

charge of them upon the real progress that is made. Without departmental regulation, and freed from every restraint, the infant classes present an example of progress, variety, and even adaptation such as cannot be found in the standard classes. Tact and method are essential for the successful infants' school. It is Comenius who remarks that the order of education is first by means of the senses, then the memory, and then the intellect and critical faculty. The skilful training of the senses is one of the highest functions of an infant teacher, and the forms of instruction that one finds being carried out in quite a number of departments show the aptitude of the lady teachers to carry out this special form of training. Of kindergarten instruction comparatively little is done, but there are certain schools, as named by me last year, where it is well done, and it would be better done were suitable appliances provided and some encouragement given by the Board. What is specially of interest just now is the fact that many of the lady teachers are attending the Saturday classes at the Art School in Napier for brush-painting, clay-modelling, and designing, and no doubt these subjects will be introduced into a number of schools during the coming year.

Science classes, outside what is attempted in the Board schools, make headway but slowly. Such classes have been carried on in Napier and Gisborne for instruction in chemistry, physiology, and architectural drawing, but the attendance has gradually dwindled so that it is doubtful whether further attempts will be made for the present.

The senior division of the Gisborne District High School continues to be taught with considerable success. An assistant has lately been added to this portion of the school, and although the number of pupils does not show any appreciable increase, the extra help will enable the course of instruction to be further widened and strengthened.

Concerning the schools as a whole, I would add that, as far as I have been able to judge, the moral tone of them is very satisfactory.

Catholic Schools.

In addition to the ordinary work connected with the Board schools, I also examined six Catholic schools, containing a roll of 686 children. Four hundred and eighty-one of these were examined in standards, and the passes numbered 396, 191 being in standards higher than the second. The progress made during the year is good, and altogether the schools are in a fair condition of working efficiency.

I have, &c.,

W. HILL,

Inspector of Schools.

The Chairman, Board of Education, Napier.

MARLBOROUGH.

SIR,—

Blenheim, 20th January, 1900.

I have the honour to submit my ninth annual report on the state of primary education in this district.

At the end of the year 1899 there were sixty-one schools open, or three more than appeared in my last report. Two others were open at the beginning, but were closed before the end of the year; so that sixty-three schools have been at work in this district during the year. Although the number of schools has (with slight fluctuations) remained about the same during the past few years there is a small falling-off in the roll-number this year as compared with the last and previous years. The strict average attendance for the year is about 1·22 per cent below the average for the whole colony for the year 1898, as given in the Minister's annual report. The average weekly roll-number, which for the year 1897 was 2,182, has steadily decreased from 2,200 in June, 1897, to 2,129 at December, 1899. The strict average daily attendance for the year has fallen from 1,803·5 in 1897 to 1,750·5 for the year 1899; and the working average for the year, from 1,819 to 1,771·75. This falling off in the number of children appears to be general throughout the colony, and is referred to in the Minister's last annual report.

The number of scholars on the school-rolls at the dates of the examinations was 2,099, and of this number 570 were in the preparatory classes, and sixty in the class above Standard VI. The number therefore classed in Standards I. to VI. was 1,469, being one more than last year. Of this number fifty-six were absent from the examinations, leaving 1,413 who were actually examined in standards, or sixteen more than in 1898. The scholars who satisfied the requirements for a pass numbered 1,189 as against 1,190; so that taking all the standard classes together the results do not differ materially from those of 1898, being about 1 per cent. less, and as compared with the whole colony last year about 1·78 per cent. less. Leaving out the First and Second Standards, which are examined by the teachers, the numbers examined in Standards III., IV., V., and VI. was 912; and the number who passed, 695; or a decrease of about 3·2 per cent. upon last year's results. The failures in the Sixth Standard amounted to nearly 16 per cent., those in the Fifth to 24 per cent., in the Fourth to 29 per cent., and in the Third to 22 per cent. The number of scholars re-presented in a standard in which they had previously failed appears to be about 4 per cent. less than last year, but some of the smaller schools failed to supply the information because it was not specially asked for in the circular notifying dates of examination. The fifty-eight schools examined this year may be divided into two groups—those having ten scholars and upwards on the roll, and those having fewer than ten.

In the first group there are thirty-one, and in these the results may be called very good in nine cases, good in twelve, fair in five, poor in four, bad in one. In this estimate I assume that, in this district and under the system of examination pursued, a result of 90 per cent. and over is a very good result; 80 and below 90, good; 70 and below 80, fair; 60 and below 70, poor; and below 60, bad.