

scholars. In pleasing contrast to this, I notice that at several schools the girls have made praiseworthy attempts to cultivate small gardens, and this, while providing a rational and healthy pastime, also adds much to the appearance of the grounds, and tends at the same time toward the promotion of that regard for neatness and tidiness so often conspicuous by its absence.

Private Schools.—The schools supported by the Roman Catholics of Blenheim were examined by me as usual, under the same conditions as the public schools, and with very creditable results. Though the general percentage of passes is somewhat lower than the average of all the public schools, yet these schools held a good position as regards the “pass” subjects, being a little above the average in reading, spelling, and composition, and a little below in writing and arithmetic. Moreover, the average ages of all standards, except Standard II., were considerably below those of the same standards in the public schools.

M.H.R. Medals.—For the first time since their establishment, these medals were gained by pupils attending St. Joseph’s Girls’ School and St. Mary’s Boys’. The two next highest were both scholars at the Renwick School.

Scholarships.—The examination of candidates for the Board’s scholarships was held on Tuesday, the 22nd of December, 1903. Twenty-two candidates were examined. Ten of these gained the proportion of marks required to qualify them to take scholarships (60 per cent. or upwards). Seven of the candidates are entered for the National Scholarships, and two of these (the third and fourth on the list) are entitled to Town Scholarships. The work of the ten candidates who qualified was, on the whole, very good in all subjects excepting arithmetic, which was somewhat inferior in several cases. There was a considerable falling-off in regard to the neatness of the papers, especially so in those on arithmetic, many of which were disgraceful as regards the formation of the figures and the slovenly arrangement of the work, and added considerably to the trouble of the examiner in finding out the answers. The last five or six candidates on the list ought not to have been nominated at all. The examination for the newly established National Scholarships took place on the 5th and 6th of January, and seventeen candidates presented themselves in this district, besides three who competed for the “free places” given in conjunction with the scholarships.

I have, &c.,
JOHN SMITH, Inspector.

The Chairman, Marlborough Education Board.

APPENDIX.—SUMMARY OF RESULTS FOR THE WHOLE DISTRICT.

Classes.				Number on Roll.	Present at Inspector's Annual Visit.	Passed.	Average Age of the Pupils in each Class.
							Yrs. mos.
Standard VII.	...	...	...	45	39	...	15 1
" VI.	...	...	...	164	163	131	14 2
" V.	...	...	...	242	233	207	13 2
" IV.	...	...	...	237	231	212	12 0
" III.	...	...	...	239	238	218	10 11
" II.	...	...	...	267	262	252	9 7
" I.	...	...	...	261	258	250	8 7
Preparatory...	...	...	...	515	501	...	6 8
Totals ...	...	...	...	1,970	1,925	1,270	11 3*

* Mean of average age.

NELSON.

SIR,—

Nelson, 26th January, 1904.

We have the honour to submit the following report on the schools of the Nelson Education District for the year 1903.

One hundred and nineteen schools were at work during the last quarter of the year. Six small household schools—Awaroa, Baton, Lighthouse, Maruia, Cable Bay, and Warwick Junction—have been closed since last examination. Brook Street, Hampden Street, and Matiri have been reduced to the rank of side schools. New schools have been opened at Blackwater, Owen Junction, McWha’s, and Oparara. As there were 124 schools open at the end of 1902, the number has nominally fallen by five, but really by two, for the others, as above shown, still operate as side schools. During the year a side school to Progress has been opened at Globe Hill. Great difficulty was experienced in getting capable teachers for some of the small schools, which consequently were closed for several months of the year. Owing to this cause the children at Doctor’s Creek, Inangahua Landing, Wangapeka, Glenroy, and Sherry were not prepared for examination this year, and the prevalence of epidemics at the time of the Inspector’s annual visit prevented Little