

The very general improvements recently effected in their lot by the adoption of the colonial scale of salaries and other measures, with the expected adoption of a superannuation scheme in the near future, have considerably brightened the prospects of the members of the teaching profession, who are deservedly entitled to the nation's gratitude.

We have, &c.,

G. A. HARKNESS, M.A., } Inspectors.
D. A. STRACHAN, M.A., }

The Chairman, Education Board, Nelson.

GREY.

SIR,—

Education Office, Greymouth, 18th March, 1903.

I have the honour to present the following report on the schools of the Grey Education District.

The schools of the district were inspected by my predecessor about the middle of the year. On the 1st October I took up my duties as Inspector under your Board, and my report will therefore refer only to the examinations of the schools and the impressions formed during a somewhat hurried visit.

Thirty-one primary schools, three Catholic schools, the secondary class of the Greymouth District High School, scholarship candidates, and pupil-teachers were all examined.

The following table gives the general results of the public schools:—

Classes.					Number on Roll.	Present at Inspector's Annual Visit.	Passed.	Average Age of the Pupils in each Class.
								Yrs. mos.
Standard VII.	...	...	...	...	72	56	...	14 3
" VI.	...	...	...	...	128	120	93	14 0
" V.	...	...	...	...	151	132	122	13 1
" IV.	...	...	...	...	188	168	146	12 0
" III.	...	...	...	...	170	159	145	10 9
" II.	...	...	...	...	174	161	157	9 11
" I.	...	...	...	...	175	165	141	8 7
Preparatory	...	...	...	...	545	411	...	6 8
Totals	...	...	...	...	1,603	1,372	804	11 2*

* Mean of average age.

In the three Catholic schools examined the roll number was 268; 241 were present at the examination; and 137 passed.

At the outset I may say that I was disappointed with the numbers present on examination day. In several cases, a few days before my visit, measles were prevalent in the school districts, and consequently many pupils were absent. Still, there were schools where no satisfactory explanation was forthcoming. Where teachers and pupils have honestly worked throughout the year they should not fear the visit of an Inspector. Rather, they should strive to convince him that their work has been well and thoroughly done—that another good report has been secured for the school by their united efforts.

The number of times the various schools were opened was far too small, and an improvement in this direction must be effected. The number of regular holidays granted by the Board is not excessive; in fact, I think a longer holiday could reasonably be granted at midsummer. Perhaps then there would be less desire to have so many odd holidays throughout the year. After making all allowance for the wet days, on which the children of some of our country schools cannot possibly get to school, I am convinced that every school should be opened at least four hundred times throughout the year, and satisfactory explanation should be forthcoming in every case where that number has not been reached. Some of the schools of Westland for the past year were opened over four hundred and forty times. Teachers must recognise the advantage of continuous and regular instruction.

In a district such as this, where there is a number of small schools, the salaries appertaining to the position of teacher must be so small that trained teachers cannot be obtained. Before long the Board will have to face the question of how to keep these small schools open at all. One solution of the difficulty is obtained where an elder pupil gets so far advanced as to be able to instruct the juniors. It certainly will not pay a girl to reside away from home on a salary of £20 or £25 a year with no prospect of an increase. Several of these small schools do very good work. True, they do not attempt the whole syllabus, nor do I think they should be asked to do so. If good work is shown in what may reasonably be called the more important subjects an Inspector is usually satisfied. But in a school that is well staffed there should be no omission. Indeed, teachers should particularly remember that "all the subjects must receive a due measure of attention, and the neglect of any one of them will be regarded as highly censurable."

The terms "pass" and "class" subjects are very misleading, and should be abolished. Many teachers attach an undue importance to the former, and almost neglect the latter. If the education of the child were considered, and not the fact that he must secure a "pass," this would