

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.	...	...	6	...	...	...	...	...
Standard VI.	...	...	50	2	2	14	32	14 6
" V.	...	...	179	18	8	47	106	13 6
" IV.	...	...	264	16	15	86	147	12 8
" III.	...	...	442	30	42	87	283	11 7
" II.	...	...	353	18	31	32	272	10 3
" I.	...	...	361	24	23	36	278	9 3
Preparatory	...	...	1,042	...	...	...	...	...
Totals	...	...	2,697	108	121	302	1,118	11 11*

* Mean of average age.

WANGANUI.

SIR,—

Education Office, Wanganui, 28th February, 1893.

We have the honour to submit our report on public education in the Wanganui District for the year ended the 31st December, 1892.

NUMBER OF SCHOOLS ; ROLL-NUMBER ; ATTENDANCE.—At the close of the school-year ninety-five schools were in active operation, with an average weekly roll-number of—males, 4,353 ; females, 4,040 ; total, 8,393 : and an average attendance of—males, 3,322 ; females, 3,043 ; total, 6,365. The roll-number is 228 higher, and the average attendance 471 higher, than in the last quarter of 1891. For the four quarters of the year the mean average weekly roll-number was 8,368, and the average attendance 6,104, the former showing an increase of 144, and the latter a decrease of thirty-seven for the twelve months. At first sight it seems strange that, considering there are four more schools this year than in 1891, and that settlement is so rapidly progressing in the district, the roll-number shows such a small increase. We know, however, that to some extent this is accounted for by the fact that the majority of those parents who have taken up new land have simply gone further back in the bush, and that, consequently, their children went merely from one school to another.

The average attendance for the year expressed as a percentage of the roll-number barely reaches 73 per cent. This is very low indeed, and shows a decrease for the year of 1·7 ; while it is 7·3 lower than the percentage for the thirteen districts in 1891, and 10·3 lower than that for Otago. Certainly the attendance was most seriously affected by diphtheria, which was very prevalent for quite six months. On account of this epidemic one school was closed for just a whole quarter at a time, and later on for some weeks ; another school for eleven successive weeks ; and so on with others for varying periods. The fact of the Board's capitation grant for one quarter falling over £500 will give a good idea of how the attendance was affected by this disease. Putting epidemics aside, however, the attendance in this district, as all are well aware, has ever been far from regular. A few months back the Board, with a view to improve it, resolved to request the police to act as truant officers, and to reward them with a certain sum per head on the increase in the average attendances of the schools.

Irregularity in attendance is the greatest bane of the enthusiastic skilful teacher, but is often a valuable friend to the incompetent one. Bad roads and long distances to travel do not always account for it, for we often noticed, when looking over the registers of the schools, that families who are the worst offenders as regards bad attendance are the most favoured in both these respects. To our mind, teachers might do a great deal to improve the average attendance by making their schools as attractive as possible, by establishing in their pupils' minds happy associations with the duties and employments of every day (a valuable factor in the training for after-life), and by fostering among their pupils a feeling of loyalty and pride in everything—work, conduct, sports, &c.—connected with the school which they attend.

STAFF.—The ninety-five schools were officered as follows : Principal teachers, 41 ; sole teachers in charge of schools, 54 ; assistant teachers, 30 ; pupil-teachers, 71 ; probationers, 4. A relieving teacher also was employed during the year. In our last annual report we wrote : " We consider the average attendance—fifty—now required at a small school before the first pupil-teacher is appointed is too high ; at all events, if the six standards are represented at the school." The Board has since kindly lowered the required average to forty, but, as it is demanded that this average be maintained for two quarters before the addition to the staff is made, the concession is not as great as appears at first sight, or as we should like to see.

INSPECTIONS.—All the schools were duly inspected, with the exception of two aided (or, rather, "household") schools, three schools opened during the latter half of the year, and Bull's and Hawera Schools. In all, eighty-eight visits were paid. Bull's and Hawera were closed, owing to diphtheria, when the Inspectors were in the district, and time did not admit of special visits being made.

EXAMINATION IN STANDARDS.—Of the ninety-five schools in operation at the end of the year, all open for twelve months, or ninety, were examined in standards. This number shows an increase of