

Out of every hundred pupils examined in the requirements of the different standards, eighty-one passed in reading, eighty in spelling and dictation, seventy-six in arithmetic, eighty-four in writing, seventy-nine in grammar and composition, sixty in geography, and eighty-three in English history. The fifty-three pupils re-examined in standards already passed came from nine schools, the large majority being from Norsewood and Takapau. Bad attendance, sickness, and general dullness were alleged as the causes for the re-presentations; and in each instance I satisfied myself that the excuses given were reasonable.

*Infants.*—The infants too young for presentation in standards were examined by me individually when they had been taught in a separate department by a special teacher, and collectively when taught (?) by a teacher who had had the very difficult task to perform of preparing ten or a dozen infants for a pass in Standard I., and instructing a score or so of other children in work ranging through the requirements of the six standards. The best infants' departments in the order of merit are Gisborne—which is a model department—Napier, Hampden, Clive, Hastings, and Wairoa. At Waipawa, Hastings, and Waipukurau the instruction of the infants has been retarded in consequence of the building operations; but I anticipate great progress at each school during the coming year, as all are in charge of well-qualified teachers. I regret to report a great falling-off in efficiency in the infants' departments at Taradale and Norsewood. The latter was, no doubt, caused by the resignation of an efficient infants' mistress, and the appointment of one whose experience in such teaching was very limited; whilst at Taradale the mistress accounted for the comparatively inefficient state of her department by urging "that the other teachers in the district had told her that she worked too hard, and was injuring other teachers thereby"!

*High Percentage of Presentations.*—In the standard examinations I do not know whether my requirements for a pass are less severe than those in other districts. I have exchanged sets of standard questions with other inspectors in several instances; but it seems to me that my tests, especially in arithmetic, grammar, geography, and history, are quite equal in difficulty to any of those I have yet seen. I mention this because I find that the number of pupils presented in standards in my district is 8 per cent. higher than the average presentations and passes for the colony, as shown in the annual report of the Minister of Education published last year. Of course, I cannot say how the results will compare as regards the year under notice. A few years ago the case was very different. I was then under the necessity of complaining of the exceptionally low results obtained by me as compared with those obtained in other districts, and, as far as I am aware, the tendency in all my examinations has been upward rather than downward. For myself, I can only account for the comparatively large number of presentations by supposing that the offer of a bonus by the Board to all those teachers who pass 50 per cent. of the pupils attending their schools, at the annual standard examination, has proved a great incentive in bringing forward the younger pupils; but, if this be not the cause of the high average standard passes in this district, it seems to me the time has arrived when an Inspectors' conference has become a necessity, if only for the purpose of consulting one another as to what should constitute a fair standard pass.

*Quality of Work.*—Regarding the general character of the schools, it is to me a source of satisfaction to report that most of them are in a comparatively efficient state. Not that the standard subjects are taught as I hope yet to see them taught, or that there is no further room for improvement in discipline and organization—in these respects much still remains to be done; but a comparison between the condition of the schools as they were even four years ago and their present condition shows that in the district a body of earnest men and women is growing up, who, if not yet efficient, are aiming at being so, and who are grudging no efforts to bring on their schools to a satisfactory standard. Hitherto the Gisborne and Napier schools have occupied the places of honour among the schools of my district; but they are being closely pressed, and in some respects they have been overtaken, by such schools as Makatoku, Hampden, Matawhero, and the upper divisions at Kaikora, Waipawa, and Taradale. The rapid increase which has taken place in the schools at Hastings, Waipukurau, and Port Ahuriri has naturally thrown them back somewhat for a time; but they are in the hands of diligent workers, who will, no doubt, be able to give a good account of themselves another year. Taking the condition of education according to counties I find that the Cook County contains the best and certainly the worst schools in the district. Gisborne is without exception the best disciplined and most efficient school under the Board, and Matawhero is following the good example of its neighbour; but the schools at Patutahi, Te Arai, and Ormond are unsatisfactory in many important points. The absence of suitable buildings for so many years has done a good deal to retard the progress of these schools; but after making every allowance I cannot help feeling that the schools ought to have been in a much better state than they were at the date of my last examination. In the Wairoa County all the schools are in charge of lady teachers, and as far as results go they will bear favourable comparison with schools of equal size in other parts of the district. I think, however, that the time has come when a head-master should be engaged for the Wairoa County School. Not that the school is inefficient, for the mistress is an exceptionally good and hard-working teacher; but it appears to me desirable that an effort should be made to place the school on a still sounder footing than it is even now, being situated in a district where the outlying settlers must look to the county school for the higher education of their children. All the schools in the Hawke's Bay County are in very fair working order, and I think that each of them, without exception, is in the hands of a capable teacher. The Napier Central schools are doing, on the whole, good work; but in general efficiency they fall below the only other borough school in the district, to which reference has already been made. In the Patangata County, Kaikora, Waipukurau, Patangata, and Porangahau schools are doing satisfactory work, and are likely to improve still more under the present teaching staff. I am not yet prepared to offer an opinion as to the efficiency or otherwise of the schools at Wallingford and Wainui, as they have only recently been placed under the charge of the present mistresses. The Waipawa County contains several very efficient schools, and several that fall below a fair standard. Among the