

have been made upon the teachers. Whatever I have asked for—and more—has been complied with in some of our schools, and there is no reason why it should be shirked in the rest. “What man has done man can do.” And I am not altogether without hope that by dint of sharp and continual reminders I shall eventually bring it to pass that those who persist in doing their work in a slipshod and perfunctory fashion will either amend their ways or quit the service. The public clearly has a right to the best services procurable for its money, and I reckon confidently on the loyal support of the Board in my endeavours to bring about a better state of things.

I subjoin my usual estimate of the state of each school when it was last examined. [Not reprinted.]

The Chairman, Marlborough Education Board.

I have, &c.,

W. C. HODGSON.

SUMMARY OF RESULTS FOR THE WHOLE DISTRICT.

Standard Classes.	Presented.	Absent.	Excepted.	Failed.	Passed.	Average Age of those that passed.	
						Yrs.	mos.
Above Standard VI. ...	20	...	...	...	...	...	...
Standard VI. ...	70	5	3	16	46	14	0
" V. ...	149	9	11	26	103	13	1
" IV. ...	202	20	15	43	124	12	0
" III. ...	245	14	14	43	174	11	1
" II. ...	270	4	15	46	205	10	2
" I. ...	202	11	7	34	150	9	1
Preparatory ...	668	...	...	...	...	...	...
Totals ...	1,826	63	65	208	802	*	

* Mean of average age, 11 years 7 months.

NELSON.

SIR,—

31st December, 1889.

I have the honour to lay before you my report on the Nelson public schools for the year 1889.

Ninety-one schools were at work at the close of the year. When the schools were examined 5,741 scholars were on the rolls, 5,404 being present on those occasions. The absentees numbered 337. The number of children on the roll at the end of the September quarter (the latest for which returns have been sent in) was 5,801, being an increase of 319 on last year's return.

On the whole—with a few grievous exceptions which will be specially dealt with in the detailed account of each school—our schools may fairly be said to have come creditably out of the ordeal of an examination which in several respects was certainly somewhat more stringent than any of its predecessors. In this favourable estimate every one of the factors that go to make up the sum of what is meant by a well-conducted school has been taken into account. The honest endeavours of the majority of our teachers to remedy the admitted defects pointed out in last year's report also deserve recognition.

In one important particular—the relative prominence given to the record of passes and failures—an entirely new departure has been taken in this report. I have for some time felt that my frequent references to these matters, however modified by protests against undue importance being attached to them, have largely contributed towards the wider spreading of the mistake of regarding the percentage of passes and failures as the sole criterion of the success of a school. It is high time that so mischievous and far-reaching a fallacy were put an end to. On this occasion the intolerable jargon of the standards shall not be repeated. The words “strong” and “weak pass,” “failure,” or “percentage of passes” shall find no place in the body of this report. Those who, after the experience of the last twelve years, are still curious about such things, and who still believe that the exact equivalent of so complex a machine as a school can be found in a simple numerical expression, are referred to the prodigiously long and elaborate set of tables appended to this report [not reprinted]. That they may find some difficulty in getting at their gist, and may feel encumbered by the wealth of information set before them, is no fault of mine. Those, on the other hand, who recognise that a comparative statement of the number of scholars able to satisfy the bare minimum of requirement of the regulations is only one—and by no means the most important—element in determining the actual condition of any school will rest content with my brief but carefully-drawn-up estimate of the state of each school when it was last examined. Included in that estimate, though not always directly referred to, they will find, in addition to the results of mere standard-work, due weight given to such vital matters as the general tone of the school, the intelligence of the scholars, their alertness in carrying out instructions, their behaviour to their teachers and to one another. They will find, also, some recognition of the teacher's power of interesting and influencing his children, of his making the best use of his time, and his readiness to adopt the latest and most approved methods of teaching.

Whether the conclusions at which I have deliberately arrived on these and other matters square with those formed by Inspectors in other districts—it may well be, under widely different conditions—is to me a matter of indifference. No transferring of Inspectors, however frequent or vexatious; no painfully ingenious endeavours to define by regulations the indefinable, will, fortunately, bring about that uniformity for which the *doctrinaires* of the day are perpetually hankering. Until something approaching to a Babbage's machine does for inspection what that invention was