

OBJECT LESSONS AND ELEMENTARY SCIENCE.—Only in a very few schools are object lessons omitted, but I fear they are a good deal neglected in many more. I look upon these lessons as a very important part of school work, and capable of being made a very interesting part, even to infants. But then of course the subjects must be such as come within the mental ken of the child. In many schools elementary physiology or elementary chemistry is taught to the higher standards, and I have been a good deal pleased with the answers given to my questions in these subjects. I believe that in several schools the work done is sound, that a few facts and principles are thoroughly grasped, and that young minds are waking up to the world of marvels amid which they live, and of which they form a part.

HINDRANCES TO SUCCESS.—These are several. One very prominent one in the smaller country schools, where there is only one or at most two persons to do the whole work of the school, is the want of proper organization. Only in a few cases do teachers seem to understand that the only way to conduct schools efficiently under such conditions, and to give every child some share of oral instruction, is to reduce the number of their classes by combining as many of them as possible. It is painful to see the amount of subdivision in some of these smaller schools, with, of course, the same result as that of the man who beats the air. “Ruthlessly cut down the number of your classes,” is what I would say to all these. But the gravest trouble with which our school system has to contend is the irregular attendance of the children, a circumstance that neutralizes every effort to produce good educational results; and the man who is going to make our machinery efficient must set himself to grapple with this evil somehow or other. I own that at present I am not clear in my mind as to the proper remedy for it, but I have been a good deal struck with the apathy of teachers on the subject, and the contentedness with which they tolerate the evil, and I should like to know whether teachers are as patient under it in countries where the system of payment by results obtains. In some educational districts in New Zealand teachers are supplied with printed forms which they send out to the parents whenever a child is absent, the parent being requested to state on the back of the notice whether the child was absent by permission or not. Might not something of the sort be done here?

SCHOLARSHIPS AND PUPIL-TEACHER EXAMINATIONS.—For the sake of completeness I append to this report my reports on the scholarship and pupil-teacher examinations, which I have already submitted to the Board.

The Secretary, Education Board. I have, &c., JOHN GAMMELL, B.A., Inspector.

SOUTH CANTERBURY.

SIR,— I have the honour to submit my general report on the work of inspection for the year 1882. At the close of the year there were thirty-nine schools in operation. Four of these—viz., Albury, Redcliffe, Seaview, and Waimataitai—were opened during the latter part of the year, and were not prepared for a standard examination, while the Hunter School was closed on account of sickness at the time of my annual visit of inspection. The remaining thirty-four schools were examined, and the results are given in this report. In a few cases, where the results of the first examination were unsatisfactory, a second examination was held during the year. I have also made a large number of visits of simple inspection in accordance with the Government regulations, and visits for special purposes under instructions from the Board; but on account of the limited time at my disposal these visits of inspection have not been so systematically arranged as I could have wished.

The general results of the standard examinations are given in the following table:—*

The number of scholars attending the schools of the district at the end of the year was 3,853, but, of these, 196—those attending the new schools—are not accounted for in this statement. Those on the roll of the several schools examined are accounted for as under: Roll number at date of examination, 3,657; average attendance at date of examination, 2,728; number present at examination, 3,016; number presented for examination in standards, 1,941; number doing preparatory work below Standard I., 1,075; number passed standards as presented, 1,460; number failed in standards as presented, 481; percentage of passes to the number examined, 75·21; percentage of passes to roll number, 39·92.

The work done in the several standards may be summarized as follows:—

—				Average Age.	Number presented.	Number passed.	Percentage.
				Yrs. mos.			
Standard VI.	...	...	...	14 2	43	19	44·18
Standard V.	...	...	...	12 11	173	100	57·80
Standard IV.	...	...	...	11 8	326	181	55·51
Standard III.	...	...	...	10 7	472	364	77·11
Standard II.	...	...	...	9 8	447	378	84·56
Standard I.	...	...	...	8 5	480	418	87·08
				...	1,941	1,460	75·21

* Not printed.