

satisfactory attendance, there should be no taint of cram at all, for steady honest study all the year round will overtake all that is required, and even more. That this is so is evidenced, among other things, by the fact that the elder pupils of the district high schools do all the syllabus work as well as those of other schools of the same size, and a large amount of extra work besides. There are even schools in which the geography and history of the higher standards are worked up almost exclusively during the second half of the year, and that with no noticeable deficiency in the knowledge of these subjects. As a rule, a good teacher will not try to cram his pupils: it does not pay him to do so. It is only the indolent and the incapable who are willing to trust to such a process. Those who trifle away the earlier part of the year may find the time left insufficient for thorough and intelligent study of the work prescribed; but, except in a very small proportion of schools, a capable teacher, who works honestly and steadily week by week, will have no great difficulty in taking his classes over all that is required without strain or pressure, and in a way that will promote in a high degree the mental training of his pupils. It seems to be a common mistake to postpone revising till the examinations are approaching. In a well-conducted school the work of revisal will be pretty evenly distributed throughout the whole year, and not concentrated into a spurt of high and unhealthy pressure at its close. To the latter practice, and to the excitement which it generates, a great many failures are unquestionably due, and it is probably the chief cause of the suspicion that the work is rushed through without that mental assimilation which is a condition of all educative study.

We have, &c.,
D. PETRIE,
W. TAYLOR,
P. GOYEN,
Inspectors.

The Secretary, Otago Education Board.

SOUTHLAND.

SIR,— Education Office, Invercargill, 23rd March, 1888.
I have the honour to submit my general report for the year 1887. I entered on the performance of my duties as Assistant Inspector on the 12th March. Between that date and the middle of December I examined and reported upon ninety schools, and paid fifteen visits of inspection. The rest of my time was fully occupied with office work, and with the usual examination of pupil-teachers and of scholarship candidates. Five schools—namely, those at Wendonside, Mandeville, Mossburn, Mokoreta, and Redan—were opened during the year, and were therefore not visited by me for the purpose of examination. One school, that at Athol, was closed temporarily when I was prepared to examine it. The following table gives a summary of the examination results for the year for the whole district:—

Standard Classes.			Presented.	Absent.	Excepted.	Failed.	Passed.	Average Age of those that Passed.	
									Yrs. mos.
S 7	...	...	29	...	...	...	...	...	...
S 6	...	...	98	1	1	25	71	14	9
S 5	...	...	336	10	15	132	179	13	6
S 4	...	...	637	41	58	176	362	12	7
S 3	...	...	1,076	55	89	290	642	11	8
S 2	...	...	1,075	65	52	86	872	10	5
S 1	...	...	1,167	53	28	50	1,036	9	6
P.	...	...	2,943	...	...	...	...	...	...
Totals ...			7,361	225	243	759	3,162	*	

* Mean of average age, 12 years 1 month.

From the above table it will be seen that of the 7,361 on the examination schedules, 4,389 were entered for examination in standards. A total of 4,164, or about 95 per cent., attended; and of these 3,162, or nearly 76 per cent., passed in the standards for which they were presented. But from the number actually examined there must be deducted 243 scholars "excepted" on account of irregularity of attendance. When this deduction is made the percentage of passes rises to 80.

In the examination-report schedules, which contain an arithmetical expression of the Inspector's estimate of the efficiency of individual schools, there are two items which, to many members of Committees, and even to a few teachers in this district, are still somewhat misleading. I refer to the terms "percentage of passes" and "percentage of failures." I observe that some Committees use the former as a means of comparing their schools with others. For the purposes of such comparison the percentage of passes, as computed for the examination-report schedule, is quite useless, seeing that it has reference not to the number of children actually examined, but to the whole number enrolled. Take the cases of the following schools:—

School.			Number on School Register.	Presented and Passed in Standards.	Percentage of Failures.	Percentage of Passes.
			I.	II.	III.	IV.
Mabel	...	...	56	14	0	25
Slopedown	...	...	17	14	0	82