

classes preparing for Standards III. and IV. the change in this respect is intermittent, and in all the lower classes the proportional number of pupils is diminishing. All this, of course, is quite satisfactory, assuming, as may be fairly assumed, that the standard of examination is maintained, if not advanced. The three classes proper to pupils who have passed at least the Fourth Standard constitute only 20·71 per cent. of the whole number of pupils, while the next three classes below contain 41·7, and those who have not yet passed any standard constitute 37·59 of the total.

Table E, which gives for each standard in each district the average age at which the pupils pass, exhibits little variation from year to year. The mean of the several "standard ages" for the colony is the same—eleven years and seven months—as it was last year, and has been the same since 1893, when it was eleven years and eight months. As usual the most conspicuous differences are those which come to light in comparing district with district.

TABLE E.—AVERAGE AGE OF PUPILS AT STANDARD EXAMINATIONS IN 1897.

Education Districts.				Average Ages for Standards.						Mean of Ages.	
				I.	II.	III.	IV.	V.	VI.	1897.	1896.
				Yrs. mos.	Yrs. mos.	Yrs. mos.	Yrs. mos.	Yrs. mos.	Yrs. mos.	Yrs. mos.	Yrs. mos.
Auckland	..	..	..	9 0	10 2	11 3	12 5	13 2	14 2	11 8	11 9
Taranaki	..	..	..	9 6	10 9	11 9	13 0	13 10	14 2	12 2	12 1
Wanganui	..	..	..	9 1	10 5	11 7	12 7	13 9	14 6	12 0	12 0
Wellington	..	..	..	8 8	9 9	10 11	11 11	12 10	13 10	11 3	11 4
Hawke's Bay	..	..	..	8 11	9 11	11 1	12 4	13 2	14 1	11 7	11 7
Marlborough	..	..	..	8 9	9 11	11 1	12 9	13 6	14 2	11 8	11 6
Nelson	..	..	..	8 5	9 8	10 10	12 1	13 0	14 1	11 4	11 3
Grey	..	..	..	8 10	10 3	11 5	12 4	13 4	14 3	11 8	11 9
Westland	..	..	..	9 0	9 10	11 7	12 3	13 2	14 4	11 8	11 8
North Canterbury	..	..	..	8 6	9 8	10 10	12 0	12 11	13 9	11 3	11 4
South Canterbury	..	..	..	8 6	9 7	10 10	12 0	12 11	13 8	11 3	11 5
Otago	..	..	..	8 8	9 9	11 2	12 0	12 10	13 10	11 4	11 5
Southland	..	..	..	8 8	9 11	10 11	12 1	13 0	13 10	11 5	11 6
Mean	..	..	..	8 10	10 0	11 2	12 3	13 2	14 1	11 7	11 7
Range (difference between highest and lowest)	..	..	..	1 1	1 2	0 11	1 1	1 0	0 10	0 9	0 10
Mean in 1896	..	..	..	8 11	10 0	11 2	12 4	13 2	14 0	11 7	..
Range in 1896	..	..	..	1 4	1 0	1 3	0 10	0 9	0 10	0 10	..

The rolls of the different schools on their days of inspection amounted to 132,318 in 1897, this number being smaller by 1,643 than the average of the weekly roll. This number is accounted for thus: 40,741 were in preparatory classes and not ready for standard examination; 2,324 had already passed the Sixth Standard, and were therefore not subject to standard examination; 73,392 was the total of all who passed one of the six standards; 13,268 failed; and 2,593 was the number absent from examination. The passes as related to the number on the roll amount to 55·5 per cent.; the failures as related to the number examined for standards amount to 15·32. In 1896 the percentages reckoned in the same way were 54·45 and 15·55, so that what difference there is in the way of progress.

TABLE F.—INSPECTION STATISTICS.

Education Districts.				Rolls on Days of Inspection.	Preparatory Classes.	Pupils above Sixth Standard.	Present in Standard Classes.	Passed.
Auckland	..	..	..	28,026	9,433	234	17,657	14,790
Taranaki	..	..	..	3,846	1,294	18	2,416	1,634
Wanganui	..	..	..	9,827	3,095	83	6,427	5,238
Wellington	..	..	..	14,194	4,290	392	9,313	8,107
Hawke's Bay	..	..	..	7,297	2,624	32	4,559	3,797
Marlborough	..	..	..	2,130	596	68	1,412	1,181
Nelson	..	..	..	6,054	1,635	138	4,179	3,358
Grey	..	..	..	1,698	565	48	1,041	898
Westland	..	..	..	1,461	425	76	958	863
North Canterbury	..	..	..	21,028	5,893	298	14,339	12,003
South Canterbury	..	..	..	5,239	1,475	109	3,568	3,055
Otago	..	..	..	21,960	6,550	651	14,440	12,886
Southland	..	..	..	9,558	2,866	177	6,351	5,532
For the colony	..	..	..	132,318	40,741	2,324	86,660	73,392
In 1896	..	..	..	131,171	40,460	2,222	85,795	71,422