

entirely due to the energy and perseverance of the teaching staff under the most disheartening circumstances.

At the close of my third complete year of work in this district I am able to express with much confidence my opinion as to the condition of the Marlborough schools, and as to the efficiency of their teachers; and it is to me a source of gratification that I can honestly congratulate the Board on having secured the service of a staff of teachers who, as a rule, are painstaking, earnest, and conscientious workers in the cause of education. Not a few of them are also eminently successful in their work, which need not fear comparison with that of any schools in the colony. That others have not been quite so successful is largely due, not to want of energy or persevering endeavours on their parts, but in some cases probably to a disinclination to part with old-fashioned ideas, to adopt later improvements in method, or to adapt their teaching to the altered circumstances and increased demands of modern elementary schools. I regret that I am bound to say that in one or two instances superior teaching ability is unfortunately marred by what, though once common, is now happily a rare failing in the teaching profession. I allude to intemperance. Of course in my official capacity I am not supposed to be aware of any transgressions in this respect, since none have fallen under my own observation; but I cannot pretend to be ignorant of what is a matter of common notoriety. It needs no elaborate argument to show that absence of sobriety on the part of a teacher is more to be deplored than even the want of high intellectual attainments; and it is a great mistake on the part of a Committee to condone an offence, repeatedly committed, which must sap the foundation of all good discipline, and destroy the feeling of respect with which a teacher should be regarded by his scholars, and what is perhaps worse, that must tend to familiarise the children with the vice, until in their eyes it ceases to be more than a venial offence, if it does not actually come to be regarded with gratification, as the occasion of extra holidays.

I have, &c.,

The Chairman, Education Board, Marlborough.

JOHN SMITH, Inspector.

SUMMARY OF RESULTS FOR THE WHOLE DISTRICT.

Classes.	Presented.	Absent.	Excepted.	Failed.	Passed.	Average Age of those that passed.
						Yrs. mos.
Above Standard VI. ...	28	...	...	...	...	...
Standard VI. ...	90	3	1	6	80	14 2
" V. ...	140	8	4	19	109	13 7
" IV. ...	216	23	3	31	159	12 11
" III. ...	301	31	13	42	215	11 9
" II. ...	294	31	11	21	231	10 7
" I. ...	314	22	6	25	261	8 9
Preparatory ...	595	...	...	..	...	...
Totals ...	1,978	118	38	144	1,055	11 11*

\* Mean of average age.

NELSON.

SIR,—

2nd January, 1894.

We have the honour to submit to you our annual report on the Nelson public schools.

A hundred and one schools have been examined during the past year. Separate visits of inspection have also been paid to four-fifths of these. There were 5,852 names on the rolls of the schools on examination day, 5,500 children being present. The total number of scholars on the rolls at the end of the September quarter was 5,894.

The outcome of our examinations, on the whole, was hardly so satisfactory as it was in the preceding year. The exceptionally bad weather during the winter months, and an outbreak of measles later on, will fully account for any falling off in the majority of our schools. There were some cases, however, in which the work of the scholars was so poor that it would be hard to discover extenuating circumstances that would fully cover their demerits. Although it is pretty well understood by this time that a mere record of passes and failures will not show fully the state of any school, a heavy percentage of failures cannot be safely disregarded as a factor in estimating the value of the work done so long as the standard-pass system is in vogue. The eleven schools in which more than half of the children were plainly unequal to the work that they attempted evidently stand urgently in need of a reformation.

The tone and discipline of all but a very few schools leave nothing to be desired. Excellent order is maintained, without, as a rule, any approach to harshness; the schools giving a visitor the idea of their being hives of cheerful industry.

*Regulation as to Exceptions.*—Nothing has caused such general and outspoken dissatisfaction among our teachers as the regulation which compels Inspectors to record the failures of such scholars as have fallen short of the prescribed minimum of attainment, but who have attended for even a fraction more than half the number of times during which school has been open during the year. This regulation seems to have been framed on the singular assumption that the work of the syllabus is so easy that it can be overtaken by the average scholar within half of the school year. The practical outcome of this rule is to show our schools in a much worse light than they really deserve. Not only are scores of children set down as "failures" who have attended school, it