

to that examined last year: that the drawing of the sixth class at Ross was fairly good; that of the same class at Kumara "not as good as Ross." The work of the fourth and fifth at Kumara was superior to that of the same classes at Ross, the greater part of which is characterized as very bad, while that of Kanieri and Woodstock is "the same as Ross." Vocal music is taught at Hokitika, Ross, and Kumara, but, as far as I am able to judge, the results were not quite so good as they were two years ago. At Kynnersley also this subject was taught with fair results. The boys are drilled at stated times in the Greymouth, Kumara, and Ross Schools, those of Greymouth being the most proficient. The condition of the examination papers with respect to cleanliness, neatness of arrangement, and handwriting affords a very fair indication of the amount of personal interest taken by the head-teacher in the work of his school, and, it is to be presumed, of his estimate of the value of these qualities. At some schools good writing and neat work were the rule. Of these I may mention Stafford, Paroa, Kumara, Ross, Cobden, and the Fifth and Sixth Standard work at Hokitika. Of the small schools the Third Standard work at the Upper Crossing was exceptionally neat and well written. Bad writing and slovenly arrangement of the work are the rule at a few schools where the general results are good; but efforts should be made to effect an improvement in this respect also, since the two excellences are by no means incompatible, and slovenly habits once acquired are seldom thoroughly shaken off, and prove a serious obstacle to advancement and success in after life. In arithmetic the number of failures was, as usual, greater than in any other subject, although geography closely approached it in this respect. It is quite possible that the slovenly writers alluded to above occasionally suffer a loss of marks in consequence of the confused jumble of figures which in their case does duty for an arithmetic paper, although, at the expense of much valuable time, I generally succeed in ferreting out the figures intended for an answer. Mistakes so frequently occur from the hasty scribbling down of figures that it is not surprising that, as a general rule, the neatest papers contain the greatest number of correct answers. In geography more attention should be paid to map drawing, with which I was disappointed this year. With a few individual exceptions the map drawing throughout the district was inferior, and in some cases very bad, and even worthless. In history the work of the upper standards was fairly well performed; but in the Third, as before, and as is to be expected, the scholars, as a rule, have only a confused idea of a number of isolated facts. Answers such as the following were common: "Sir Walter Raleigh invented the potato. He sold some to Queen Elizabeth, who cooked them; the people would not eat them, so she was obliged to give them to the pigs." "Magna Charta led the French and relieved Orleans." "Augustine came from Rome to teach the Anglo-Saxons how to dine, to make roads, to eat and dress, and other useful things." With regard to English history, I wish to recommend the Royal Reader Junior History for Standards V. and VI., and propose to make it the basis of the history examination for these standards next year. The English composition in the upper standards on the whole showed some improvement, but in the third and fourth classes it abounded with errors in the spelling of the simplest and easiest words. Sewing is taught as usual at all the schools having a female assistant. It was very good at Greymouth, Stafford, and Paroa. At Hokitika it was inferior in some respects, and the work prescribed had not all been accomplished. The time devoted to this subject at this school (two half-hours a week) is insufficient for the purpose: at least twice as much is necessary. On this account I reduced the percentage of marks allowed to the girls from 10 to 5 per cent.

CONFIDENTIAL REPORTS.—In my report for the year 1879 I announced my intention of, and gave my reasons for, adopting the plan of furnishing the Board, when I thought it desirable, with a confidential report upon the various schools; and I have accordingly since been in the habit of doing so. In addition to the reasons then given I may mention this additional and, in my opinion, very sufficient one: The fact of a teacher failing to give satisfaction in a given position here, does not of itself prove that he is incapable of satisfactory work in any department of teaching or under any other circumstances; his want of success in fact is not a crime; and, seeing the wide publicity that is now given to the Inspector's report in the colony, it would be the height of cruelty to blazon abroad the weakness of a teacher, and thus partially debar him from obtaining employment elsewhere more suited perhaps to his temperament and attainments. A man for instance may be possessed of respectable or even high classical or mathematical attainments, and may unite with these the most amiable character and gentlemanly behaviour, and yet be wholly unable to carry on the work and maintain the discipline of a large department of an elementary school. And to forbear publishing this want of success in any particular to the whole colony has been criticised as "un-English." If it be so I trust that my reports will always merit the criticism. If the cause of complaint is stated to the Board and the Committee concerned I consider I have done my duty, and it remains with them to take what action they consider that the circumstances demand. The case, however, would be widely different if a person should be found guilty of an offence which manifestly unfitted him for the important duties of a teacher in any community and under any circumstances. In such cases, which happily are of very rare occurrence, it would be the imperative duty of all who were cognizant of the facts to give them such publicity as would place it out of the offender's power to occupy a position for which he had proved himself unworthy.

PUPIL-TEACHERS.—Twenty-one pupil-teachers were examined at their own, and in some cases a neighbouring, school. Two of these were examined for admission to the highest or first class, both of whom passed, one with credit. Ten were examined for admission to the second class: of these, nine passed (four with credit) and one failed. For the third class two were examined, and both passed. In the fourth class seven were examined: four passed (one with credit) and three failed. From the table it will be seen that the pupil-teachers at Kumara and Hokitika Schools all passed with credit, as well as two out of three at the Ross School, the whole of whom also take up Latin as an extra subject. The marks gained in Latin are recorded on the table, but, in accordance with the regulations, are not included in the marks constituting a pass. The Hokitika candidates took up the second year's work in this subject, all the others the first. In all cases the translation of English into Latin seemed to present the greatest difficulty to the candidates, as indeed was to be expected. The elementary-science papers of the two higher classes were very good throughout, the two candidates from Kumara