

introduced, teachers were allowed considerable latitude in classifying their scholars, and as a rule the classification was sufficiently low to insure a pass. Now that repeated examinations have thoroughly gauged the scholar's ability, a pass can be secured only by work done during the year."

The following table contains a summary of the information received from the Inspectors respecting the ages at which the pupils have passed the several standards. The average ages furnished by the Inspector of Westland District are calculated for the 1st July. The Inspectors of Wellington and Southland have not furnished information on the subject:—

TABLE O.—AVERAGE AGES OF PUPILS AT STANDARD EXAMINATIONS.

EDUCATION DISTRICTS.	Average Ages (in Years) for Standard						Mean of Ages.	
	I.	II.	III.	IV.	V.	VI.		
Auckland	9	10·7	11·9	13·3	14·3	15	1882.	1881.
Taranaki	8·4	10·1	11·4	12·3	13·2	13·8	12·4	...
Wanganui	8·1	9·7	11	12·5	13·6	14·5	11·5	11·4
Wellington	...	...	...	...	...	...	11·4	11·6
Hawke's Bay	8·8	10·1	11·2	12·1	13·6	13·9	...	...
Marlborough	8·8	9·5	10·6	11·9	13	13·5	11·6	11·8
Nelson	8·7	9·3	10·3	11·8	12·8	14·6	11·2	11·4
North Canterbury	8·9	10·2	11·7	12·8	13·6	14·5	11·3	11·1
South Canterbury	8·4	9·7	10·6	11·7	12·9	14·2	11·9	11·8
Westland	8·2	9·4	10·1	11·9	12·8	13·8	11·2	...
Otago	9·1	10·2	11·6	12·5	13·4	14·3	11	11·2
Southland	...	...	...	...	...	...	11·9	12
Mean of the ten returns	8·6	9·9	11	12·3	13·3	14·2	...	11·7
Range (difference between lowest and highest)	1	1·4	1·8	1·6	1·5	1·5	11·5	...
1881—							1·4	...
Mean of nine returns	8·4	10	11·2	12·3	13·3	14·3	...	...
Range (difference between lowest and highest)	1·2	1·3	1·7	1	2	0·7	11·5	0·9

The reports of the several Inspectors of Schools give evidence of an earnest desire to bring into successful operation the scheme of school examination prescribed by the regulations made under the Education Act, and of increasing success in the efforts they are making to attain this object. The following extracts are given as specimens of the opinions and suggestions that are contained in the reports:—

Influence of the Teacher upon Regularity of Attendance.—"It is a matter of regret that the attendance at the great majority of the country schools is still very irregular and inconstant. Teachers complain—and very often justly so—that they find it impossible to efficiently prepare their pupils in the essential subjects of the syllabus, not to mention the optional. We feel bound, however, to state that, where the teaching is earnest and efficient, there the attendance is marked by a fair degree of regularity; whereas in those schools where the teaching is unskilful, perfunctory, and lifeless, the scholars naturally attend irregularly and take but little interest in their work. Teaching of the kind last mentioned is rapidly disappearing, and in at least two-thirds of the schools now in operation the teachers are zealous, and fairly trained for their important duties. Punctuality is, on the whole, well observed. The masters of the town schools and of some few of those in the country have printed absentee forms, easy to fill up, in which they let parents know of the absence of their children, and request their co-operation in securing greater regularity. Perhaps the general adoption of these forms might have a good effect on the attendance."—(*Messrs. Edge and Oumming.*) "In a private report sent in some two years ago in reference to this subject, I pointed out that the best authorities on educational affairs are almost unanimous in attributing excessive irregularity to inefficiency in the management. One writer says, 'Excessive irregularity is frequently assigned as the cause of the low state of a school, but it is much oftener the effect, for both parents and children naturally become indifferent when the discipline and instruction are of a worthless character.' Unpunctuality, another form of irregularity, is also, I am sorry to say, very noticeable at some schools; and the same writer, referring to the subject, says, 'Among the many circumstances that may be considered indicative of a badly conducted school, this [unpunctuality], when allowed to run to an extreme, is perhaps the most infallible of any. The unpunctuality of the children is almost always the consequence of indifference, or want of firmness and vigilance, on the part of the teacher.' With regard to punctuality, a striking contrast is presented to an observer outside certain schools when the school-bell rings. In one case, at the first sound of the bell, every child in sight may be seen to start off in a brisk walk, or a run, to endeavour to reach the appointed spot before the bell shall have stopped. At another no such anxiety is to be noticed. The children, however far from or near to the building at the time, appear scarcely to hear the bell, and certainly to attach no importance to its warning, but continue to saunter along with listless indifference, that shows they are under no apprehension of unpleasant consequence from their unpunctuality; and from ten to fifteen minutes afterwards groups of children may be seen leisurely making their way towards the school, as though they had abundance of time to spare. There is no doubt that irregularity