

the children who attend the Marlborough schools will be engaged hereafter in the field or the work-shop. In neither of these pursuits will the acquirements I have enumerated be found superfluous; nor, even if a little elementary science be added, will some knowledge of the principles on which a pump or a hydraulic press is constructed be found burdensome to a farmer or a mechanic. The danger of our children being over-taught may then, I believe, be regarded as a very remote contingency. Nor can I see how the cutting-off of what are termed the extra subjects, such as grammar and science, would materially lessen the total cost of primary schools. A teacher who is not competent to give instruction in these matters is hardly fit to be employed at all in our public schools; and, as a matter of fact, teachers do not object to taking up two or three of these subjects, which, on the contrary, are regarded by many as a relief from the monotonous drudgery of grinding at the bare rudiments. The salaries of teachers whose work was restricted to teaching reading, writing, and arithmetic could not well be reduced below the new scale; the only difference, so far as they are concerned, would be that their work would be duller. My own objection to attempting so many subjects is that they can rarely be taught effectively, especially in our smaller country schools, where there are many classes to one teacher. For this reason, mainly, I have formerly recommended the excision of history from our school course. So far, however, am I from sharing the apprehension that the children of this colony will be over-educated, that my only fear is lest, owing to the abridgment of school life—caused by bad roads, bad weather, sickness, and perpetual withdrawals for home-work—a large proportion of our youth should leave school with but a sorry equipment for the battle of life. I have written strongly and at length on this subject, because I feel its paramount importance, affecting, as it does, the very foundation of our education system.

I have much pleasure in adding to this general review of the literary work done in the Marlborough schools my favourable testimony to the behaviour of the children, so far at least as I have observed it on my former visit of inspection and during my late examination. The scholars, as a rule, struck me as being mannerly, well disciplined, and promptly obedient to orders—a matter in which they have improved perceptibly during the last two years.

I have, &c.,

W. C. HODGSON,

Inspector.

The Chairman, Marlborough Education Board.

RECORD of TOTAL PASSES made in the Marlborough Schools during 1880.

						Presented.	Passed.
Number on roll	...	...	1,122	Standard I.	...	199	146
Present at examination	...	...	892	" II.	...	183	151
Presented in standards	...	...	643	" III.	...	147	126
Passed	...	...	505	" IV.	...	65	40
Percentage of passes	...	...	78	" V.	...	27	21
				" VI.	...	22	21

SUMMARY showing the AVERAGE AGE at which the Standards have been passed in the District of Marlborough in 1880.

			Yrs.	mos.			Yrs.	mos.
Standard I.	...	...	8	6	Standard IV.	...	12	1
" II.	...	...	10	0	" V.	...	12	6
" III.	...	...	11	0	" VI.	...	14	1

NELSON.

SIR,—

31st December, 1880.

I have the honor to submit to you my report on the Nelson public schools for the year ending the 31st December, 1880.

NUMBER OF SCHOOLS.—There are now 67 schools in the district, the two divisions of Bridge Street and of Westport Boys' Schools being this year bracketed together, and reckoned as a single school. Nine new schools have, therefore, been opened during the past year, a much larger increase, within twelve months, than has been made for many years. Four of these schools—Bridge Street (juniors), Brightwater, Rockville, and Fern Flat—are within school districts, the remaining five—Stanley Brook, Marahan, Churchill, Ngakawha, and Fairdown—are small aided schools.

NUMBER OF SCHOLARS.—The number on the rolls during the last quarter of 1879 was 3,737, the working average being 2,935. The number on the rolls for the corresponding quarter of 1880 is 3,934, the working average 3,007, the increase on the rolls being 197, on the average attendance 72. The smallness of the addition to the total numbers caused by the opening of nine schools is accounted for by the fact that the five new aided schools muster altogether no more than 78 scholars.

STANDARD-WORK: PERCENTAGE OF PASSES.—The results of this year's examinations have, on the whole, exceeded my expectations. Although teachers were no longer at liberty to present their scholars under whatever standard they pleased, as in 1879, the total percentage of passes is 80, as against 78 last year. The subjoined statement will show more clearly the improvement made:—

		Passed in 1879.	Passed in 1880.			Passed in 1879.	Passed in 1880.
Standard I.	...	575	464	Standard IV.	...	194	274
" II.	...	487	555	" V.	...	78	134
" III.	...	334	428	" VI.	...	17	69

The increase in the number of passes in the two highest standards appears to me a very hopeful symptom, especially as I have construed the requirements of these standards very strictly. At the risk, however, of being accused of a wearisome iteration, I must again caution my readers against