

fostering habits of industry, order, and neatness, and respect for the rights and property of others, it possesses an educational value of no mean order. To mark my appreciation of the effort, and to give additional impetus to the movement, I have promised a prize to the owners of the neatest and best-cultivated plot at this school, at the next examination.

PUPIL-TEACHERS.—The pupil-teachers were examined this year, as on previous years, at the schools wherein they are employed, the state of the Board's finances forbidding the adoption of the recommendation made in my last report on this subject. Table E* shows the marks gained by each candidate in the several classes. The pupil-teachers from Hokitika took up Latin as an optional subject, in which they acquitted themselves very creditably; and the fact that they occupy so good a position on the list, without taking into account the marks gained in this subject, speaks highly for the excellence of their instruction, as well as for their own ability and diligence. The needlework this year was executed in the presence of the examiner and according to the regulations laid down by the Board, and was submitted to the judgment of a lady of experience, who awarded marks for the same. The Greymouth candidates were, as they always have been, most proficient in the subject, the work of Frances Kemple being specially commended. Three pupil-teachers signified to the Inspector-General their intention of taking up drawing at the annual examination of teachers, under the regulations made by the Government, but only one of these attended. The absence of the others has not yet been explained.

The undue proportion of female pupil-teachers in this district, which has often been referred to, seems likely to be rectified, for it will be seen that of the twenty-one examined this year eleven are males. It is unfortunate that in the past the appointment of female pupil-teachers should have been so general, as at the present time, when openings more suitable for males than females are occurring, there are only two of the former out of eleven who have, or will shortly have, completed their terms of service. Now that the balance is in a fair way to be restored, I hope the Board will urge upon Committees the necessity of preserving it in future, and, if necessary, insist upon the vacancies occurring being filled by males and females alternately. It is, I think, open to question whether local Committees have anything at all to do with the appointment of pupil-teachers under clause 50 of the Act, where alone any reference is made to them.

Before quitting this part of the subject I may repeat the hope that, whenever the time arrives for the consideration of the much-needed amendments in the Act, this Board will use all its influence in support of any that shall provide for the examination and classification of pupil-teachers by the department. The scale of payments might perhaps with advantage be left to the Boards employing them; but there can be no doubt that pupil-teachers, of a given class, should have as well-recognized a status throughout the colony as holders of certificates in E or in any other letter or grade, and this can never be the case while each Board has its own programme of instruction and system of examination.

Copies of the papers set at the eleven schools standing first on the list are given below.*

The Chairman of the Education Board.

JOHN SMITH,
Inspector.

OTAGO.

I.—MR. PETRIE'S REPORT.

SIR,—

Dunedin, 31st March. 1882.

I have the honor to submit the following report for the year 1881.

During the year I paid visits of inspection to 68 schools, and examined, according to the regulations of the Education Department, 68, in addition to the extra branches at two of the District High Schools. Mr. Taylor accompanied me at 20 of the largest schools, and undertook nearly the whole of the oral examination thereat.

It was only during the months of April, May, and June that I was able to devote most of my time to surprise visits or visits of inspection. The rest of the year was occupied by the examination of the schools in the standards, the preparation of questions for the various public examinations, and the perusal and valuing of the answers thereto. The amount of time devoted to visits of inspection has thus been shorter than in any previous year. I have repeatedly expressed the opinion that half an Inspector's time should be devoted to visits of inspection made without notice, and I cannot but deplore the fact that every year sees the amount of time available for this object more and more curtailed. I am convinced that a great improvement in the efficiency of many of the schools would follow upon more frequent and systematic visits of inspection without notice. The cost of the requisite assistance would be as nothing to the gain to education from sufficient and skilful superintendence. As it is, a considerable number of schools have not been visited except for examination in the standards. In the case of the teachers of these schools, and of a number of assistants in the larger schools, I have experienced no small difficulty in assigning marks for the purposes of classification, for I have not had sufficient opportunity of observing whether they have lately improved in their management and methods of teaching. It is not improbable that some have suffered considerable hardship through this circumstance.

Results for the Year.—In the 68 schools examined by me (with Mr. Taylor's assistance at 20 of them), 6,935 pupils were examined in the standards. Of this number, 5,417 passed in the standard for which they were presented. The following table shows (1) the number of pupils examined in each standard, (2) the number of pupils who passed in each standard, (3) the number of pupils who failed in each standard, (4) the percentage of passes in each standard, (5) the average age of the pupils examined in each standard, and (6) the number of schools at which the different standards were represented:—

* Not reprinted.