be ascertained from the following table that this proportion at the end of the year was 28·8 per cent. of the total number of pupils. In 1886 the proportion was 23·8, and in the three following years 25·9, 26·8, and 27·4. About 2 per cent.-remain in the schools after passing the Sixth Standard, about 7 per cent. have passed the Fifth, and about 16 per cent. have passed the Fourth. The proportion of children that have not yet passed the First Standard, though gradually decreasing, is still very high—42½ per cent. The statistics of classification, which are condensed in Table D, will be found in detail in Table No. 2 in the Appendix (p. 2).

TABLE D.—CLASSIFICATION BY STANDARDS, DECEMBER, 1890.

Standards.	Boys.	Girls.	Totals.	Percentages for Five Years.				
				1890.	1889.	1888.	1887.	1886.
Preparatory classes	17,176	15,223	32,399	27·48	27·75	26·90	26·77	27·70
Class for Standard I.	8,601	7,986	16,587	14·06	14·70	15·53	16·59	17·41
„ „ II.	8,824	8,375	17,199	14·59	14·73	15·19	15·39	15·61
„ „ III.	9,080	8,650	17,730	15·04	15·42	15·63	15·39	15·48
„ „ IV.	7,680	7,596	15,276	12·95	12·42	12·23	12·15	11·57
„ „ V.	5,348	5,276	10,624	9·01	8·48	8·46	7·92	7·08
„ „ VI.	2,945	2,721	5,666	4·80	4·52	4·35	4·06	3·58
Passed Standard VI.	1,197	1,234	2,431	2·07	1·98	1·71	1·73	1·57
Totals..	60,851	57,061	117,912	100·00	100·00	100·00	100·00	100·00

There is no material change in the ages at which on an average the pupils pass the several standards; the average is one month below that of the year 1889, and identical with that of 1888. The lowest average last year occurred in Wellington, and it is noticeable that all the inspection statistics for Wellington for 1890 represent better results than those of any other district. The expectation entertained when the standard regulations were made was that children of ordinary ability would pass the Third Standard at the age of ten, and the Sixth at the age of thirteen. The tables show that on an average the Third Standard is passed at eleven years and four months, and the Sixth at fourteen years and one month. The details are exhibited in Table E.

TABLE E.—AVERAGE AGE OF PUPILS AT STANDARD EXAMINATIONS IN 1890.

Education Districts.	Average Ages for Standards.						Mean of Ages.	
	I. Yrs. mos.	II. Yrs. mos.	III. Yrs. mos.	IV. Yrs. mos.	V. Yrs. mos.	VI. Yrs. mos.	1890. Yrs. mos.	1889. Yrs. mos
Auckland	9 2	10 4	11 6	12 5	13 3	14 3	11 10	11 11
Taranaki	9 5	10 5	11 9	13 1	14 0	14 10	12 3	12 3
Wanganui	9 4	10 5	11 8	12 8	13 6	14 3	11 11	12 0
Wellington	8 6	9 7	10 11	11 11	12 9	13 9	11 2	11 4
Hawke's Bay	9 0	10 5	11 4	12 3	13 5	14 3	11 9	11 11
Marlborough	No	returns.						11 7
Nelson	8 8	9 10	10 10	12 0	12 10	13 11	11 4	11 3
Grey	8 8	9 7	11 0	12 1	13 1	13 11	11 4	11 6
Westland	9 4	10 6	11 8	12 7	13 6	14 0	12 0	12 1
North Canterbury	9 0	10 2	11 4	12 4	13 3	14 1	11 8	11 8
South Canterbury	8 11	10 0	11 0	12 0	13 0	13 7	11 6	11 4
Otago ..	9 0	10 2	11 2	12 3	13 1	13 11	11 7	11 8
Southland	9 3	10 3	11 5	12 7	13 8	14 4	11 11	12 0
Mean ..	9 0	9 9	11 4	12 4	13 3	14 1	11 8	11 9
Range (difference between highest and lowest) ..	0 11	0 11	0 11	1 2	1 3	1 3	1 1	1 0
Mean in 1889 ..	9 1	10 3	11 4	12 5	13 4	14 1	..	..
Range in 1889 ..	1 1	1 6	1 6	0 10	1 6	1 5	..	..

The absence of inspection statistics for 1890 for the Marlborough District is unfortunate; it affects Tables E, F, and G, and the computation usually made from a comparison of Tables D and G. It arises from a change of Inspectors in the district, and from the abandonment by the new Inspector of the practice of including in the returns of a calendar year the results of inspections made in the first quarter of a subsequent year. The chief effect of the omission is to render it impossible to compute the probable number of children actually withdrawn from the schools during the year. A casual inspection of Table B might lead one to suppose that more than 38,500 had left during the year; there