

Physical Exercises.—Deep-breathing exercises are taken daily, and physical drill in the form of free exercises is practised in the majority of the schools. In a few cases dumb-bell and club drill are favoured, and in two schools military drill is still continued.

Manual and Technical.—[See E.-5, Report on Manual and Technical Instruction.]

Needlework.—This subject is well taught in the majority of schools. The drawing-up of programmes for the standards and the exhibition of finished samples of the work necessary made the results better and more uniform.

Geography.—In many of the schools this subject was well taught. Good schemes of work had been prepared, and local geography was better known. Mapping was invariably satisfactory.

History.—History has received better treatment during the year. More oral teaching has been done, with encouraging results. In the larger schools civics enter into the programme, and has been satisfactorily treated.

Discipline.—The order, discipline, and tone of the schools are good.

In conclusion, I wish to place on record my appreciation of the earnest endeavours of your teachers. The year has been one of progress, and the teachers as a whole are doing their best to further the cause of education in the district. I have, &c.,

The Chairman, Marlborough Education Board.

D. A. STURROCK.

NELSON.

SIR,—

Nelson, 31st March, 1915.

We have the honour to present our annual report on the schools of the Nelson Education District for the year 1914.

One hundred and twenty-one schools—three more than last year—were at work during the last quarter, the number including two half-time schools reckoned as one. There were in addition, as hitherto, nine side schools, and at district high schools four secondary classes. Five small household schools—Baton, Berlin's, Lester's, Oparara, and O'Rourke's—have been closed, and eight new schools opened. Household schools have been formed at Awaroa, McLaren's Bay, Okiwi Bay, and Te Arowhenua, and Grade I schools established at Owen Junction, Tophouse, Whangamoa (half-time), and Upper Sherry.

One hundred and seventeen schools were inspected by us, those unvisited being for the most part recently opened household schools.

Twelve private schools have also been subject to inspection, with a roll of 676, and 624 pupils present at the annual examination. The Granity Convent school has been formed only this year, and its establishment has reduced the number attending the public school at the same centre, and also affected others situated near the train-line. The total number of children in attendance this year is higher by sixty-two. From these private schools fifty-nine Sixth Standard pupils were presented for examination, of whom twenty-eight obtained proficiency and eighteen competency certificates. Our estimate of the general efficiency of these schools is summarized as follows: Good, 3; satisfactory to good, 4; satisfactory, 4; fair to satisfactory, 1.

Secondary schools and classes are subject to inspection by departmental officers, but at the request of the Council of Governors we also examined for certificates the preparatory divisions of the Nelson Colleges. The roll numbers were—Boys, 18; girls, 7; but thirteen pupils from higher forms also competed for proficiency certificates, of which sixteen were awarded. Five candidates obtained competency certificates.

At special examinations held during the year seventy-four candidates presented themselves—seventy for Standard VI and four for Standard V—and the following certificates were obtained: Twenty-seven proficiency, thirty-two Standard VI competency, and three Standard V competency.

For the last three years the district rolls have shown continuous increase, the number of children attending school and the average attendance for each quarter being a distinct advance upon the corresponding period of the previous year. The average weekly number on the rolls for September quarter was 6,529, higher by 160 than in September, 1913. New schools, of course, contribute towards the increase, but marked growth this year is noticeable at Millerton, with an addition of twenty-five to its average weekly roll; Reefton and Tahuna, each with twenty-two; Hampden Street, with twenty-one; and Black's Point with seventeen. On the other hand, Granity and Hector (combined) have lost twenty-nine, and Waimangaroa fourteen. At the end of the year the number on roll was 6,539. The steady improvement in regularity of attendance is also a matter for congratulation, and may be taken as an indication that such regularity is at last becoming habitual, as continuous improvement has been shown for four years back. The yearly average, 5,833, represents 90 per cent. of the average weekly roll number, 6,481, and a very commendable degree of regularity throughout the district. The percentage for the Dominion in 1913 was 89.2, but the best district, Otago, with 91.8 per cent., far exceeded that limit, and four other districts recorded over 90 per cent. This year sixty-five of our schools—a larger number than hitherto—reached 90 per cent., the best returns from the larger schools being: Nelson Boys' Central and Summerlea, each 95 per cent.; Granity, 94; Seddonville and Waimea West, each 93. Of the smaller schools other than household the most noteworthy for regularity of attendance are Six-mile, 95 per cent.; Motupiko and Takaka Central, each 94; and Appleby, 93. Very irregular attendance still maintains at some schools, where less than 80 per cent. of attendance has been recorded. That contributory negligence on the part of the teacher is an important factor in producing such results is evident when we find that a new teacher in a school district long notorious for irregularity has effected a marked improvement in attendance.