

upon which aid to such schools is granted—viz., that a schoolroom shall be provided “to the satisfaction of the Board.”

The examination of the schools in the Sounds County was delayed this year, with the intention of taking advantage of an offer made by the owner of the “Torea,” and to enable me to carry on the examinations as suggested in my last report, and approved by your Board. The “Torea,” unfortunately, could not be got ready in time, nor was any similar boat available. I was therefore conveyed to the several examination centres in an open boat as heretofore, excepting that the settlers were relieved from the duty of conveying me from place to place. I shall endeavour to make an arrangement this year to carry on the examination as contemplated, and, if successful, will submit the same for your approval. One of these schools missed the examination this year, being prevented by bad weather from reaching the rendezvous on the appointed day.

I have, &c.

The Chairman, Board of Education, Marlborough.

JOHN SMITH, Inspector.

SUMMARY OF RESULTS FOR THE WHOLE DISTRICT (exclusive of Private Schools).

Classes.	Presented.	Examined in Standards.	Passed.	Average Age of those that passed.
				Yrs. mos.
Above Standard VI.	52	...	...	...
Standard VI.	168	157	108	14 2
" V.	201	186	147	13 4
" IV.	319	301	240	12 6
" III.	311	300	255	11 5
" II.	239	230	222	9 11
" I.	230	223	218	8 11
Preparatory	615	...	...	...
Totals	2,135	1,397	1,190	11 8*

* Mean of average age.

NELSON.

SIR,—

6th February, 1899.

We have the honour to present the following report on the schools of the Nelson District for the year 1898 :—

One hundred and eighteen schools have been examined this year, the number including household schools which have been recently opened at Moutere Bluffs and Upper Stanley Brook. Those at Bedstead and Sandy Cove have been closed during the year, but a new district school at Miller-ton and household schools at McNabb's and Berlin's, that were established too late for examination, make the total number at work at the close of the year 120. Visits of inspection have been paid to 106 schools. On these occasions we found to our regret that considerable apathy is still apparent in the matter of enjoining regular attendance ; that in some schools certain subjects, such as object-lessons, had not been begun at the commencement of the school-year ; and that supervision during recess is not always systematically attended to. As a rule, the buildings and grounds were in good condition, but there is still a great deficiency in pictorial and instructive wall-decorations, and teachers often omit to use to advantage the means at their disposal for thoroughly ventilating the schoolrooms. The examination of certain private schools, with an aggregate attendance of 681, made some demands upon the time of the Inspectors. This year the list comprises St. Mary's Industrial Schools at Stoke and at Nelson, St. Mary's Parish School, St. Canice's School at West-port, the Sacred Heart School at Reefton, the Whakarewa Home, and the Bishop's School, Nelson.

The number on the rolls at the end of the September quarter was 5,992, the average attend-ance for the first three quarters being 4,869. We regret that this year, for the first time in our experience, we have to record a decrease in each of these items, the corresponding figures for the last year being 6,069 and 4,927. The falling-off is very general, but is particularly noticeable in the largest centres, Nelson City and Westport. We have repeatedly called attention to the low average attendance prevailing throughout the district, and were struck by the marked decrease shown in the returns for the December quarter, 1897. The March and December quarters usually show the lowest returns. Fruit-picking, harvesting, and hop-picking are perhaps the chief causes of the small average attendance for the March quarter, but even this might be to some extent remedied if all Committees were more careful about timing the hop-picking holidays. The falling-off in the December returns cannot be accounted for so satisfactorily. Except in parts of the district where children are detained for such industries as pea-picking and small-fruit gathering, the cause of the falling-off, which is a very general one, points to a more widespread evil. As soon as the examinations are over the children are apt to loose their keenness of interest, parents become less careful to insist upon regular attendance, and we fear that some teachers, too, relax their efforts and betray culpable negligence in this matter. They do not appear to recognise the importance of using every effort to secure regularity at this particular time, which is, in our opinion,