

Dobson, Hatters, and Notown. All passed, eight passing with credit; seven of these belonged to the Greymouth School.

DISTRICT HIGH SCHOOL.—The work of the higher class commenced in July, 1887, under the care of Mr. W. H. A. Craddock, and, considering the short period of work, the results of the examination may be considered very good. Eleven scholars were presented for examination. The best work was shown in Latin and Euclid; but all subjects showed fair progress.

COMPARISON OF RESULTS.—Comparing the results generally with those of 1886, we find that the percentage of passes on the number presented in standards is 1·5 lower, and the percentage of passes on the standard subjects is 7 lower. Considering, however, the influence exercised by one or two exceptionally unfortunate schools, I am of opinion that the results are, on the whole, quite on a par with those of last year. Notwithstanding such drawbacks as irregular attendance, insufficient floor and desk accommodation, and limited staff, with a too frequently recurring anxiety as to reduction of income, the teachers in this district have worked diligently and well, and deserve the thanks of the Board for their efforts. In my last report I referred to the possibility of evil resulting from the desire on the part of teachers and parents for large percentages. When satisfied that no effort will be spared to prevent his being misjudged by inexpert critics, I find the teacher readily amenable to reason: with the parent, however, it is different. Those who will exhibit the greatest apathy during the year as to their children's attendance will probably be aggressively anxious at examination time that the latter should pass. This results from the mistaken tendency to look upon the pass as the end and aim of all school work.

GENERAL.—At the time that I replied to the circular from the Education Committee I was unable to give the various points referred to in the circular much consideration. I will now take the opportunity of going a little more into detail in one or two subjects. I stated in my reply that I considered the present programme of instruction to be on the whole a satisfactory one, and am still of that opinion. The difficulty is not so much with the programme itself as to the general application of it to all classes of schools alike. I am quite sure that the solitary teacher of a country school would do very much more useful and generally better work if the list of pass subjects were for him reduced, and greater freedom given to him as to choice of class and optional subjects. As to the process by which the fitness for promotion is tested, I think there is room for considerable improvement. Before proceeding to suggest a remedy, I may briefly state the evils which my experience of the system leads me to think may result from it. Cram, rote teaching, and superficial work are the principal. Parents and scholars are both apathetic about attendance at the commencement of the year, and though I certainly cannot say that it is so with the teachers generally, yet the temptation exists for them also to take matters easily in the early stage. Indifference at the beginning brings hurried, superficial work at the end of the year. The nervousness and excitement observable among the scholars may be regarded as the reflected influence of this mental bugbear upon the teacher himself, for he may abstain from any direct reference to the approaching examination, and yet impart a share of his own worry to the pupils. I would suggest that some such plan as the following be adopted: That Standards I. and II. be promoted solely on the record of the year's work kept by the teacher, subject to the opinion of the Inspector as to the general condition of these classes; such opinion to be based partly on the impression made at the visit of inspection and partly on the result of oral questioning at the examination. No results to be recorded for these classes. For Standards III. to VI. a careful record to be kept of the work of the year, and at the examination the record percentage and the examination percentage to be added together, and the mean average percentage taken as the result, subject possibly to the attainment of percentages to be fixed upon for certain leading subjects. The fact of the yearly record becoming a factor in the matter would have a decidedly beneficial effect upon the attendance, and would tend to remove any temptation to cram. It is commonly remarked by teachers that the pupils upon whom they place the greatest reliance often fail them on examination day, and this is doubtless owing to worry and nervousness. The knowledge of having a good yearly record to fall back upon would help the scholar greatly to resist these feelings. Of course, the successful working of such a system requires thorough efficiency in the teacher, and his removal from the slightest suspicion of local influence. I do not pretend to any originality in connection with these suggestions. The test method recommended is largely in operation in the primary schools of America, and is gradually extending. Attached hereto are Tables I. to IV. [Tables II. to IV. not reprinted], and a report giving full particulars as to each school in the district.

I have, &c.,

The Chairman, Education Board, Greymouth.

E. T. ROBINSON, Secretary.

SUMMARY of RESULTS for the WHOLE DISTRICT.

Standard Classes.			Presented.	Absent.	Excepted.	Failed.	Passed.	Average Age of those that passed.
								Yrs. mos.
S 7	...	...	13	...	...	...	...	...
S 6	...	...	54	13	2	12	27	14 5
S 5	...	...	113	11	4	39	59	12 11
S 4	...	...	222	22	12	67	121	12 6
S 3	...	...	219	13	14	52	140	10 9
S 2	...	...	223	13	13	45	152	9 7
S 1	...	...	227	14	12	24	177	8 5
P	...	...	442	...	...	...	...	...
Totals			1,513	86	57	239	676	*

* Mean of average age, 11 years 5 months.