if taste and culture are to find a place in the schoolroom. I have many times directed attention to the differences of the school arrangements in the Board schools. The teaching staff are responsible for what may be set down as the ornamental and artistic features of the school-room. The old barn-like rooms of the past are not suitable for the wants of to-day; and it would be well if some of the teachers who have worked so long under the old conditions could realise that there is development in education as there is in everything else. Some school-rooms show but little change from year to year, except that, perhaps, a little more dust has accumulated in particular places; but the dulness and unattractiveness continue, and the absence of everything bright and inspiring shows how little education is understood in its higher aspects of training, and when interpreted outside the standard syllabus and departmental regulations. Waipawa continues well ahead of other schools in its artistic and ornamental arrangements, but Waipukurau, Norsewood, Napier (infants and side), Patutahi, Meanee, and Port Ahuriri are worthy of commendation, the internal arrangements showing that much care is bestowed upon them by the teachers in charge. In these days of "picture transfers" the useful and the scientific might easily be combined, and the schools could readily be furnished with valuable illustrations at small cost were proper means taken to select the necessary diagrams. In the Clive School a pleasing innovation has lately been introduced in the shape of a magic-lantern for purposes of instruction. The master uses it to illustrate geographical, historical, and scientific lessons, and when the plan is fully matured the pleasures of teachers and pupils will be largely increased. The shortening of educative processes by objective methods is the plan likely to be adopted in the near future, and I would like the Board to adopt some plan to encourage teachers in the use of this form of instruction in schools.

Ventilation, drainage, well-kept grounds, a suitable water-supply, and arrangements for the physical training of children are aspects of school management which seldom receive the attention their importance would suggest. Some Committees display much activity in these matters, and where this is the case, as at Patutahi, Gisborne, Hastings, Port Ahuriri, Waipawa, Norsewood, Kumeroa, and Woodville, the outside arrangements are often excellent.

Arbor-day was not kept as a general holiday among the schools, and few trees were planted by the children. As far as I am aware, Ashley-Clinton and Norsewood are the only schools where tree-planting was indulged in by the Committees, teachers, and children, although there are a number of school sites which would be improved by means of a few trees and shrubs if the Committees and teachers concerned would interest themselves in this useful work.

Fifty-three schools were examined for results, exclusive of the school under the control of the Meanee Catholic Mission, which was examined by special request. The presentations in standards, including fifty-one pupils in the class above Standard VI., numbered 4,095, or 64.1 per cent. of the whole number attending. There were 301 absent from examination, 145 were "excepts," 901 failed, and 2,697, or 42.2 per cent., passed for promotion to a higher standard. The following summary table contains information for each standard, and the total results are also given for the corresponding period of last year:—

Classes.	Presented.	Absent.	Excepted.	Failed.	Passed.	Percentage of Passes to Presentations.	Average Age of those that passed.
							Yrs. mos.
Above Standard VI. ...	51	..	..	..	..	..	..
Standard VI. ...	200	15	5	53	127	63.5	14 1
" V. ...	444	39	19	116	270	60.8*	13 2
" IV. ...	688	66	19	183	420	61.0	12 4
" III. ...	841	51	33	220	537	63.8	11 2
" II. ...	930	54	39	169	668	71.8	10 1
" I. ...	941	76	30	160	675	71.7	9 2
Preparatory ...	2,288	..	..	..	..	..	..
Totals ...	6,383	301	145	901	2,697	65.8	11 8*
Totals for 1892...	6,202	92	141	780	2,970	74.5	11 8†

* 42.2 per cent. of total belonging.

† 47.7 per cent. of total belonging.

These results show a serious falling off compared with the results for 1892. Compared with that year the number of children absent from examination increased from 92 to 301; the failures from 780 to 901; and the passes diminished in number from 2,970 to 2,697, or from 74.5 per cent. of those examined in 1892 to 65.8 per cent. in 1893. Seventeen schools only passed 50 per cent. or more of the pupils. In twelve of the remaining schools the percentage of failures was higher than that of the passes. Te Karaka, Wimbledon, Blackburn, Maraekakaho, Maraetaha, and Waerenga-o-kuri each occupied my time for a day, and their total passes number thirteen. Unsatisfactory as these figures are, they can hardly be interpreted as showing a falling off in general efficiency, or of