

In the foregoing all scholars who, under the new regulations, will next year be classed as "excepted" have been omitted. It will be seen, by comparing the results with those for 1884, given in the last column of Table A, that there is a general improvement in all the standards, represented by an increase in the number of passes ranging from 3 per cent. in the First and Sixth to 10 per cent. in the Fourth Standard. This, on the whole, may be considered as very satisfactory; but it is to be regretted that the largest school in the district does not occupy a more creditable position on the list. The low percentage of passes recorded at this school is chiefly due to what may be fairly called a break-down in the Third Standard, where, out of seventy-six examined, only forty-nine passed. The failures in the Second and Fourth Standards also were more numerous proportionately than in the same standards at most of the Board's schools. With regard to the Third Standard the inferior results cannot be a matter of astonishment when it is known that this class, which at one period of the year numbered as many as seventy children, has been under the charge of a female pupil-teacher of the second class, and, for the greater part of the year, unassisted.

The real cause of the comparatively low position occupied by the Hokitika School on the table of results, both this year and last, is, in my opinion, to be found in the unequal distribution of the teaching power of the staff. The whole time of the head-teacher and the first assistant is devoted to the Fifth and Sixth Standards; the other certificated assistant is placed, very properly, in charge of the infant department, leaving all the rest of the school to be taught by two junior assistants and the pupil-teachers. In a school having 470 children on the roll it is somewhat strange that fifty-eight of that number should engross the whole time of the two principal teachers. In several schools in this district the three higher standards are taught by the head-teacher, unassisted; and it is not too much to expect that one teacher, with a pupil-teacher, should suffice for the Fifth and Sixth at the Hokitika School. I am quite aware that the Sixth and Upper Sixth—the latter numbering fifteen—have derived very great benefit from the nature of the instruction received at the hands of the head-teacher, which embraces much of a very valuable kind which cannot be made to appear on a bare table of results. The length of time—in some cases as much as two years—which scholars are allowed to spend in this division of the school after passing the Sixth Standard is a sufficient proof of the estimation in which Mr. Dixon is justly held as a teacher; but it certainly appears to me that the principle of working for "the greatest good of the greatest number" demands that the advantages derivable from his admittedly excellent teaching powers should be to some extent shared in by more than one-fourteenth of the scholars attending the school. Moreover, an adherence to the present system must tend to perpetuate a state of things of which the head-teacher has on more than one occasion complained—namely, the backward condition of scholars admitted to the Fifth and Sixth Standards. In reference to this complaint I have suggested to him that a redistribution of the staff would probably remove the difficulty complained of; but hitherto, as far as I know, this has not been attempted. I believe that one obstacle to the alteration has been the want of a room sufficiently large to contain both the Fifth and Sixth Classes.

The average ages of the scholars examined in the several standards are given below: Standard I., eight years six months; Standard II., ten years three months; Standard III., eleven years seven months; Standard IV., twelve years two months; Standard V., thirteen years one month; Standard VI., thirteen years nine months.

Table C shows, with respect to each school—first, the number examined, omitting those who had passed the same standard before and those who are "excepted;" second, the number who passed; third, the number who failed; fourth, the exceptions; fifth, those who had passed before; sixth, the absentees; seventh, those below Standard I.; and, eighth, the roll number. The number below Standard I. is 645, or 35.6 per cent. of the whole, being an increase of nearly 3½ per cent. upon last year.

TABLE C.

Schools.	Number examined in Standards.	Passed.	Failed.	Excepted.	Passed same Standard before.	Absent on Day of Examination	Below Standard I.	Number on Rolls, 1st Nov., 1885.
	(1.)	(2.)	(3.)	(4.)	(5.)	(6.)	(7.)	(8.)
Kumara ...	153	146	7	...	7	38	132	330
Rangiriri ...	14	8	6	...	...	...	7	21
Goldsborough ...	66	57	9	...	4	8	53	131
Stafford ...	86	74	12	1	8	8	19	122
Arahura Road ...	31	26	5	...	3	1	19	54
Hokitika ...	255	200	55	7	15	19	173	469
Kanieri ...	54	51	3	...	3	16	29	102
Bluespur ...	37	28	9	...	...	...	9	46
Upper Arahura ...	18	16	2	...	...	2	19	39
Woodstock ...	55	50	5	...	...	3	42	100
Lower Kokatahi ...	13	11	2	...	...	3	10	26
Upper Kokatahi ...	23	14	9	...	...	3	10	36
Ross ...	148	138	10	3	5	6	90	252
Donoghue's ...	37	34	3	2	...	1	28	68
South Spit ...	9	6	3	...	...	...	5	14
Totals...	999	859	140	13	45	108	645	1,810

As I have pointed out in former reports, a low percentage of passes in one year is almost certain to be followed by an apparently high percentage in the next, as all the children failing at