

4. PROFESSOR SALE'S REPORT.

SIR,—

Dunedin, 17th December, 1883.

In accordance with your request I have held an examination of the Boys' and Girls' High Schools in the subjects of English literature and grammar, history, and geography. The results of the examination are given in the enclosed lists. In the Girls' High School I examined the two highest classes only—the Fifth and Sixth—by means of written questions and answers. In the Boys' High School I examined the four highest classes by means of written questions and answers, and I was also present when the junior classes were being examined orally by the several masters who have charge of them. In all the junior classes a large proportion of the boys answered the questions put to them intelligently and well.

In conclusion, I wish to impress upon the Board that, especially in the subjects in which I have been called upon to examine, an examination held by a stranger, unacquainted with the classes, must of necessity be a very imperfect and uncertain test of the relative merits of the candidates examined; and that it is in reality of little value except as showing the general character of the work done. So far as this general result is concerned, I am favourably impressed with the work done in both the schools. I ought to add that in awarding marks I have throughout endeavoured to give the highest value to answers which showed intelligence, and have attached comparatively little weight to such as were merely evidence of memory. For instance, in English literature I have attached more importance to a vigorous and accurate paraphrase of Milton than to the repetition of some foreign or Anglo-Saxon form of a word.

The Secretary, Board of Governors.

I have, &c.,

G. S. SALE.

5. PROFESSOR SHAND'S REPORT.

SIR,—

Dunedin, 31st December, 1883.

I have the honour to report that on the 4th, 5th, and 6th instant I examined the High Schools in the subjects assigned to me—namely, arithmetic and mathematics. The higher classes in all the subjects were examined by means of written papers, and nearly all the lower classes were examined orally, so that I obtained a good view of the work done throughout both schools. As regards the written part of the examination, the papers set were so drawn, valued, and marked as to be, in my opinion, relatively to the age and advancement of the several classes, of very nearly the same degree of difficulty. The papers in all the subjects being thus comparable with one another, the tables which I give below of the average percentages obtained express in the most concise way my judgment regarding the proficiency of the classes examined. An average of more than 60 per cent. may be taken as "excellent," between 50 and 60 per cent. as "good," between 40 and 50 per cent. as "fair," and below 40 per cent. as "poor." Those classes are bracketed together which did the same paper, valued and marked in the same way:—

Classes examined.				Arithmetic.		
				Percentages obtained.		
				Highest.		Average.
{ III. B (boys)	...	...	...	100	(Herdman)	59½
{ III. A (boys)	...	...	...	86	...	53
{ IV. (girls)	...	...	...	85	...	46
{ Lower IV. (boys)	...	...	...	100	(Beck)	63
{ Upper IV. (boys)	...	...	...	98	(Isaacs and Moir)	55
{ V. (girls)	...	...	...	81	...	46½
{ V. (boys)	...	...	...	88	...	54½
{ VI. (boys)	...	...	...	91	(Allen)	69
{ VI. (girls)	...	...	...	83	...	55

It will be observed that in this important subject the results are, as usual, highly satisfactory, more especially in the Boys' School. The classes which were examined orally also did their work very fairly, although they were not so accurate as those examined in writing, and their quickness in working was also capable of improvement. In the oral examination, the girls, I thought, did quite as well as or even a little better than the boys, but on the other hand it was noticeable that they were not nearly so far advanced in respect of the rules gone over. Thus many of the girls, even in the Fifth Form, had not learned practice, a rule with which they ought to have become familiar in the Second Form. The remedy for this defect lies, I think, in following up the recommendation which I made last year regarding the appointment of a special mathematical teacher. The Board has given effect to this recommendation by the selection at Home of a lady well qualified to take charge of the mathematical department of the school; and I would now suggest that the whole of the classes in arithmetic, as well as in mathematics, be placed under the charge of the mathematical mistress, a special assistant being assigned to her to enable her to undertake the work. She will thus become responsible for the whole arithmetical and mathematical instruction given in the school, and will be in a position to see that satisfactory progress is made year by year in the junior classes, without which the highest excellence in the upper classes cannot be looked for.

Algebra.

The results of the written examination in algebra are given in the following table:—

Classes examined.				Percentages obtained.		
				Highest.		Average.
Upper IV. (boys)	...	...	...	78	...	40
{ V. (boys)	...	...	...	76	...	42½
{ VI., Second Division (girls)	...	...	...	49	...	26½
{ VI. (boys)	...	...	...	76	...	47
{ VI., First Division (girls)	...	...	...	66	...	51