

indeed, a surer test of the work done at any school than the "pass" column. The proportion that the number of scholars who have passed bears to the number on the roll is very high in some of our schools this year. It is only fair to select for special commendation on this ground Stoke, Tadmor, Haven Road, Ngakawhau, Toitoti Valley, River Terrace, and Charleston Girls', the lowest on this list having passed 57 per cent. of the number on the roll, which, of course, includes absentees from the examinations. In striking contrast to these we have Brighton, Ranzau, Foxhill, Neudorf, Brightwater, and Ngatimoti, in none of which does the percentage exceed, while in some it falls much below, 21.

I subjoin my usual estimate of the condition of each school when I last examined it.*

From the foregoing survey of the state of each of the Nelson schools, it will be gathered that, with, at most, half-a-dozen exceptions, the work is being carried on smoothly and efficiently, and that even in the less satisfactory schools the faults pointed out are in a fair way of being remedied. The instances are rare in which I find, at my next examination, that no honest attempt has been made to amend what was amiss.

I have, &c.,

The Chairman, Education Board.

W. C. HODGSON, Inspector.

NORTH CANTERBURY

SIR,—

Christchurch, 31st March, 1884.

We have the honour to submit our general report for the year 1883.

With very few exceptions all schools in operation during the year were fully examined in standards. Those schools not so examined were either recently opened, or had, after being closed for considerable periods, been only a short time under the teachers in charge at the dates of our visits. Owing to the number of schools and the large attendances on the days of examination, a great proportion of our time had necessarily to be spent in the work of examining, valuing the papers handed in, and making out detailed reports for the information of the Board, Committees, and teachers, thus leaving very little time for visits of inspection. However, we were enabled to pay at least one casual visit to the large majority of schools, but, beyond looking through the registers and seeing that the instruction was being carried on in accordance with the regulations, we were unable to see much of the organization or methods of teaching.

The number of schools in the district at the end of the year was 143, an increase of eight over the previous year. New schools were opened at Darfield, Lauriston, Lakeside, Winslow, South Malvern, Little Port Cooper, Rotherham, and Manuka Town, the three latter being small aided ones.

The total number of scholars on the registers at the dates of our examinations was 17,565, and the number present 15,019. Table No. I. shows the enrolments and attendances for the years 1881, 1882, and 1883:—

TABLE No. I.

	Enrolment.	Present at Examination.	Percentage.
1881	16,076	12,663	79
1882	16,781	13,848	82
1883	17,565	15,019	85

It is satisfactory to find that, notwithstanding that the weather during the latter portion of the year—what we consider our busiest time—was very wet and stormy yet the attendance was very considerably in excess of the previous year, the percentage of roll-number present being 85.

There appears an increasing desire on the part of Committees and teachers to pay more attention to the improvement of the grounds attached to their schools. In the case of several, however we have to reiterate what we stated in our last report, namely, that very little care appears to be bestowed on either grounds, buildings, furniture, or apparatus. Considerable alterations have been made in the furniture now supplied to schools. It may be stated that almost all schools in the district are suitably furnished, and that there is an adequate supply of the usual teaching appliances.

We have still to complain of the irregular attendance of a large proportion of the pupils whose names appear on the register for the year, and to deplore the evil effects upon themselves and their more regular class-fellows. For not only do the absentees wrong themselves, but they act injuriously on the other more regular scholars, whose progress is necessarily retarded in order that these laggards may be brought forward to the level of the class. Again, while in some cases the master, by his supineness, is greatly to blame in this matter, in very many more the persistent irregular attendance of the children, kept at home for any and every cause, eats up the energy and enthusiasm of even the best masters. If Committees would only move in this matter, without fear of their neighbours and in the true interests of the children, our results would be very much better, the hearts of the teachers encouraged, and parents and pupils brought to appreciate the value of the great boon of free education placed within the reach of the majority of the inhabitants of this district. Not only is this irregular attendance bearing evil fruit now but in the future of the children the effect cannot be anything but bad. When kept at home, as is too often the case, for very trivial causes, they are taught to subordinate education with all its advantages to little and sordid matters, and thus, when they themselves come to take their place in the State, they will not give to education that interest necessary to enable the present system to be carried on with any measure of hearty zeal. This is not a result which those interested in education can look forward to with anything approaching to feelings of pleasure. We therefore urge upon Committees the duty not only of carefully looking over the quarterly returns before they are signed, but also of examining the registers in order to ascertain the number of attendances made by each child. In

* Not reprinted here.