

both to the bodily and mental health of the little ones. In the more populous centres, there is, besides the regular school concert, a constant succession of children's entertainments in connection with juvenile friendly societies, bands of hope, &c., the preparation for which keeps the youngsters in a perpetual round of excitement. This evil has been recently increased by the introduction of what is known as the "Kinderspiel," an entertainment to which the above remarks apply with ten-fold force. Complaints have been made by teachers of the injurious effect on their pupils which has resulted from the weeks of preparation for these plays.

Kindergarten Training.—Being convinced of the value of the Kindergarten system in training the eye and hand, and generally developing the powers of observation in the younger children, we are pleased to note that in the infant divisions of the Nelson City Schools and especially in the Tasman Street School, something has already been done in this direction by the spontaneous action of the teachers. It is hoped that the recent action of the Board in sending one of its teaching staff to Wellington for a course of training in this department of work, will ultimately be of great benefit to the infant divisions of our schools throughout the district.

The schools are, as a rule, very orderly and well conducted, and our general estimate of the training that the children have been receiving throughout the year justifies us in congratulating the Board upon a successful year.

We have, &c.,

G. A. HARKNESS, M.A., } Inspectors.
W. LADLEY, }

The Chairman, Education Board, Nelson.

GREY.

SIR,—

I have the honour to present my fourth annual report on the schools under the control of the Grey Education Board, for the year ending the 31st December, 1897.

At the close of the year there were twenty-nine schools in operation, that number being one in excess of the number returned for last year.

During the year inspection visits were paid to all the schools, reports being furnished and laid before you as usual. All the schools under the Board were examined, and I am pleased to be able to record a very satisfactory improvement in the results, the improvement being numerically represented by about $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. ; this is all the more gratifying, because I am convinced it has been brought about by earnest, conscientious, and capable teaching, and is not in any way due to an easier examination test. For some time I have been pleased to notice that teachers have been taking a more liberal view both of their duty to the children and of the regulations, and, as a consequence, the tendency to work, as it were, between the lines has been growing gradually less—in fact, anything approaching purely mechanical work has become rather an exception.

The following table gives a summary of results for this and the three previous years :—

Years.		Number of Schools in operation.	Presented for Examination.*	Presented in Standards.	Present in Standards.	Passed.	Percentage of Passes.
1894	...	24	1,644	1,024	995	696	69.9
1895	...	25	1,684	1,066	1,007	829	82.3
1896	...	28	1,650	1,068	1,040	862	82.8
1897	...	29	1,698	1,085	1,041	898	85.3

* Including infants and class above Standard VI.

It will be noticed in the above table that I have included the number of schools in operation at the end of each year. In referring to this increase in the number of schools it is perhaps advisable to remind the Board that four out of five schools added to the list are small and comparatively expensive, and although owing to the scattered population of the district they may be very necessary, yet they are maintained at a considerable loss to the Board, and it is quite evident their number cannot be increased indefinitely—unless some special provision be made for their support—without serious injury to the larger schools.

The following table gives a summary of results for each class :—

Standard Classes.				Presented.	Examined in Standards.	Passed.	Average Age of those that passed.
							Yrs. mos.
Above Standard VI.	...	...	...	48	...	...	...
Standard VI.	...	...	...	92	87	74	14 3
" V.	...	...	...	155	150	113	13 4
" IV.	...	...	...	209	197	157	12 4
" III.	...	...	...	226	219	182	11 5
" II.	...	...	...	220	210	205	10 3
" I.	...	...	...	183	178	167	8 10
Preparatory	...	...	...	565	...	...	...
Totals	...	...	...	1,698	1,041	898	11 8*

* Mean of average age.

I do not consider it necessary to refer every year to the treatment of all the subjects taught in the schools. I shall therefore confine myself to making a few remarks on those subjects which seem to call for special attention ; but first I wish to state that, speaking generally, I am highly