

NOTES AND NEWS.

THE Educational Conferences held lately at Oban and Stornoway, if they have thrown no additional light on the problems of education in the Highlands, have at least kept the subject well to the front. Meanwhile we may take this opportunity of noticing the latest Bluebook or Report of the Education Department. In Mr. Robertson's district the Highland Minute is doing good, at least in the increase of grants. "It is encouraging to note," he says, "that of the 157 schools inspected this year the returns now to hand show that 74 schools claimed varying amounts of the premium on average attendance, and that 26 of these claimed the maximum grant (8/-)." Mr. Sime finds it "extremely difficult to say how far that Minute has fulfilled the expectations of its promoters." Mr. Macleod says nothing about it.

BESIDES Attendance, the other leading provisions of the Highland Minute aimed at the encouragement of Secondary Schools, the employment of Gaelic-speaking pupil-teachers, and the teaching of Gaelic as a specific subject. The only information we get on these points is a few remarks from Mr. Sime on Gaelic as a specific subject. He says: "A few schools have offered Gaelic as a specific subject; the pupils offered numbering 39. . . . The schools that have put forward pupils in Gaelic are Raining's School, Inverness, and the Schools of Cross, Shawbost, and Valtos, in the Lewis," apparently four in all. Mr. Sime justly remarks of the way Gaelic is put on the Code, "the conditions of examination are of a most unsatisfactory nature, as no curriculum is prescribed, and managers are invited to submit a graduated scheme to Her Majesty's Inspector. I have never seen a graduated scheme or had an interview with the managers on the subject; but I have not on that account refused to examine pupils (as I probably ought to have done), nor have I declined any scheme for the first year's work offered to me."