

an optional subject, were placed in a column by themselves, and the candidates were arranged according to the number of marks gained in the compulsory subjects only. This was to some extent unfair to those who took up the extra subject, as the general public seldom take the trouble to do more than glance at the totals. I have this year included the marks for Latin in the totals, but of course they are not included in the number necessary to secure a pass. Had the same plan been followed this year that was adopted in 1882, the order of merit would have been somewhat different. In the first class the first four names would have stood in the following order 1, Voysey, 2, Reynolds, 3, Andrews; 4, Ecclesfield. In the third class the name now occupying the central position would have appeared last and in the fourth, there being no subject to set against the needlework of the female candidate, Henry Smith is a few marks ahead of the girl who now occupies the first place.

The Secretary for Education

I have, &c.,

JOHN SMITH, Inspector

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SIR,—

1. MR. PETRIE'S REPORT.

I beg to submit the following report for the year 1883.

During the year I paid one or more visits of inspection to sixty-five schools, and examined fifty-nine according to the regulations of the Education Department, besides taking part of the extra branches at the four district high schools. At sixteen of the largest schools I was assisted by one of the other Inspectors. Owing to an accident that prevented me from moving about for some weeks, I was unable to visit four schools in the neighbourhood of Dunedin, which had not been inspected at the usual time. All the schools in operation throughout the year were examined, and all except thirteen were visited for inspection. Of the thirteen not visited, eight were closed when the Inspector was in the district. Of the 11,320 pupils whose names were entered on the examination schedules, only 387 were absent, being less than 3½ per cent. The excellence of the attendance on examination-days is much to the credit of the teachers and the parents of the pupils, and clearly shows that in this education district a high value is attached to the standard certificates issued to those who succeed in passing. Of the 10,933 pupils examined, 72 per cent. passed in the standard for which they were entered. Last year's percentage was 73. The total number of pupils examined is considerably greater than in any previous year, and more than 4,000 in excess of the total for 1879.

As regards the percentage of passes in the several standards, there is a decline as compared with last year's results in Standards I., III., V and VI., and an increase in Standards II. and IV. The details are shown in Table III., from which it will be seen that the decline has been chiefly in the reading, spelling, and arithmetic of Standard I., the geography of Standard II., the reading and history of Standard III., the spelling, arithmetic, grammar, and geography of Standard V., and the arithmetic and grammar of Standard VI. In connection with these results I must point out that the number of schools presenting pupils in the higher standards is thirty-two in excess of that of last year. Looking at the year's results as a whole, I must confess to some disappointment with them. At the same time there is no occasion to take a despondent view of the situation, for so long as seventy-two out of every hundred examined pass in their standard the result cannot be thought other than satisfactory. As in former years, all who have been more than six weeks in attendance were examined—those of course excepted who were below the level of Standard I. Of the 159 schools examined, eight gained a gross percentage of 90 or more, fifty-three gained one between 80 and 90, fifty-nine one between 70 and 80, twenty-six one between 60 and 70, nine one between 50 and 60, and four one of less than 50. A gross percentage of 80 or more must be considered a very good result, and it is satisfactory to find that 38 per cent. of the schools (including most of the largely attended ones) reached that figure, while 37 per cent. of them stood between 70 and 80. In thirteen the gross percentage was below 60, a result that cannot be considered satisfactory. The gross percentage for all the schools in the district is 80, a number considerably higher than the percentage of passes in standards. The excess of the percentage of passes in subjects over that in standards shows that the failures in standards have not been of a serious character, and that many who have come short of a pass in their standard have yet made good progress in a majority of the subjects in which they receive instruction. On the whole very few made a bad appearance, most of those who failed to pass having shown a tolerably good knowledge of the work. The public and many teachers also attach too great a stigma to failure at the standard examination. In many cases the difference between success and failure turns on a mistake in a sum or in the spelling of a word. The standard for passing in each subject was the same as for last year, and the same sets of examination cards were employed.

For the purpose of exhibiting the relative efficiency of schools of different sizes I have made out the following tabular statement. In grouping the schools no account has been taken of the pupil-teachers belonging to the staff:—

	One Teacher.	Two Teachers.	Three or more Teachers.
Percentage of schools gaining a gross percentage of 80 or more	28	35	82
Percentage of schools gaining a gross percentage of 70 or more	67	81	93
Highest gross percentage in each group	93	93	92
Lowest gross percentage in each group	35	52	68

This table shows very clearly what I have pointed out from time to time, that the present course of instruction in the public schools of New Zealand can be adequately overtaken in the largest