

the most valuable results of earnest teaching and training—those which exercise the most beneficial influence on the future lives of the scholars who are fortunate enough to be the subjects of such training—cannot be gauged by any literary examination nor be exhibited in the most elaborate tabulated statements. I have, however, found by experience, what indeed might be expected, that the teacher who recognises to the fullest extent the serious responsibility of his office is not unfrequently as successful in the ordinary school-work as other teachers perhaps more highly gifted intellectually but with a less exalted conception of their duties. In attempting to compare one school with another by reference to the figures set forth on Table 3 [not reprinted], regard must be paid to the conditions under which they are respectively conducted, the size of the school, the number of teachers employed, the number of standard classes, the age of the scholars, the number below Standard I., and, most important, perhaps, of all, the results of the previous examination, with the number of scholars who, having failed, are again presented in the same standard. It is, for instance, somewhat misleading to say, of any school that shows a good result after a lamentable breakdown at the previous examination, that “a great improvement is manifest” unless it can be shown that all or most of those who failed the year before have still been advanced to the next higher standard. At the beginning of 1891, when, for reasons known to the Board, it was resolved to postpone the examination to the end of the year, I addressed a circular to all the teachers recommending them to promote to higher standards such scholars as they believed would have passed if the examination had taken place as usual at the beginning of the year. I have endeavoured to ascertain how far this recommendation was adopted; and the following are, as far as I know, the numbers so promoted in the schools named:—

	Presented.	Promoted.	Percentage.
Blenheim Boys' and Juniors' ...	237	198	84 per cent.
Blenheim Girls' ...	165	119	73 "
Picton ...	103	27	20 "
Havelock ...	61	24	39 "
Renwick ...	59	6	10 "
Spring Creek ...	23	23	100 "
Kaituna ...	19	1	51 "
Canvastown ...	24	9	37 "
Grovetown ...	63	13	21 "
Waitohi ...	62	36	58 "
Fairhall ...	42	11	26 "
Okaramio ...	30	30	100 "
Springlands ...	54	26	48 "
Tuamarina ...	54	25	46 "

The Board's schools not included in the above list retained all their scholars in the standards they were working in at the beginning of the year. Since the promotion of scholars without examination was entirely optional, and was to be confined to those scholars only who were considered by their teachers to be prepared to pass the standard in which they had been taught for a whole year, the fact of some unsuccessful schools having promoted the whole or a large number of their scholars constitutes a very slight palliation of their shortcomings, since it betrays a lamentable want of judgment, or a culpable ignorance of the actual condition of their schools. It is, however, only fair to point out that at the schools earliest examined the promoted scholars had been not more than nine months in their respective standard classes.

From Table 4 [not reprinted] it will be seen that the reading throughout the district is decidedly good; and doubtless the trenchant criticism of this subject in the last report of my predecessor has had the effect of directing more attention to this very important item of the syllabus.

Writing and spelling occupy the second and third places respectively in the order of merit, and may be called satisfactory, the tests employed in the latter subject being tolerably severe. During my inspection visits I generally take the opportunity of examining the exercise-books and copy-books, and at the principal school in the district I was far from satisfied with their condition, and criticized severely the quality of the writing in my inspection report. I am glad to be able to say that a most satisfactory improvement has since been effected, and I hope will be maintained in this portion of the school work.

Geography occupies the lowest place in the list of pass-subjects, the mapping throughout the district being generally inferior and sometimes execrable. I have noticed elsewhere that this subject has been generally less satisfactory since it was made a “class”-subject in Standards II. and IV., and possibly this may be something more than a mere coincidence. I am not prepared to state that the two facts stand in the relation of cause and effect, but a perfunctory treatment of the subject in Standard IV. would certainly militate against a satisfactory proficiency in the higher standards.

In arithmetic the percentage of passes can scarcely be considered satisfactory when the amount of time usually devoted to this subject is taken into account. In the Fourth Standard I was surprised how very few scholars attempted the “bill” which they were required to make out, and of these only a small minority were successful in obtaining the correct total. Considering the practical importance of this part of the work, especially in the case of boys and in the “Standard of exemption,” it is to be regretted that more attention is not paid to it; and, in order to bring about an improvement in this respect, I intend in the future to make it compulsory to attempt this question. In the First and Second Standards the questions bearing on the aliquot parts of the current coins and the relative length of the yard, &c., were pretty generally avoided altogether. This also it will not be safe to do in future.

The measure of success achieved in grammar and composition was largely due to the latter, which was fairly well done at most of the Board's schools—the formal grammar reducing the