

taking charge of the Greymouth public school on a sudden emergency, on the 16th of November, at the request of the Board. This, necessarily almost suspended my other work during the time (about four weeks) that I was thus engaged. The school at Rangiriri was reopened on the day before it was examined, and had been so frequently closed, owing to changes of teachers and other causes, that it had not been examined since February 1880. This year, therefore, the examination was more for the purpose of reclassification than for ascertaining results.

2. It appears to have been expected in some quarters that the progress of education in this district would be to some extent influenced unfavourably by the unfortunate and deplorable dissensions that have occurred during the past year in connection with the Education Board, and by the impending subdivision of a district already, and confessedly, too small, as regards population, for satisfactory and economical administration. It is therefore the more gratifying to observe that, whatever ill effects may have been produced in other directions, the efficiency of the schools has been fully maintained, and that the interests of the scholars do not appear to have suffered to any appreciable extent. As a rule the teachers on either side of the Teremakau have evidently pursued "the noiseless tenor of their way" undismayed, or at all events uninfluenced, by the storms that have raged around them and consequently the results of the year's work, so far as it is possible to gauge them at the annual examination, show a marked improvement on those of the previous year, as will be seen in the following summary:—

	Average Age on 1st July, 1883.	Examined.	Passed.	Percentage.	Percentage in 1882.
	Yrs. mos.				
Standard I.	8 5	353	337	95	76
Standard II. ..	9 10	334	293	88	65
Standard III.	11 3	289	233	81	60
Standard IV. ..	12 1	260	219	84	69
Standard V	12 8	147	126	86	76
Standard VI.	13 3	80	56	70	93
		1,463	1,264	86	69

3. On comparing the foregoing table with the corresponding figures for 1882, we find that, while there is an increase of 93 in the number of children examined, the number passed has increased by 318. The percentage of the roll-number examined in standards has also increased 1 per cent., and the percentage of passes 10 per cent. Taking the standards separately there is an increase in the passes of all below the Sixth, varying from 10 to 23 per cent., while the Sixth alone shows a marked falling-off. Eleven out of the twenty-four failures recorded in this standard are contributed by the two largest schools in the district—seven by Greymouth and four by Hokitika. Each of these schools has had special and peculiar disadvantages to contend against, to which I need not more particularly refer.

4. I have again compiled an analysis of the examination schedules, in order to furnish Committees and teachers with information of an important character which they have no other means of obtaining. By comparing this (Table A) with the same table given last year, the following facts may be observed. The roll-number has increased by 44. There is an increase of 80 in the number of names on the schedules, and the percentage of children below Standard I. has fallen to 35 per cent. The number of absentees on the day of examination was greater than last year by 13, and the number excluded on account of insufficient attendance (*i.e.*, less than 250 half-days) is 315, or 10 less than in 1882. This number, however, being 16 per cent. of those on the schedule, is still, in my opinion, too large a proportion of irregular scholars to be considered satisfactory. I believe that, as a rule, the teachers do all in their power to check this irregularity, which is, moreover, directly opposed to their own material interests, but I fear that little improvement can be expected until Local Committees turn their special attention to this too generally neglected portion of their duties. The table here quoted will at any rate enable such of them as take an interest in this important matter to see how their own schools compare in this respect with others.

5. With regard to the absentees on the day of examination, although the number is slightly larger, it is more evenly distributed. Some schools, which last year showed a large percentage of absentees, have effected considerable improvement in this respect. At Kanieri, for instance, the number has been reduced from 13 to 2·8 per cent., and at Woodstock from 17 per cent. to 0. I observe that there are certain children—not many, however—who are regularly absent from every examination. The total number of children who have not been presented in a higher standard this year is 80, a decrease of 10.

6. Table B, as usual, shows with respect to each school the number of children examined and passed in each standard, with the average age at the 1st July, the average percentage of the possible marks obtained, and the general percentage of passes in all the standards. And here I must once more caution the general public against attaching undue importance to the figures given in this table. Other things being about equal, the highest percentage of marks and passes should indicate the most efficient schools, but, unfortunately for this hypothesis, other things very seldom are "about equal," and the most erroneous opinions as to the relative efficiency of schools may be apparently justified by the figures in the Inspector's report. Among the many things to be taken into account, before attempting to pronounce an opinion on so delicate a question, are the follow-