

NELSON.

SIR,—
Education Office, Nelson.
We have the honour to present our annual report on the schools of the Nelson Education District for the year 1910.

One hundred and sixteen schools were at work during the last quarter of the year. New schools have been established at Kaka and Nine-mile, the buildings having been erected by the Public Works Department, and household schools have been formed or reopened at Baton, Farewell Spit, Maori Pa, Moutere Bluffs, O'Rourke's, and Onekaka. Although five household schools—Awaiti, Farewell Spit, Nine-mile, O'Brien's, and Wairoa Gorge—were closed throughout the last quarter of the year, the total roll of schools has again increased by three. Pangatotara, a side school to Whakarewa, has also been closed.

With the exception of the addition of a small laboratory to Motueka High School, the erection of the Tahuna Side School, and the rebuilding on a new site of one room at Neudorf, no great improvements have been made in our school buildings. Last year we called the attention of the Board to the advisability of systematically rebuilding the oldest class-rooms, but probably the insufficiency of the Board's building grant prevented the adoption of such a policy, unless Neudorf may be quoted as a proof of its inception. In addition to our recommendations of last year, Longford should claim early attention. If a school is to be maintained there some suitable building is urgently required, as existing conditions should not be allowed to continue during the coming winter.

One hundred and eleven schools were inspected by us, and, as usual, all except some of the isolated household schools were visited twice. The inability of experienced teachers to correctly post up and utilize the examination registers issued last year was continually demonstrated, so that in many cases of low-grade schools under sole teachers we were constrained to enter our own classification, and the results of the individual examination held by the Inspector in place of those of the annual examination. To examine and classify correctly necessitates the exercise of a wise judgment, ripened by experience, but it is surprising to find that the mere tabulation of results in an intelligible manner should also prove a difficult task for many; consequently the young and untrained are more than ever dependent upon the Inspector for guidance in this department of school management. When a change of teachers takes place, or a certificate is to be issued according to the marks shown in the examination register, the necessity for an accurate and faithful record at once becomes apparent.

The following schools under other control than that of the Board have also been inspected by us:—

	Roll.	Present.
St. Mary's Boys', Nelson	61	56
St. Mary's Girls', Nelson	62	54
St. Mary's High, Nelson	66	63
Sacred Heart, Reefton	91	90
St. Canice's, Westport	242	237
St. Canice's High, Westport	27	25
Cabragh House, Nelson	10	10
Zephyr Lodge, Nelson	18	17
Nelson College, Boys' preparatory	23	22
Nelson College, Girls' preparatory	16	16
Totals	616	590

Whilst these private schools, as a rule, have the advantage over those of the Board in being more fully staffed, very few of the teachers are certificated, and the progress of the scholars is more often retarded by irregularity of attendance. These private schools presented sixty-five candidates for the Sixth Standard examination, and obtained twenty-six proficiency and twenty-six competency certificates. The general work of these schools was summarized as follows: One good, two satisfactory to good, five satisfactory, one fair to satisfactory, one fair.

At different schools, when examinations for proficiency certificates were being held, twenty-one candidates from other schools presented themselves, and were awarded five proficiency and eight competency certificates. A second examination for Standard VI pupils was also held at each of the Westport, Takaka, and Reefton High Schools. Two of these were taken at our visits of inspection, but the last named was held under the supervision of the head teacher, who forwarded the written papers to us for examination. There were in all thirty candidates, who gained nine proficiency and ten competency certificates. The numbers given are in addition to those afterwards recorded in the summary of results for the district, the latter being those obtained at the regularly notified visits of the Inspector, formerly known as annual visits.

Two special examinations were also held at the Nelson Technical School, and the fifty-two candidates who presented themselves obtained thirty-six proficiency and eleven competency certificates.

The average weekly number on the rolls for September quarter was 5,897, an increase of 163 upon that for the corresponding quarter of last year, the roll-number having shown continuous improvement since 1904. The schools which have benefited most by an addition to their numbers are Granity, Nelson Boys', Karamea, Burnett's Face, and Westport, recently established schools being responsible for the remainder of the increase in the district roll.