

is not unfrequently the result of a general relaxation of work for which the teachers and parents are equally responsible. I believe that at some schools the regular and systematic progress of the school work does not commence directly after the examination, but is postponed from day to day, or from week to week, because of the bad attendance which sometimes prevails immediately after the holidays, or the examination, and this, becoming a kind of tradition of the school, perpetuates and aggravates the very evil which is made the excuse for this waste of time. Such a course of action is, moreover, most unjust to those who do attend regularly during the first quarter, since they, as well as the absentees, have to make up for lost time by working more or less at "high pressure" during the latter part of the year, when the examination is approaching.

If the disturbing and retarding force of irregular attendance throughout the colony (for the same complaint comes from all parts of it) could be accurately gauged, I believe it would be found that fully one-half of all the teaching-power in the primary schools is literally thrown away. It is to be hoped, therefore, that the present so-called compulsory clauses of the Act will be amended in such a way as to render them something more than a mere bugbear, and, in addition, a regulation should be added similar to one formerly in force in Nelson and Westland, forbidding admission to the examination to those who failed to attend, say, 300 half-days between any two annual examinations. An additional incentive to regularity might be found by fixing a high minimum of attendance as a condition of admission to a scholarship examination, and perhaps some improvement might be effected by the adoption of some form of certificate of attendance more attractive in appearance and better worth gaining and keeping than the shabby square of printed pasteboard, which at present is provided, but seldom claimed, as a reward for regularity.

The scale of payment to teachers adopted by the Board some time back, but as yet only very partially applied, is calculated to give head-teachers and assistants an additional motive for doing their best to secure regularity of attendance, as under that scale every addition to the average attendance adds to the teachers' salaries, and *vice versa*. I am, therefore, inclined to recommend the immediate application of the scale in all cases, but with a re-adjustment of capitation, in order to guard against loss to old and deserving servants of the Board.

Conclusion.—The conclusions I have arrived at as to the condition of the primary schools in this district may be thus summarised: 1. That most of the larger schools, notwithstanding a somewhat larger number of failures in them this year, are in a very satisfactory condition. 2. That a few others, though this year's "harvest" was not so good as former ones, may be regarded as having had, what every occupation and pursuit is liable to, a period of depression, from which no doubt they will emerge with their wonted success at the next examination. 3. That in those schools that have changed hands since the last examination, a most urgently-needed improvement has set in, which will, I believe, be more manifest next year. 4. That at the schools referred to in the "confidential" portion of this report, some radical alteration is necessary. 5. That in a few others improvement is desirable, and will be looked for at the next examination. 6. That a few of the aided schools did very badly, chiefly owing to changes of teachers. 7. That some of the small aided schools are doing most satisfactory work. 8. And, lastly, that, taking the district as a whole, the general results of the examination show a decided improvement upon those of last year.

I have, &c.,

The Chairman, Board of Education, Wellington.

JOHN SMITH, Inspector.

SUMMARY OF RESULTS FOR THE WHOLE DISTRICT.

Classes.			Presented.	Absent.	Excepted.	Failed.	Passed.	Average Age of those that passed.
								Yrs. mos.
Above Standard VI.	...	...	31	...	...	...	...	...
Standard VI.	...	...	66	3	...	4	59	13 10
" V.	...	...	145	8	6	41	90	13 7
" IV.	...	...	219	10	16	54	139	12 9
" III.	...	...	274	12	16	78	168	12 1
" II.	...	...	289	14	7	21	247	10 6
" I.	...	...	297	8	7	42	240	8 10
Preparatory	...	...	670	...	...	...	...	...
Totals	...	...	1,991	55	52	240	943	11 11*

* Mean of average age.

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