



SUPPLEMENT

To the HONGKONG GOVERNMENT GAZETTE of 11th February, 1888.

GOVERNMENT NOTIFICATION.--No. 62.

The following Annual Report of the Head Master of the Government Central School for 1887, which was laid before the Legislative Council on the 8th instant, is published for general information.

By Command,

FREDERICK STEWART,
Colonial Secretary.

Colonial Secretary's Office, Hongkong, 11th February, 1888.

GOVERNMENT CENTRAL SCHOOL,
HONGKONG, 16th January, 1888.

SIR,—I have the honour to forward the Annual Report on this School for 1887.

1. The total number of boys on the Roll for the past year was 601. The school days numbered 234, the difference from last year being accounted for, by the four days special holiday, given by His Excellency the Governor, in November in connexion with the celebration of Her Majesty's Jubilee.

2. To illustrate the condition of the School during the last five years the following table is annexed:—

YEAR.	Total Number of Scholars.	Number of School Days.	Monthly Enrolment.		Average Daily Attendance.
			Maximum.	Minimum.	
1883,	556	236	460	378	394
1884,	558	236	462	362	411
1885,	596	238	499	382	437
1886,	610	238	507	419	446
1887,	601	234	525	417	449

YEAR.	Number of School Boys Examined.	Percentage of Passes.	School Fees.	Actual. Nett Expenditure.	Average Expense of each Scholar per Average Daily Attendance.
1883,	365	96.98	4,121	13,109.51	33.22
1884,	379	95.58	4,981	13,378.62	32.48
1885,	412	95.38	5,273	12,885.00	29.45
1886,	405	94.81	5,422	11,680.41	26.17
1887,	384	97.65	5,547	11,872.70	26.40

ANNUAL EXAMINATION.

3. The result of the Annual Prize Examination in English subjects, just held, is eminently satisfactory. Only 9 boys failed out of 384 examined, in other words 97½ per cent passed. As this is the last Annual Examination which will be held in this school building, the history of which extends over a quarter of a century, I may be pardoned for dwelling on this signal success, which forms a fitting crown to the labours of so many years. It will be remembered that on my arrival, six years ago, after examining the school I expressed my astonishment and gratification at the attainments in English of the Chinese, who form the vast majority of Central School boys. Since then, no stone has been left unturned, steadily and get without undue haste, to raise the standard. English Composition was introduced into the 4th class; translation from and into Chinese was made obligatory in every class; English Grammar and Geography were extended three classes lower. The result of this extension is shown in the present examination; of the 314 boys examined in English Grammar 90 per cent.

passed, while 94 per cent. passed of the 110 examined in English Composition; and I may say that for idiom of expression and thoughtfulness in ideas the essays presented by these Chinese boys—who, it must be remembered, do not associate with English, out of school hours,—cannot fail to be considered admirable. Making comparison with the percentage table of last year, I observe a higher percentage obtained by the *school* this year in *every* subject, except Map-Drawing which is about the same figure. Special improvement is noticeable in Arithmetic, Grammar, Geography, Euclid, Algebra, General Intelligence Papers and Mensuration.

4. The severity of the test applied to the classes in this school precludes all possibility of any comparison being instituted with work done in any other school in the Colony. Not only are there *no* Special *Optional* subjects—every subject, Euclid, Algebra, Latin, Physical and Commercial Geography, taught in any class being compulsory to every boy in that class,—but the examination in Grammar is not, as in the Grant-in-Aid System, confined to Analysis Parsing and Definitions, nor in Geography to Map drawing and Definitions; on the contrary searching general questions are set, more after the type of the Oxford and Cambridge Local Examinations; nor must I forget to mention the two papers, translation from and into Chinese, in each class, which prove such a stumbling-block to non-Chinese boys, and so ruthlessly handicap them in the race for prizes. The system I adopted on my arrival, and which I have since maintained, is that to pass in each subject a boy must obtain at least half-marks, and failure in more than half the subjects of his class makes a boy a complete failure. This year there were 15 subjects in the First Class, as opposed to 8 subjects in 1882; therefore this year, a boy required for a bare pass, as much as would have gained him excellent distinction six years ago. If this School had been examined on Grant-in-Aid principles, we could have presented 69 boys in the *highest* Standard, Standard VI; 41 in Standard V; 102 in Standard IV; 100 in Standard III; 52 in Standard II; and 20 in Standard I; moreover Copy-writing would have been taken into account for 274 boys, instead of merely for the 70 boys at the bottom of the school.

5. The Upper School was examined in a *first* year's work in Latin, the same paper was set to all three classes, and though the questions were stiff, very creditable answers were obtained. Class I was examined in three books of Euclid; and in Algebra offered Surds, Scales of Notation, &c. up to Harmonical Progression. Class IV passed excellently in Algebra and Euclid.

STAFF.

6. Mr. ARTHUR, Third Master, was transferred to the Magistracy, early in the year. He was a thoroughly efficient, successful, and popular teacher, able to maintain excellent discipline without any ostentation, and having no need to resort to severity. In the important subject of English Reading and Pronunciation, which, to those not practically engaged in teaching English to foreigners, might appear easy, he was unrivalled. The school was fortunate in obtaining the services of Mr. JAMESON, a graduate of Peterhouse Cambridge, whose engagement at another school happily terminated at the time of Mr. ARTHUR's transfer. Mr. JAMESON laboured strenuously throughout the year, with what success may be estimated from the fact that only one boy failed, out of the three classes in his charge, which comprised 126 boys. On April 1st Mr. Mok, 3rd Chinese Assistant was transferred to the Registrar General's Office, Mr. CHÜ took his place, and Mr. Lo KIT was promoted from Senior Pupil Teacher to be 4th Chinese Assistant. In my report on the requirements of the New School forwarded twelve months ago, I drew special attention to the injury done to the school, by Masters, English and Chinese, leaving on account of dissatisfaction with salaries, and I trust that my suggestions on this head will meet with the approval of the authorities.

7. That the whole Staff deserves credit for the past year's work is evident from the results of Examination given above; but I wish to bear my testimony to the important fact, of which I alone can be cognisant, that in this school, there is no spasmodic cramming at the end of the year, with a view to dazzling effect; but steady uniform work, willingly and cheerfully performed consistently throughout the year. As in the New School a larger amount of responsibility in teaching will fall into the hands of the Chinese Assistants, I desire to draw particular attention to the good results obtained by the four classes V–VIII, which were entrusted to the care of the four Chinese Assistants. The excellent papers, in most instances, done by these boys, in English Grammar, Geography, Dictation and Arithmetic show that there is no ground for apprehension, that English subjects cannot be adequately taught by Chinese.

8. I have received from Mr. JAMESON, Master in charge of the Preparatory School, a very favourable report of the work done by the six Articled Pupil Teachers. This is very satisfactory, and marred alone by the fact, that one of the Pupil Teachers gave evidence of persistent neglect of his First Class studies, which culminated, as might naturally be expected in a pass, which can only be viewed as discreditable.

CAMBRIDGE LOCAL EXAMINATION.

9. The six candidates who entered for the Cambridge Local Examination in 1886 acquitted themselves well. The Senior candidate passed in Arithmetic, English Grammar, Composition, and History, Geography, Euclid, and Algebra, but failed in Scripture. As a Chinese, he had natural difficulty with this subject, but his experience has led him to devote more attention to it for the late examination.

Of the five Juniors, HOWARD and MADAR obtained certificates and have therefore the distinction of being the first Hongkong boys to obtain that honour; two others WONG FAN and WONG PING failed only in History and Geography, or it may be in only one of these as particulars were not given. The remaining boy was incapacitated by fever. That the boys themselves considered this result encouraging is evident from the fact, that they all entered for the late examination; MADAR abandoned the project only on leaving school, and five new boys swelled the number. In October last the Colonial Secretary, Hon. F. STEWART, LL.D., presented the parchments to the two successful candidates, for it seemed specially appropriate that the late Headmaster should perform in his old school a ceremony, that occurred for the first and last time, and which will prove a prominent link between this school and the new college.

10. I cannot refrain from here taking the opportunity to defend the Local Examinations against two serious imputations, cramming and competition, that have been laid to their charge. *Cramming* is the process by which a man of experience reduces, for the sake of his pupils, the wide area of any given subject, by judiciously selecting those portions, on which questions are likely to be set. This method is open to the obvious objection that first principles and sound basis are sacrificed to show results in answer to Catch Questions. Now when year after year, bodies of examiners, like the Oxford Delegates and Cambridge Syndicate set forth varied questions, testing the knowledge of rudiments in each subject, as well as embracing the highest achievements,—and at the same time distinctly state that each candidate must *satisfy* the examiners in *Rudimentary* knowledge in each subject—to talk of cramming in connexion with these examinations merely argues want of information in those who hazard the statement. As regards the Central School, this charge is simply ludicrous; the local candidates study their subjects in a class of 60 boys; only one hour a week, in the afternoon, is allowed for instructions in each of the special subjects (as Shakespeare and the Epoch of History) and for instruction in Higher Euclid and Algebra.

11. The idea of *Competition* is foreign to the purpose of local examinations, which is to provide one standard for boys educated in different schools on widely varying principles. Each boy does his best to pass well, and if possible to obtain distinction; but there is no personal emulation to urge him to outstrip any particular boy, which is the necessary element of competition as applied to school-boy life. Unfortunately, however, the attempt has been made, to raise the spirit of competition, not among scholars but *schools*. Such a feeling should not be admitted for a moment; not only is there no contest, but there is actually no uniformity of conditions. One school may send in *all* the boys in certain classes, another may offer only *selected* candidates. One school may have a large staff of masters, another may be without this advantage. It is not the custom in England, as far as my personal knowledge reaches, for comparison to be made between the results in different schools in the same town. Whatever wholesome emulation may be personally stirred among the masters, no comparisons are drawn between the results (say) of a Grammar School and of a Board School, nor between the latter and those of a Denominational School; nor in fact would it be possible as the basis of comparison is wanting.

OLD SCHOLARS.

12. In the past year we were gratified by the news of Mr. WALTER BOSMAN'S (Government Scholar) final success at the Engineering College at the Chrystal Palace. He was presented with the Society's Bronze Medal for sustained distinction, in no less than 9 terminal examinations. His future successes will not come within the scope of School Reports, but he will continue to carry with him the good wishes of his old school-fellows and schoolmasters.

13. It is also worthy of note that Mr. TAI TIN-PUI, who left the Second Class of this school at midsummer after showing marked aptitude for English Studies, graduated last November as Sau Tsoi at Canton. I am informed that this is the first time this success has been achieved by a Central School boy. It must, however, be clearly understood that the credit of this success does not belong to this school, for as a rule we can do but little more than preserve the knowledge of Chinese a boy brings with him; still Mr. TAI has shown conclusively that application to English studies need not cause a boy to abandon the pursuit of native literature.

HEALTH.

14. The health of the school suffered from the fever and small-pox prevalent in the town, at the close of the year. The Sick List in December is the largest I remember.

CONCLUSION.

15. I will conclude with a few general remarks. The new school is hastening to its completion, and I sincerely trust, that we are not doomed to pass another summer in these overcrowded classrooms, from which air is effectually blocked out by the houses that hem us in, on every side. It may be that in another year Chinese dwellings may stand on the site of this old School, but its memory

will endure; a dozen Morrison scholars, and one Government scholar, hundreds of clerks in English and Chinese Government Service, and a countless number of mercantile clerks scattered over the Far East will have these old walls photographed on their memory of happy youthful days, as long as life shall last. The standard of education at the Central School may be said this year to have attained its High Water mark, it only remains for the Victoria College to take this tide at the flood and so be led on to Fame and Fortune.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your most obedient Servant,

GEO. H. BATESON WRIGHT, M.A.,
Head Master.

The Hon. FREDERICK STEWART, LL.D.,
Colonial Secretary,
&c., &c., &c.

1887.

CENTRAL SCHOOL.

Month.	Number of Scholars.	Number of Attendances.	Number of School Days.	Average Daily Attendance.
January,	417	5,700	14	407.14
February,	519	4,587	9	509.66
March,	525	13,386	27	495.78
April,	518	8,314	17	489.06
May,	509	11,493	24	478.87
June,	498	11,017	24	459.04
July,	471	11,609	26	446.50
August,	449	1,767	4	441.75
September,	470	9,864	22	448.36
October,	467	10,059	23	437.35
November,	455	9,143	22	415.59
December,	433	8,287	22	376.68
Total,	105,226	234

Total Number of ATTENDANCES during 1887, 105,226
 Number of SCHOOL DAYS during 1887, 234
 Average DAILY ATTENDANCE during 1887, 449.684
 Total Number of SCHOLARS at this School during 1887, 601

AVERAGE EXPENSE of each SCHOLAR at the Central School during 1887.

Expenditure,	\$17,803.40
Deduct School Fees,	\$5,547.00
„ Rent of Quarters,	382.50
„ Sale of Ink to Police Department,	1.20
	5,930.70
Total Expenses of the School,	\$11,872.70
Average Expenses of each Scholar per number on Roll,	\$19.75
„ „ „ „ „ Average Daily Attendance,	26.40

GEO. H. BATESON WRIGHT, M.A.,
Head Master.