

All this would, of course, take up time that cannot well be spared from the hours devoted to instruction, and would therefore encroach upon what certain teachers regard as their leisure moments; but, as I remarked in my first annual report for this district, a teacher whose heart is in his work and who is actuated by one of the highest motives of which human nature is capable—the desire to advance the moral and intellectual welfare of his fellow-creatures of the next generation—has no leisure hours so long as anything remains to be done for the benefit of his pupils and the furtherance of the cause of true education.

In the expectation of some alteration in the existing syllabus I have delayed recommending what is, I think, necessary—a special programme for work above Standard VI. Some amendments are also desirable in our pupil-teachers' regulations, which I have also postponed in the hope that some movement in the direction of a colonial system of training as well as of payment would shortly be made by the Department. As the Public-school Teachers' Salaries Act will make it necessary for the Board to revise all its regulations, these matters might receive attention at the same time.

I have, &c.,

The Chairman, Education Board, Blenheim.

JOHN SMITH, Inspector.

SUMMARY OF RESULTS FOR THE WHOLE DISTRICT.

Classes.				Number on Roll.	Present.	Passed.	Average Age of those that passed.
							Yrs. mos.
Above Standard VI.	...	...	...	58	...	...	...
Standard VI.	...	...	...	167	163	129	14 4
" V.	...	...	...	211	204	192	13 2
" IV.	...	...	...	264	252	230	12 1
" III.	...	...	...	283	275	253	10 9
" II.	...	...	...	257	253	242	9 7
" I.	...	...	...	240	237	230	8 7
Preparatory...	...	...	...	597	...	...	...
Totals	...	...	...	2,077	1,384	1,276	11 5*

* Mean of average age.

NELSON.

SIR,—

Education Office, 28th January, 1902.

We have the honour to lay before you the following report on the public schools for the year 1901:—

One hundred and twenty-two schools were at work during the last quarter of the year, and with the help of Mr. T. G. Malcolm, who acted as assistant Inspector for three months and a half, we were able to examine them all.

During the year three new schools were opened—at Upper Tadmor, Arnold's, and Maruia Station; but five others—Sunnyside, Ligar Bay, Scott's, Buller Ferry, and Owen Junction—have been closed, so that the total is two below that recorded last year. Visits of inspection have also been paid to ninety-three schools, it being found impossible during the first half of the year to reach all the small outlying settlements. The average weekly number on the rolls for the September quarter was 5,680, as compared with 5,814 in 1900, so that the annual decrease still continues, and to a greater extent than formerly. This falling-off was general throughout the colony for the years 1899 and 1900. This year the loss of numbers is most apparent in the gold-mining centres. In some coal-mining parts the school-rolls have grown larger with settlement.

The average attendance for the year has been 4,733, or 82·8 per cent. of the average weekly number on the rolls. This year the working average only has been kept—that is, days on which the attendance was less than half the number on the school-roll have not been taken into account. This we regret, as the strict average formed the fairer basis for estimating regularity of attendance and making comparisons between different schools. While the working average is retained as a basis for the payment of capitation, the fraction upon which it is calculated should, we consider, be not lower than three-fifths, or 60 per cent. As at present estimated, a large school, in which the attendance is generally regular, obtains little or no benefit from the retention of the working average, the attendance rarely, if ever, falling below half, so that the special provision for abnormal days of excessively bad weather, sudden epidemics, &c., acts by comparison as a handicap upon regularity of attendance. As a result of good attendance we naturally found that the best examination results were shown in schools where the attendance reached over 90 per cent. To see the reverse of the picture, and note how careless parents can be of the educational interests of their children, we have but to look at the attendance at Ngatimoti (67 per cent.). It is truly disheartening to conceive of an able teacher wearing himself out in the public service and receiving from the parents no more support than these figures would indicate.

The following is an extract from the report of the Minister of Education for the year 1900: "In regularity of attendance there has been an improvement in every district except in Nelson, which remains the same as in 1899, and Marlborough and Southland, which show a slight falling-off. In Grey and Westland the high figures which were attained in 1899—89 per cent. and 86·8 per cent. of the average roll-number respectively—have increased to 89·1 and 87·5 per cent. Otago, with an attendance of 86·9 per cent. of the number on the roll, stands at the head of the