

dangered by the extremely limited character of the standard of attainment prescribed in Standards III., IV., and V., forming a very frail foundation for promotion. We have elsewhere made representations on the subject, and we earnestly trust that in this respect the scheme will be reconsidered in time to save the schools from starting a fresh career on a false basis.

We have, &c.,

L. B. WOOD, M.A.
W. J. ANDERSON, LL.D.
THOS. RITCHIE, B.A.

} Inspectors.

The Chairman, Board of Education, North Canterbury.

SOUTH CANTERBURY.

STR,—

Education Office, 26th February, 1890.

I have the honour to present my report on the schools in this district for the year 1899.

At the close of the year there were sixty-seven public schools in South Canterbury. The Geraldine Flat School, which was established eighteen years ago, was closed in the month of July, as it was recognised that it was no longer necessary; and the school-buildings and dwellinghouse were removed to the new district of Clandeboye and re-erected there. In the month of September a new school was opened at Salisbury, just after the annual examinations of the neighbouring schools were completed.

The number of public schools examined during the year was sixty-six, and these with the five Roman Catholic schools brought up the number of schools examined to seventy-one. The details of the examinations of the Roman Catholic schools show that the number presented was 703, the number present in the standards 425, and the number passed 369. The percentage of passes was 86·8 against 86·7 in the public schools; but it is a significant fact that the mean of the average ages in Standards I. to VI. is eleven years ten months against eleven years one month in the public schools.

The following table shows the examination results of the Board's schools for the whole district :—

Classes.	Presented.	Examined in Standards.	Passed.	Average Age of those that passed.
				Yrs. mos.
Above Standard VI.	150	...	...	...
Standard VI.	341	333	258	13 8
" V.	564	539	423	12 9
" IV.	743	726	585	11 8
" III.	681	656	549	10 8
" II.	625	613	601	9 5
" I.	590	578	572	8 7
Preparatory	1,408	...	...	...
Totals for 1899	5,102	3,445	2,988	11 1*
Totals for 1898	5,094	3,467	3,110	11 2*

* Mean of average age.

A comparison with a similar table in last year's report shows that the decrease in the number presented still continues, though in a less marked degree than formerly. When allowance is made for the inclusion of the Hakataramea School, which was not examined last year, the number presented this year is about thirty less than last year. The cutting-up of the large estates of Waikahi, Pareora, and Three Springs will bring into the district a large number of settlers, and the increased attendance at the neighbouring schools should more than counterbalance the falling off in attendance at schools in other parts of the district.

The number of pupils presented and examined in Standards I. to VI. is 3,445, as against 3,467 last year; and the number of pupils that passed in one or other of the standards is 2,988, as against 3,110 last year. The percentage of those that passed is 86·7; it was 89·7 last year. In Standards III., IV., V., and VI., the percentages of passes are 83, 81, 78, and 77; the corresponding figures for last year were 86, 83, 81, and 88. In every class the percentage is lower than last year, the greatest falling off being in Standard VI., a result that may be accounted for by the increased difficulty of the arithmetic tests furnished by the Education Department.

Of the 1,408 children in the preparatory classes, 180 were over eight years of age when the schools in which they were taught were examined; last year we had 184 out of 1,394. The number is not excessive, and the explanations furnished by the teachers appeared satisfactory.

The following table shows the number of pupils examined in Standards III., IV., V., and VI., and the number of passes gained in each of the pass-subjects by these standards, the percentage of passes being also stated in the following subjects, viz.: spelling and dictation, arithmetic, composition, and geography :—