

According to the Board's regulations, a boy or girl who has passed Standard VI. has a sufficient literary equipment to enter upon the pupil-teachers' course. To our thinking the literary equipment denoted by such a pass is, in most cases, very inadequate, and in the amended regulations we intend shortly to submit to the Board we propose making it compulsory on all candidates for the office of pupil-teacher to undergo a literary as well as a practical examination. This will add considerably to our work, but it is, we feel sure, work well worth doing.

We have, &c.,

The Secretary, Education Board, Otago.

P. GOYEN,
W. S. FITZGERALD, } Inspectors.

SOUTHLAND.

SIR,—

Education Office, Invercargill, 30th January, 1896.

We have the honour to lay before the Board our report on the state of primary education in this district for the year ended the 31st December, 1895.

All the schools in the district were examined, the total number, including the five Roman Catholic schools, being 138; all were also inspected, except two or three that were closed for sufficient reasons when we were in their respective districts. The departmental examinations for teachers' certificates in January, the examination of pupil-teachers in June, the scholarship examination in December, and attention to the other matters that fall to be sifted by the hands of the Inspector, make the complement of our employment for the year.

A review of the educational work done in our primary schools during the past twelve months, so far as it came under our observation, leads us to speak approvingly of the present and hopefully of the future. There has been, we think, a genuine effort on the part of the majority of the teachers to make their schools more efficient in every department, an earnest desire to secure a good moral tone, as well as to cultivate intelligent method, wherein lie, as every true teacher knows, the alpha and the omega of school-keeping. That the teachers are not alone in the forward movement is shown by the fact that apparatus for the rational teaching of elementary science and object-lessons, as well as kindergarten gifts for the training of infants on natural principles, continue to be procured by the Committees for schools in every part of the district. Then, again, there is the establishment of the central technical school, from which in time there will no doubt be various offshoots. There is only wanting the establishment of an efficient art school to bring us into line with the most advanced educational districts in the colony.

The following table gives a summary of results in the standard subjects for the year for the whole district. The column headed "Present" shows the number actually examined in each standard, while the column headed "Passed" shows the number actually promoted on the result of the examination to higher standards:—

SUMMARY OF RESULTS FOR THE WHOLE DISTRICT.

Standard Classes.	Presented.	Present.	Passed.	Average Age of those that passed.
				Yrs. mos.
Above Standard VI.	155	...	...	...
Standard VI.	451	442	371	13 11
" V.	757	727	522	13 3
" IV.	1,333	1,241	892	12 3
" III.	1,428	1,369	1,073	11 5
" II.	1,341	1,305	1,235	9 7
" I.	1,188	1,150	1,086	8 9
Preparatory	2,830	...	...	...
Totals	9,483	6,234	5,179	11 11

Each pupil of Standard I. and Standard II. must satisfy the examiner in five subjects—namely, reading, spelling, drawing, writing, and arithmetic. The passes in these classes are awarded by the head-teachers, and, as our re-examination showed, the awards were, in by far the greater number of instances, made for substantial reasons. In a few schools, on the other hand, the power delegated to the teachers was certainly abused, and promotions were made that could be justified neither by the attainments of the pupils nor by any other circumstance whatever. It is to be feared that in dealing with this matter the better judgment of teachers sometimes gives way to more or less pressure on the part of parents, who are not infrequently blind to the fact that it is far better for a child to master thoroughly the elementary parts of school-work than to have an indifferent knowledge of more advanced parts. It may be in place here to note, (1) that only a relatively small proportion of pupils of eight years of age was withheld from presentation for Standard I., while for such as were withheld sufficient excuse was tendered, and (2) that the average age of passing has this year been lowered in every standard except the fourth.

Each pupil in Standard III. to Standard VI. must satisfy the examiner in seven subjects—namely, reading, spelling and dictation, writing, drawing, arithmetic, composition, and geography. Speaking generally, we are pleased with the instruction of the pupils and their attainments in all the subjects except arithmetic and geography—though, of course, in a large number of schools these subjects too are taught with enthusiasm and success.