

Much of the apparatus in the schools is old and out of date, and I am gradually supplying new maps and appliances where such are necessary. With the liberal amount set aside by the Board for this purpose I hope by the end of the year to have the schools fairly well equipped with up-to-date ordinary appliances, though much that is needful is beyond our means at present. Many of the teachers are themselves making excellent aids to teaching, which render the instruction more effective and at the same time less laborious. I have been surprised to see how little has been done in this respect, for by means of easily-made charts and diagrams much drudgery in the mere memory work of the school may be avoided. Dates in history, catches in tables, relative proportions of weights and measures, the written letters of the alphabet, and so on, should all be placed permanently before the pupils, who may thus learn without effort, and almost unconsciously, what otherwise would be crammed off in a manner injurious to themselves and irksome to the teacher. Another excellent aid is to place on the walls good samples of work, those done by the pupils being preferred if of sufficient merit. Forms of bills of parcels, forms of letter-writing, addresses on envelopes, and so on, will require little teaching if pupils see them daily, and the impressions made are not likely to be forgotten.

Pupil-teachers.—The examination of pupil-teachers was held in the Central School during the midwinter holidays. At the end of the year there were twenty-eight pupil-teachers in the employ of the Board. Some are doing really good work, and give promise of becoming skilful and efficient teachers. Since the examination a new syllabus has been drawn up, and in it more attention is given to the training in school management, both theoretical and practical. This practical instruction in school management is a matter which teachers seem to have overlooked, resting satisfied with the preparation of certain sections of a text-book, and giving little heed to the practical instruction before a class. At examination-time the pupil-teachers can give the good points of a lesson, and can name the errors to be avoided, but they do not assimilate the knowledge and make it their own, so as to be able to apply the principles. I have seen fourth-year pupil-teachers working without any methods at all, or by methods which are condemned in every book on school management, and which they would themselves condemn as faulty if asked at the annual examination. It must be remembered that "school management" enters into all departments of the school routine, and that text-books are studied for the purpose of giving increased skill *in actual teaching*, and not for mere examination purposes. In future at inspection the pupil-teachers will be required to give special lessons before me, and for the skill displayed there will be assigned marks which shall count towards a pass at the annual examination. I hope that at the expiry of their apprenticeships the pupil-teachers will have little difficulty in passing the certificate examination in school management, for if there is one subject more than another in which they should show proficiency it is school management.

Examination of Schools.—Of the fifty-four schools open at the end of the year fifty-two were examined. The examination of Waihi had to be postponed at the last moment, and the Ngariki School had been open for only a short time. On the days appointed for the examination 3,714 pupils were on the roll of the fifty-two schools examined, and of these 2,328 were presented in Standards I. to VI., twelve were presented in the class above Standard VI., and 1,374 were in the preparatory classes. Of the 2,328 presented in Standard I. to Standard VI., 2,198 were present, and 1,453 passed. No less than 130 pupils were absent from the examination, a number which seems to me too large. The number of pupils above Standard VI. was higher than it had previously been, being twelve for the year ending 1895, as compared with five for 1894. Ngaire and the Central, with three pupils each, had the largest classes. Few pupils remain in the Sixth Standard. Stratford had the largest class, containing ten pupils, while Inglewood presented only one pupil. Ngaire, a school with a roll of 175, presented as many as the Central, with a roll of 545; in the case of the latter the pupils, when they reach the higher classes, being sent by their parents to the High School.

The following table shows the summary of results for the district:—

Classes.	Presented.	Present.	Passed.	Average Age of those that passed.
				Yrs. mos.
Above Standard VI.	12	...	...	...
Standard VI.	68	65	42	14 4
" V.	218	204	105	13 10
" IV.	442	409	216	12 11
" III.	556	531	307	11 10
" II.	540	512	390	10 9
" I.	504	477	393	9 5
Preparatory	1,374	...	...	...
Totals	3,714	2,198	1,453	12 2*

Attendance.—I find that in 1892 there were 2,697 pupils on the rolls at the examinations, and that for 1895 the number had risen to 3,714, showing an increase of 1,017 in three years. This is some indication of the way in which the work of examination has grown during the last few years.

A more pleasing feature still is the increase in the percentage of pupils that attend regularly. In this district the average attendance has for years been the lowest in the colony, and, from whatever cause this may have arisen, whether from neglect on the part of parents, from bad roads, or

* Mean of average age.