

Standard II.—A number of specimens were in advance of this standard, and we would here draw attention to the necessity of only sending in what is required in the syllabus. The whole year's work should be duly practised, but only one specimen of the same need be presented for examination.

Standards III. and IV.

The work of the pupils in these standards is on the whole "very fair," although it is scarcely of equal merit to that of the other standards. Gisborne, Wairoa, and Waipukurau deserve special mention for the general excellence of their work. The specimens from Clive do not show sufficient stitching. A similar remark applies to the work from Mohaka and several other of the smaller schools, where stitching and gathering do not appear to receive sufficient attention. The examiners are pleased to notice an improvement in the specimens sent from the Napier School, although the work from this school is hardly such as could be desired. In the sewing-on of tapes and buttons the specimens sent from the latter school were not well done.

CAPTAIN RUSSELL'S SEWING PRIZES.

The examination of the specimens of sewing for the annual prize competition instituted by Captain Russell took place at Napier on Friday, the 7th November, 1884. The prizes are three in number, and are offered for competition to all girls attending the schools under the Board. The first prize is a sewing-machine. This is offered for the best specimen of "patching the knees and re-seating a pair of old and well-worn trousers." The second prize is a lady's workbox. This is offered for "the best-made night-shirt." The third prize is a lady's companion. This is offered for the best specimen of darning shown on "old and well-worn stocking or socks." Five competitors entered for the first prize, seven for the second, and four for the third.

The examiners were Mesdames Ormond, Spencer, and Hill, who have awarded the prizes as follows: First prize, Nancy Renouf, aged fifteen, Napier District School; second prize, Maud Farmer, aged thirteen, Gisborne District School; third prize, Mary Baker, aged thirteen, Gisborne District School.

The following is the report of the examiners upon the general character of the specimens: The examiners for Captain Russell's prizes are very pleased to see an increase from last year in the number of specimens sent for examination. Those from Gisborne in the number and general quality are by far the best.

1. *Patching and Seating Trousers (First Prize, Sewing-machine).*—Awarded to Nancy Renouf, Napier. Only two schools competed for this prize, Gisborne and Napier. The specimens, on the whole, in this particular branch of needlework were hardly as well finished as those of last year. Five specimens were sent for examination. In reference to the patching, two or three remarks are necessary. (1.) Where it is possible, cloth of the same colour as the trousers should be procured; and, if not of the same colour, the texture should be considered. It is scarcely practicable to place a patch of thin waterproof cloth upon trousers made of thick ribbed cloth, as in one instance was adopted. Of course there are cases where a choice of cloth cannot be adhered to, as perhaps in the bush, for example, but it is rarely impossible in even small towns to obtain something like a proper kind of cloth. (2.) The warp should run the same way in the patch as the trousers patched, taking care that the cross way of the material comes into the back seam of the trousers. (3.) Wherever seams are near the patch it is best always to carry the latter into the same.

2. *Night-shirt (Man's) (Second Prize, Lady's Workbox).*—There were seven specimens sent for competition. Gisborne shows the best work, Maud Farmer gaining the prize. Her work was excellent. Annie McHardy, Hampden; Eva Burden, Napier; Maria Gosnell, Wairoa, are to be highly commended for the general excellence of their work.

3. *Darning a Pair of Socks or Stockings (Third Prize, Lady's Companion).*—Out of four specimens sent, Mary Baker, Gisborne, obtained the prize. Only Gisborne competed for this prize. The specimens sent for examination were excellent, but rather impracticable for wear. The examiners would advise in future that a little attention should be given to the plainer kind of darning, specimens of which should be forwarded. They also think that all schools should compete for these prizes, and not only two or three.

NELSON.

SIR,—

Nelson, 5th March, 1885.

I have the honour to lay before you a report of the Board's proceedings during the year ending the 31st December, 1884.

MEETINGS OF THE BOARD.—The Board has held thirteen ordinary and three special meetings during the year, seven members, on the average, being present at each meeting.

MEMBERS OF THE BOARD.—The Board was constituted as follows after the election of three new members on the 14th March: Mr. Barnicoat (Chairman), the Bishop of Nelson, Rev. J. C. Andrew, Messrs. Shephard, Dencker, Wastney, Tarrant, Clayden, and the Rev. J. Beckenham. The resignation of the Rev. J. Beckenham caused a vacancy, which was filled up on the 31st May by the election of Mr. William Henry Phillips, junior.

NUMBER OF SCHOOLS.—Eighty-three schools have been on the roll within the year, eighty-two of these being at work during the December quarter.

AIDED SCHOOLS.—The number of aided schools has increased from twelve to sixteen during the year, the Board continuing to allow these establishments the full capitation allowance of £4 for every scholar in daily attendance, in addition to a contribution of one-half to the cost of school-buildings when the site has been previously secured to the Board.

HOUSEHOLD SCHOOLS.—Two only of this class of schools were in existence at the end of the year.