

explain an experiment in agricultural science, can now get a teacher's certificate. This may be to a certain extent unavoidable; but what is to prevent the department from instituting special certificates in these subjects, which would guarantee a thorough knowledge of them? Were such special certificates attainable, I do not doubt that most young teachers would bestir themselves to secure them, and the gain accruing from their possession would be unquestionable.

While the management of the schools remains, in the main, good, I have noted in some of the larger schools a laxity in one aspect of discipline that has too long passed without remark. The order and behaviour of the pupils are nearly always very satisfactory, and usually good, but their attention and honest and persevering application to study leave a good deal to be desired. Head-teachers are, I believe, fully alive to the existence and gravity of this blot on the good management of their schools, and are making earnest efforts to cope with it. Where this weakness is due to the employment of inefficient assistants, it may be necessary to strengthen the head-teachers' hands by removing them to a less exacting sphere of labour. But there are cases where the weakness appears as much attributable to the head as to the assistants. There is no need for advising hasty action in dealing with this difficulty, for in many instances it would be hard to make changes for the better; but it will be well for those concerned to realise how important—indeed, how indispensable—is the power of maintaining satisfactory attention and application throughout the various classes of their schools. Except for the qualification just mentioned, the order, discipline, behaviour, and manners of the pupils of the public schools are highly creditable to themselves and to their teachers.

As in former years, I have pleasure in acknowledging the manifest fidelity and diligence with which the vast majority of the teachers in the service of the Board discharge their important and onerous duties. The past year has been one of heavy and continuous work for my colleagues. It was only by the most strenuous exertions that all the examinations were completed, and the inspection so largely overtaken. Mr. Crowe and Mr. Grierson have both done yeoman's service, and so too has Mr. Mulgan, who took up Mr. Dickinson's work when he had to retire on leave through ill-health, and carried it on with great expedition. My thanks are specially due to Mr. Grierson for taking up the examination of the East Coast schools in lieu of Mr. Dickinson, when he should have been employed on the less exhausting task of inspecting the schools of his own district.

I have, &c.,

D. PETRIE, M.A.,  
Chief Inspector.

The Secretary, Auckland Education Board.

#### TARANAKI.

SIR,—

Education Office, New Plymouth, 22nd March, 1899.

I have the honour to submit to you my annual report for the year ending the 31st December, 1898.

At the close of 1898 sixty-three schools were open, all of which, with the exception of the newly opened schools at Uruti, Durham Road, and Whangamomona, were examined.

The following table shows the summary of examination-results for the year:—

Classes.	Presented.	Examined in Standards.	Passed.	Average Age of those that passed.
				Yrs. mos.
Above Standard VI. ... ..	20	...	...	...
Standard VI. ... ..	114	111	80	14 8
"    V. ... ..	261	256	142	13 11
"    IV. ... ..	482	462	282	12 10
"    III. ... ..	567	546	390	11 10
"    II. ... ..	644	618	519	10 7
"    I. ... ..	540	521	450	9 5
Preparatory ... ..	1,325	...	...	...
Totals ... ..	3,953	2,514	1,863	12 2*

Comparing this table with that for 1895 (the first year I was here) I find that the number on the rolls at examination has increased by 239. The number in standards present at examination has increased by 316, or by over 14 per cent. Despite the increase in the roll-number the number of pupils in the preparatory classes has decreased.

I am pleased to note that Standards V. and VI., the standards beyond the compulsory standard, show considerable increases—in Standard V. nearly 20 per cent., and in Standard VI. 67 per cent. This, to my mind, is an indication that parents are recognising more and more the benefits to be derived from giving their children advantage of the education beyond merely that which is insisted upon by the School Attendance Act. I cannot but think that the sound instruction imparted in some of our best schools has been an important factor in bringing about this result. Standard II. also shows a considerable increase. This I believe is due to the promotion of pupils who at my earlier examinations I found had been kept back amongst the infants without sufficient reason.

\* Mean of average age.