$E.-1_B.$

the intention of introducing the subject generally into the schools of the district. I desire here to express my sense of obligation to those teachers whose efforts enabled me to carry out the course so successfully; and I am certain that many practical difficulties of method, questioning, and illustration have been made clear by these lessons, while the comments made incidentally when these lessons were in progress will be invaluable to the young and less experienced teachers, who cannot but be better able, in future, to deal more confidently and successfully with similar difficulties as they occur in their own teaching. The following is a copy of the time-table, showing the model lessons given at the Central School during the course:—

Date.	Lesson.	Standard Classes.	Teacher.
" 17 " 24 Oct. 1 " 8 " 15 " 22 " 29 Nov. 12 " 19	Drawing: Collective Arithmetic: Ratio Science: Introductory Arithmetic: Number Grammar: Noun, Definition of Science: Barometer Writing Object lesson: Coral	Standard IV Standard II. Standard II. Standard V Standard IV Standard IV Standard IV Preparatory Standard III Standard V Preparatory Standard IV	H. Dempsey. G. W. Potts. W. Dickie. J. Grant, B.A. J. Young. J. Young. Ed. Evans. J. J. Campbell. J. Grant, B.A. Isa Blair. Ed. Evans. G. Whitelaw. Teachers.

Considerable improvement was noticeable in the work done by the pupil-teachers at their annual examination, which took place on the 22nd June and three following days. Three have now completed the term of four years, and will in all probability prepare for the next certificate examination. Altogether, twelve succeeded in passing for promotion, while two or three failed through weakness in their instruction.

Coming to the information connected with the year's attendance, the roll number—2,395—at the 31st December does not show the usual increase of the past few years; the mean increase, however, of the four quarters is eighty-seven. The explanation lies in the fact that for one quarter of the year the return was 2,616, and, but for the serious epidemic, or, rather, succession of epidemics, which have visited the district, causing many withdrawals, the roll number would have stood higher than on any previous occasion. For similar reasons the working average shows a gradual decline, falling from 1,915 in March to 1,800 in December, or fourteen less than that of the 31st December, 1886, which return was the highest for that year. If the returns of both years be compared, a decided improvement of 4 per cent. is apparent, thus putting beyond question the constant increase in the number and quality of the attendance. This percentage of increase has augmented the revenue of the Board for the year by the sum of £500. While it is very gratifying to direct attention to this result, or to the steady rise of the Board's income from £5,726 to £7,369 during my four years' connection with the district, there still remains much to be done to bring the attendance to a satisfactory basis, because the reductions of the present year will press very heavily, and cannot but seriously affect the Board's relations with the teachers, whose incomes will now depend to a very great extent upon the regularity of attendance at their schools. The greatest credit is due to the New Plymouth School Committee for the very active measures used to enforce better attendance, through the compulsory clauses of the Education Act. Were several country Committees, in whose districts a great deal of indifference exists, to move in the same direction, there would be less refusals to meet their numerous applications for assistance. I notice in the quarterly returns the names of 134 scholars that in no single instance made sixty attendances in any one quarter of the year. In order to influence an improved attendance, the mean percentage of attendance on the mean roll number for the first three quarters is given in table form. [Not reprinted.] It is to be hoped that the low returns in several instances will not be repeated, nor call for any further comment on this subject be required.

Tables 1 and 2 show the necessary information required by the department. In standards 1,527 were presented, and 863 in the preparatory classes, or a total of 2,390 presented. There are 130 returned as absent and 416 excepted. The passes of the year, 876, exceed 765, those of last year. The failures are nearly alike, 416, against 413 for 1886. Better results were expected, but for the reasons already given the work has suffered much interruption, especially during the last four months of the year. A slight advance, showing improvement, of 2 per cent. is made both on the percentage of failures and the percentage of passes. As a test of the quality of the work, I was able, through the courtesy of Mr. Inspector Petrie, of Otago, to use questions that had been given in that district. The results are satisfactory, and to some extent show the character of my marking and treatment during the past few years. A percentage of 67 per cent., as against Otago's 77 per cent. on the number examined, is at least hopeful; and, though some of our best schools have rather lowered than raised it, there can be no doubt but that the teaching in many of the country schools is surely improving in the methods best fitted to develop the intelligence of the

Class and additional subjects have been more fully recognised in the work of the year, and with results beyond my expectation. The returns of the first show an increase of 11 per cent., and the latter 16 per cent. In two or three cases only was the work avoided in one or more subjects,