

Four of the uncertificated teachers hold licenses to teach. Of thirty-seven probationers four are fully certificated, and these undoubtedly could have obtained permanent employment had they desired it. Our whole probationer system needs remodelling, special consideration being given to the following particulars: Selection, scope of examination, practical training and determination of engagement. We are pleased to note that recent accessions to our teaching staff have consisted almost entirely of young, willing, energetic, and intelligent teachers from whom good work may be expected in the future.

As a result of the year's operations the district as a whole appears to better advantage, but we cannot yet congratulate the schools upon any very widespread improvement. We confess that the arithmetic especially has proved disappointing, when we take into consideration the large number of pupils who have been re-presented for the same standard examinations, and the fact that in many schools special attention has been paid to this one subject to the neglect of others. In the case of eleven schools our reports have expressed such dissatisfaction with the results and with the methods of instruction that in four instances these strictures have already led to a change of teachers, which we are confident will conduce to greater efficiency. The schools which have been most successful this year, and from which it would be almost unreasonable to expect better work, have proved to be Waimangaroa, Motupipi, Lower Moutere, Addison's Flat, Westport Girls', Lower Takaka, Motueka, Charleston, Wai-iti, Lower Wakefield Boys', Waimea West, and Caplestone. Of the small schools under sole teachers we specially commend Ferntown, Merrijigs, Summerlea, Upper Motupiko, Kongahu, Sunnyside, Anatoki, Gordon, and Brighton.

The following table, being an abstract of the annual return, gives a general summary of results for the whole district:—

Classes.				Presented.	Present.	Passed.	Average Age of those that passed.
							Yrs. mos.
Above Standard VI.	...	...	...	147	...	...	...
Standard VI.	...	...	...	450	439	333	13 10
" V.	...	...	...	509	494	324	13 2
" IV.	...	...	...	792	762	550	11 3
" III.	...	...	...	868	841	631	11 1
" II.	...	...	...	811	785	713	9 7
" I.	...	...	...	787	748	688	8 10
Preparatory	...	...	...	1,669	...	...	...
Totals	...	...	...	6,033	4,069	3,239	11 3*

These figures, when analysed and compared with those of last year, show an improvement in every class examined by the Inspectors, and especially in Standards VI. and IV., whilst in Standard V., decidedly the weakest this year, there has been but little advancement. The pass list is consequently higher, being now 79 per cent. of the number present as compared with 74 per cent. in 1894, which, so far as the numerical record can be taken into account, is an indication of progress.

In the number of children (221) who were over eight years of age and yet not presented for Standard I. we find little variation as compared with previous years, and we feel quite satisfied with the reasons usually given for non-presentation. Irregularity of attendance fully accounts for seventy-five, and shortness of school life for sixty-nine, seventy-five being returned under the head of "exceptional dulness." For two the very reasonable excuse was given that they were the children of foreigners and possessed very little knowledge of English.

The indiscriminate passing by head-teachers of children in Standards I. and II., of which we complained last year, has in some cases had a disastrous effect upon the work of Standard III., but a perusal of the papers set this year has satisfied us that as a rule carefully-prepared and more searching tests are now being applied.

The following list of subjects in which most failures occurred shows their comparative difficulty so far as the Inspectors' tests are concerned, and may prove of interest to teachers:—

	Number present.	Reading.	Composition.	Geography.	Spelling.	Arithmetic.
Standard VI.	439	16	15	51	44	227
" V.	494	29	48	76	94	282
" IV.	762	46	87	134	128	307
" III.	841	78	50	153	225	249
	2,536	169	200	414	491	1,065

The failures in arithmetic still greatly exceed those in any other subject, being in fact nearly equal to those in all other subjects put together; but, as the arithmetical tests are set by the Inspector-General, and the scale for judging them is also prescribed by him, it is evident that the heavy record of standard failures cannot fairly be attributed to undue severity on the part of your Inspectors.

We append a brief criticism on the treatment which the different subjects in the syllabus receive:—

* Mean of average age.