

from year to year till the maximum is reached. Staffing is also on a more liberal scale, and, when given full effect to, will allow of the substitution of assistant teachers in all places where pupil-teachers are now employed, and provision is made for the addition of a small number of probationers to the staff of a district. In the method of appointment of teachers, the Board's selection is restricted to four or fewer names, and the Committee's to one of those so selected, but the clauses dealing with the transfer of a teacher afford the Board facilities for granting promotions to the deserving.

Some of the reforms herein briefly indicated, such as a systematic scheme of promotion, the assurance of a satisfactory retiring-allowance, and efficient staffing, have been long desired, and the prospect of their realisation has cheered the hearts of teachers, whose hopes have never been higher, and has brightened the whole educational outlook.

We have, &c.,

G. A. HARKNESS, M.A., }
A. CRAWFORD, B.A., } Inspectors.

The Chairman, Education Board, Nelson.

GREY.

SIR,—

Education Office, Greymouth, 3rd February, 1909.

I have the honour to present my annual report on the schools of the Grey District for the year 1908.

During the year annual visits were paid to thirty-three public and three private schools. In all 147 pupils sat for the Sixth Standard examination, and, of these, eighty-three qualified for the proficiency certificate, and twenty-one for the competency certificate. The following table shows the number of pupils on the roll, the number present at the Inspector's annual visit, and the average age of each class for the whole district :—

Classes.						Number on Roll.	Present at the Annual Examination.	Average Age of Pupils in each Class.
Standard VII	...	...	...	...	...	17	15	Yrs. mos. 14 0
" VI	...	...	...	...	...	124	122	13 4
" V	...	...	...	...	...	156	152	12 6
" IV	...	...	...	...	...	189	186	12 0
" III	...	...	...	...	...	184	180	10 10
" II	...	...	...	...	...	181	177	10 0
" I	...	...	...	...	...	200	197	8 9
Preparatory	...	...	...	...	...	724	674	6 7
Totals	...	...	...	...	...	1,775	1,703	11 0*

* Mean of average age.

The compulsory subjects are well taught in most of our graded schools. The subjects hereunder noted are the only ones which call for special remark.

ENGLISH.—I am glad to note that the teachers generally have paid attention to the comments made in my last report on this subject, with the result that the formal questions were handled with more confidence and intelligence than was the case at the previous annual visits. The beneficial effects following from this revived attention to formal grammar as the foundation of good composition will be still more apparent at a later stage. Some of the questions in the English tests for Standards V and VI appeared to me to presuppose a much broader knowledge of our language and literature than could reasonably be expected from pupils twelve or thirteen years of age.

ARITHMETIC.—The work in this subject for the lower classes is now fairly easy, and it is only in the rarest cases that the questions submitted present any difficulty. In the higher standards, however, particularly in Standard V, the results are frequently disappointing—a fact due not so much to the excessive difficulty of the requirements for these standards, as to the circumstance that the work is unevenly graded. What is needed to remedy matters is not that the requirements all round should be lightened, but that the scope of the work for the respective classes should be recast.

GEOGRAPHY.—The enthusiasm for the teaching of geography by observation and experiment is languishing somewhat; and in this, as in other subjects, half-heartedness is a sure road to failure. So long as the work is prescribed it is absolutely essential that the teachers should throw themselves heart and soul into their task. The fact is, however, that the requirements of the syllabus, particularly with respect to mathematical geography, are really too difficult and almost beyond the capacity of the average boy or girl of thirteen. The syllabus mathematical geography might be curtailed with distinct advantage.

SINGING.—Singing, I am glad to report, is receiving more attention, and has greatly improved in many of our schools. I was pleased to see some teachers pluckily attempt this subject, although but