

orderly, and yield a cheerful obedience; and the impression left upon me is that they are being trained in habits of honesty and self-reliance.

Tables of statistics, which have been compiled by Mr. Edge and myself, are appended [not printed].

I have, &c.,

The Chairman, Education Board, North Canterbury.

L. B. Wood, M.A., Inspector.

SOUTH CANTERBURY.

SIR,—

Education Office, Timaru, 8th January, 1886.

I have the honour to present a general report on the schools of the Education District of South Canterbury for the year 1885.

The forty-five schools in operation throughout the year have been examined in detail, and at least one separate visit has been paid to each—with one exception—for the purpose of inspection. The new school opened towards the close of the year at Upper Waitohi Flat was not examined, as no children were attending it who had not been already examined elsewhere, or who were fitted for promotion.

Enrolment and Classification.—In these forty-five schools there were on the rolls at the date of examination 4,157 children—2,141 boys and 2,016 girls—of which number twenty-seven, or 0·65 per cent. had already passed the Sixth Standard; 2,641, or 63·53 per cent., were within the standard classification; and 1,489, or 35·82 per cent., were grouped in the infant division. This classification is very nearly the same as that of last year, in which the proportions in the forty-one schools examined were 0·53, 63·92, and 35·54 per cent. respectively; but it shows a slight tendency to augment the group of infants at the expense of the standard classes.

Examined.—Those who had already passed Standard VI. were examined in the work of that standard. The infants were examined briefly in classes. Of the remaining 2,641, the total preparing for some standard, 2,396, or 90·7 per cent., were present at examination, nineteen out of a total of twenty-three re-presented were re-examined in a standard already passed, and 2,377 were examined for promotion. The attendance at examination, which still leaves something to be desired, has slightly improved, 9·3 per cent. of the standard classes being absent, as against 10·3 last year. Taking the roll number of all schools in the district at the end of December, the proportion of children actually examined in standards is 57 per cent., as against 56 per cent. in 1884—an increase due principally to the fact that only one small school was not in a position to be examined.

Promoted.—The number promoted to a higher standard for the year is 1,754, which shows (a) a percentage of promotions of 42·19 on the roll number of the schools examined; (b) a percentage of 66·41 on the number enrolled in standard classes; (c) a percentage of 73·2 on the number present at examination in standards; and (d) a percentage of 73·83 on the number examined for promotion—that is, exclusive of pupils re-examined in a standard already passed. The corresponding figures taken from my last report are (a) 42·39, (b) 66·32, (c) 73, and (d) 73·95. In comparing the reports it is to be noted that the word “presented” is no longer used in the sense of present at examination, but applied to the class enrolment.

Comments and Explanations.—To prevent any abuse of the regulation by which teachers were enabled to re-present children in a standard already passed, the practice has been adopted both for 1884 and for this year of not allowing such re-presentation to affect the percentage of passes given for each school, and, in consequence, the number so re-presented is again extremely small. Had more encouragement been given, there is no doubt the proportion of promotions to the number examined for promotion would have been made to assume a very different aspect. By the new regulations that come into force on the 1st January, 1886, the term “percentage of passes” there recognised is made to refer to the school roll, and a new term, “percentage of failures,” is introduced to express the relation of the failures to the passes and failures taken together, the failures referred to being the net result obtained by excluding from the calculation those pupils (to be termed “exceptions”) who do not pass, and who have made fewer than half attendances during the previous three quarters. With the object of preparing the way for the new order of things, I have thought it desirable to give a “percentage of passes” and a “percentage of failures,” according to these definitions, for every school, in addition to the percentage of passes on the number examined in standards to which this district has been accustomed for several years. As, however, the regulation dealing with the re-presentation of children is not included in the new scheme, and as no teacher would re-present children who had any chance of passing a higher standard, the net failures on which the percentage of failures is based must be ascertained for this year by adding the number re-presented to the gross number of actual failures before subtracting the exceptions proposed. The total number of children excluded in the calculation on the principle applied, and termed by me “proposed exceptions,” is ninety-one, and the percentage of failures for the district is 24·03. Last year I took the trouble to ascertain the number of children examined in standards who had made 250 attendances since the previous examination, and set down a second series of percentages showing the proportion of passes among those children. The figures then obtained showed that 372 children in this group did not pass, and, as the total number of failures for the year (failures and pupils re-presented being taken together) was 616, it follows that there were no fewer than 244 children among the failures who did not make 250 attendances out of an ordinary total of 400. Had this number been excepted on the new principle, a percentage of failures—of 18·21—of a somewhat different character would have been obtained for that year. I am unable to give corresponding figures for 1885; but I have no reason to suppose that the result would have been materially different. The more liberal rule of exclusion is, in my opinion, to be preferred, and I hope that the authorities, in seeking to relieve teachers of responsibility for the failures of bad attendants, may see their way, before the next series of examinations, to the adoption of a more comprehensive definition of the term “exceptions.”