

The work of the Sixth Standard children, though not yet good, was more satisfactory ; but it is probably owing to the department's tests being of a more uniform and straightforward character that so many were able to work them successfully, the percentage of passes being the highest for that standard that this district has yet recorded. Standard V. arithmetic is always a difficult subject, probably because the child's mind has here to deal largely with numbers in the abstract ; but the great falling-off in the results this year is unaccountable, and certainly not, I think, due to any special difficulty in the nature of the cards.

Drawing, like geography, has now been made a class-subject in all classes except Standard VI., and I would rather that no exception had been made. I regret that geography should have been made a class-subject at all, and hope that the greater number of failures in Standard VI. geography is not an indication that the subject is already beginning to suffer from neglect. The other class-subjects comprise grammar, history, science, and object-lessons, recitation, and handwork. An approved course in the last-named subject may be substituted for any other class-subject except drawing. Its introduction marks a further advance in the direction of technical education. Except in the case of the nine schools whose preparatory and junior classes are trained in kindergarten exercises, no advantage has yet been taken of this innovation in the syllabus.

Recitation continues to be well and universally taught, and grammar shows a much-needed improvement, being reported now as satisfactory in twenty schools.

The only additional subjects are singing, needlework, and drill, and, as needlework is generally compulsory, and all the class-subjects are still expected from every school, very little choice is left to the female teacher of a small school, who necessarily teaches all classes, and certainly to her has come no lightening of the burden of an overweighted syllabus. Singing is taught in thirty-six schools, and drill in forty-two. The needlework has as usual at each school been examined by a lady or a committee of ladies appointed for the purpose, but considerable inconvenience was caused this year in some cases because their reports were not available on the examination-day. In consequence some went astray, and eleven of them are not yet to hand. I hope that teachers concerned will be more prompt and businesslike in future. The sewing was described as "fair" in ten schools, "satisfactory" in forty-one, "good" in nineteen, and "excellent" in twenty-three.

The cadet corps formed at the three largest schools—Nelson Central, Westport High School, and Reefton—have been supplied by the Education Department with dummy rifles, and are being successfully carried on. Military drill is taught in several other schools too, and especially well in three of the Waimea schools, the teachers being in all cases active and efficient members of Volunteer corps. Outdoor drill, either as physical exercises or in some other form, is taught in forty-four schools in all, and the training given has been considered satisfactory in twenty-seven.

During the winter months cookery classes in connection with the Toi Toi Valley School were successfully conducted, the arrangements having been made by the Nelson School Committee.

The examination report on the secondary class of the Westport High School has already been laid before the Board, and the school may be congratulated upon the success that has marked the work of this department. I am also pleased to notice that a pupil from the primary classes of the same school, who passed the Sixth Standard examination in September last, has won a Queen's scholarship, taking a high place in the competition conducted by the Victoria College authorities. For the second time in succession a candidate from this school has attained this distinction.

The serious illness of my colleague almost at the opening of the examination campaign made it necessary to obtain other assistance, which was generously granted by the Board. Six of the leading teachers in various parts of the district acted at different times as Assistant Inspectors, thereby relieving me of the task of examining for the most part the smaller schools, a duty which they, under my direction, readily undertook, and discharged with zeal and ability.

Mr. Ladley desires to thank the teachers and Committees for many expressions of sympathy, and joins with me in especially thanking the teachers who displayed such willingness to help, and the Committees who kindly granted them the necessary leave, since by their co-operation with the Board we were enabled to accomplish the arduous duty of examining the schools in all parts of the district.

I have, &c.,

G. A. HARKNESS, M.A., Senior Inspector.

The Chairman, Education Board, Nelson.

GREY.

GENTLEMEN,—

I have the honour to submit my annual general report on the schools subject to inspection in this district for the year ending 31st December, 1900.

Thirty schools were in active operation at the end of the year : of these, all were examined, and twenty-nine were inspected, the other one—viz., Orwell Creek—not being open at the time of my inspection visit. I also inspected and examined the four Roman Catholic schools in the district.

One new school was opened during the year—viz., that at Poerua Settlement.

The Chairman of the Board visited most of the schools during the year for the purpose of ascertaining the requirements of the district with regard to buildings, general repairs, and improvements. It is a matter of regret that one school was entirely burnt down and another was seriously injured by fire during the year. In each case no means for extinguishing fire were at hand, other-