

alive to the importance of this unspecified portion of their duties, and that as they realise the relief of escaping from the galling fetters of the standard pass they will have more heart, as well as more time, for what might then truly be called a "delightful task."

The old idea that the conduct of the children when outside the class-room is no business of the teachers has, I hope, quite disappeared; and I cannot call to mind a single instance of improper language or behaviour amongst the children in the playground or the immediate neighbourhood of the schools. The only weak spot that has come under my notice in connection with the management of our schools is that in a few cases an appearance of indifference and want of zeal in the service, which is crystallized in the old-fashioned expression "Come night, come ninepence," is produced when the teacher arrives at the school exactly at the hour of opening—sometimes a little later—and exhibits a corresponding alacrity in quitting the precincts directly the hour for closing arrives. Such conduct, although leaving no room for formal complaint, has nevertheless an unfavourable effect upon the school, as well as upon the general public, who are more observant of such matters than perhaps is generally supposed, and in such cases are apt to form opinions on the condition of the school more unfavourable than perhaps the circumstances really justify.

I have, &c.,

The Chairman, Education Board, Blenheim.

JOHN SMITH, Inspector.

SUMMARY OF RESULTS FOR THE WHOLE DISTRICT.

Classes.	Presented.	Present.	Passed.	Average Age of those that passed.
				Yrs. mos.
Above Standard VI. ...	70	...	...	...
Standard VI. ...	139	135	101	14 2
" V. ...	230	223	200	13 5
" IV. ...	266	255	227	12 4
" III. ...	291	280	252	11 1
" II. ...	273	268	249	9 8
" I. ...	247	241	225	8 6
Preparatory... ..	609	...	...	...
Totals	2,125	1,402	1,254	11 6*

* Mean of average age.

NELSON.

SIR,—

I have the honour to present the following report on the schools of the Nelson Educational District for the year 1900 :—

Owing to the illness of the junior Inspector during the examination time, and to the fact that the views expressed in the report are entirely my own, I have undertaken the sole responsibility of its drafting, though I am indebted to my colleague for most of the heavy labour of compiling the accompanying tables.

One hundred and twenty-four schools were at work during the last quarter of the year, and all but three small household schools have been examined. One of these had been recently established, and the children of a second were prevented by a flood from attending for examination at the nearest school. During the year household schools at Berlin's and Marahau have been closed, one at Wainui has been opened and closed, and three new ones—Tophouse, Oparara, and Aniseed Valley—have been opened, so that the total number is one higher than that recorded last year.

The total number of children in the schools of the district still continues to fall, as it has regularly done since 1897. This is a matter of grave concern, if viewed only in its financial aspect as directly affecting the revenue of the Board. A comparison of the returns for the same quarter of each of the two years in question shows that the decrease since 1897 represents a possible loss of £1,057 10s. in annual income. The average weekly number on the rolls for the September quarter of 1900 was 5,814, as against 5,934 in 1899. The two largest centres, Nelson and Westport, show decreases of twenty-four and thirty respectively, the totals for each being for this year 1,096 and 514.

It was pointed out last year that the average attendance in proportion to the roll-number had been slowly improving, the 81.1 per cent. for the year 1899 being the highest yet recorded here. I see by the report of the Minister of Education for that year that the slightly higher percentage here, combined with a falling-off elsewhere, enabled this district to take for regularity of attendance a rather higher place—the eighth among the thirteen educational districts of the colony; but I am by no means satisfied with the degree of regularity attained. It means merely that in this district at its best nineteen out of every hundred children are daily absent from school all the year round. The most regular attendances for the same year were recorded by Grey and Westland, with 87.2 and 85.7 per cent. respectively. When in this district, with its climatic advantages, such irregularity still prevails, one must perforce suspect the parents of much contributory negligence. For this year (1900) the percentage of average attendance is 81.2 per cent. In one of the appended tables I have again furnished a column showing the percentage that the average attendance at each