

you a comparative statement of the actual passes made in the several standards—irrespective of failures, exemptions, and absentees—for the past and preceding years. The results may be thus tabulated:—

	Standard I.	Standard II.	Standard III.	Standard IV.	Standard V.	Standard VI. and over.
1892 ...	1464	1491	1386	1241	979	739
1893 ...	1322	1400	1401	1080	968	950

From this it will be seen that, taking into account the increased attendance for the year, there is an appreciable falling off in Standards I. and IV., a slight falling off in Standards II., III., and V., and a very satisfactory increase in the number of children in Standard VI. or who had already passed that standard. We continue to examine the children who passed Standard VI. the previous year in hardened Standard VI. work, and, if the examiner is satisfied, we issue what is called a Standard VII. certificate. This is not necessarily required by the Education Act, but the regulations permit it, and the practice is found very useful in inducing children who pass Standard VI. at thirteen or fourteen years of age to remain another year at school.

The keener competition for the position of pupil-teachers, their improved class instruction, their special training in drawing, singing, and drill, and the extension of experimental-science instruction and kindergarten work, are doing much to improve the practical efficiency of the staff; and, where good direction and supervision are given, the work of the schools is advancing on improved lines, and a better and sounder education is imparted in a manner which affords far greater interest to the scholars than that which the older methods produced, or which any amount of hardening in spelling and arithmetic would lead to. Of course it is not every teacher who is aroused to the full importance of these issues, but we possess in a majority of the head teachers of the Wellington City schools a body of teachers of large experience, who are keenly alive to these issues, who are ever open to suggestions for improvements in method, and who are apparently always on the look-out for opportunities of extending their usefulness. As an instance of this, a meeting of the city head teachers, with the Inspectors and the instructor of the pupil-teachers in singing, was very lately held, at which it was resolved, with the sympathy and sanction of the Board, to form a School Choral Union. This, in our judgment, will serve a useful purpose, not only in giving further impetus to the teaching of singing, but also in giving more uniform direction to the class work, and in affording easier and more economical means of doing it.

We think the general work and management of the schools continue, on the whole, very satisfactory. There are a few instances in which we think very much better work could be done, and these cases have been specially reported on. Referring to the summary, of the ten schools in Class A, one was weak owing to the serious breakdown in the health of the head teacher, another was deficient in class work, and a third was suffering from the retention of weak teachers; but improved work was done in the higher classes of most of them, and five of them are specially commended in this respect. Of the seventeen schools in Class B, nearly all were more or less satisfactory, as is set forth in the special reports sent to School Committees; and six of them are reported as highly satisfactory. Of the twenty-three schools in Class C, we find several in which decidedly improved work will be looked for; but most of them are doing very satisfactory work. Of the twenty-five schools in Class D, there is only one which does not appear to be fairly meeting requirements; and most of those which have an apparently high percentage of failures are really in good hands. Since changes have been made in the teachers of one or two of the twelve aided schools the management of these is now fairly satisfactory.

The special infant schools, at Mount Cook, Te Aro, and Masterton, have an aggregate total number of 884 children. All these are now held in very good and suitable buildings; and we are pleased with much of the work done, and more especially with that of the Mount Cook Infant School, so long under the management of a very musical and specially qualified kindergarten mistress. This school may be looked upon as the centre from which our infant kindergarten system has radiated.

In the infant departments generally mat-plaiting, object-lesson work, and singing have received special attention. Very good reading is also a pleasing feature of these schools. We should like to see the School Committees of all schools in which there are infant departments—and this will include a large number—make arrangements whereby materials may be purchased for making mats and baskets, dressing dolls, &c., which may be taken home when made. This would encourage the production of better and more varied work, and the articles made would have special value in the eyes of both pupils and their parents.

We are pleased once again to refer to the advance made in elementary experimental-science teaching. The liberal outlay for apparatus and material granted by the Board has been productive of the best educational results. Year by year we find more of the assistant teachers taking up this work *con amore*; and the general increased interest on the part of the pupils in learning the why and the wherefore of everything is very noticeable.

The classes opened in Wellington and Masterton during the past year by Mr. Robert Parker for instructing teachers in the art of singing, and for training them in the methods of conducting class-singing in schools, are largely attended—about a hundred teachers meeting in Wellington and forty in Masterton. Mr. Parker's services are much appreciated by the teachers, and the effect of the training in the schools is already apparent in certain departments.

Drawing, as taught on the lines of the South Kensington first-grade course, continues to be successfully taken up throughout the district. Many teachers and pupil-teachers hold second-grade certificates; and the excellent work of the Wellington Technical School is now bearing fruit in the class instruction of our schools. Moreover, the director, Mr. Riley, visits all the large schools at least once a year in town and country, inspects the class work, and gives hints