

As the basis of promotion in standards is not the same as last year, and as it has fallen to the teachers to award the passes in Standards I. to V., a comparison of this year's results with last year's would serve no useful purpose. We note, however, with some degree of satisfaction, that the passes in Standards I. and II., which since 1894 have been determined by the teachers, have fallen to 94 per cent. of those examined, as against 98 per cent. last year. We do not consider the figures to denote a less degree of proficiency on the part of the pupils; we have grounds for hoping that in this lower percentage we have some assurance of a higher standard of attainment being demanded from the younger pupils, which will insure stronger going on their part as they proceed on their course. In Standards III., IV., and V. the new regulations permitted teachers to grant a pass on easier terms than we had been accustomed to exact under previous regulations. Taking advantage of the minimum requirements, a few teachers, some from inexperience, others from motives of various kinds, have awarded passes which in our judgment would have been much better withheld, if, as most people naturally expect them to do, "pass" and "promotion" are to mean the same thing. Most of our teachers, concerning themselves only with what they considered best in the interest of their pupils, have awarded passes with the understanding that they were classifying their pupils for the work of a new session, and this duty they have discharged with admirable discretion. In our largest schools, with masters skilled in all matters of school management, we all expected this; but even in our smaller schools, in the face of difficulties that hardly affect the large schools, the duty of promoting their own pupils has been carried out by the teachers with faithfulness and excellent judgment. In a few instances, not many in proportion to the numbers dealt with, the teachers left the decision of doubtful cases to our judgment. At a conference with teachers, held some time before the examinations commenced, we pointed out that, the privilege of classifying their pupils having been granted to them, we should consider it a sign of weakness if, unless under most exceptional circumstances, the responsibilities attaching to the privilege were to be shifted to our shoulders. Better boldly risk a few mistakes than timidly let out of their grasp the right they had just won. This was the spirit in which we wished them to face their new task, and they did not disappoint us.

Standard VI. was the only class in which we had to examine the pupils individually for a pass. The subjects were the same as last year—namely, reading, spelling, and dictation, writing, composition, arithmetic, geography, and drawing. The conditions under which a pass was to be awarded were somewhat altered: work equal to the next lower standard might be accepted in not more than one of the first five subjects, and in not more than two of the seven subjects. Thus a pupil whose work was equal to that of Standard V. in arithmetic and in composition, and satisfied the requirements for Standard VI. in the other subjects, must fail. Another whose work was equal to that of Standard V. in arithmetic and in geography, and satisfied the requirements for Standard VI. in the remaining subjects, might pass. We had some difficulty in arriving at a fair mode of settling the terms for a pass in arithmetic. A pupil might fail badly in Standard VI. arithmetic, and yet it was an open question whether, had he been given a Standard V. test, he would not have proved himself capable of satisfying the requirements of that standard in that subject. To give him this second chance would have encroached so much on the time for other subjects that in schools where the examination lasted only one day it was impossible to allow this concession. In all schools our practice was to give credit for equalling the requirements of Standard V. if two sums out of the five set in Standard VI. work were correct, or if there was such evidence of skill in computation and of knowledge of method as in our judgment entitled the pupil to be credited with two-fifths of the value of the paper. If a pupil did not earn two-fifths of the value of the card set in Standard VI. arithmetic, though fully satisfying the requirements in the six other subjects, he was not awarded a pass in Standard VI. On the whole, we may say that it was more difficult to obtain a pass this year in Standard VI. than it was last year. Of 380 examined, 262 passed—a percentage of almost 69, as against 77 for last year. As always happens, many that failed were separated by only a few marks from those that passed. If in their case failure meant another year's schooling, some day these pupils may come to think it was a good thing they did fail. The average age of the pupils examined in Standard VI. is only 13 years 8 months, and every one will allow that for boys and girls of that age another year or two at school would be most advantageous, both as regards their mental equipment and their physical fitness for the duties of life.

According to the rearrangement of subjects, the following come under the head of class-subjects: namely, Drawing, history, grammar, geography, science, and object-lessons, recitation, and handwork. As a general rule, we find the schools that do well in standard work are those that do well in class-subjects. A summary of the degree of proficiency shown in class-subjects is as follows: Good, 9; satisfactory, 40; fair, 16; moderate, 2. When it is stated that "good" implies at least 80 per cent. of the marks given, and "satisfactory" at least 60 per cent., and when the wide range of subjects is taken into account, it will be understood that the schools marked "good" are in a highly creditable state of efficiency, and that those marked "satisfactory" have had this term applied to them as designating a higher degree of efficiency in teaching than is usually associated with the term. But for the inclusion of grammar, the treatment of which in most of our schools still leaves much to be desired, the marks for class-subjects would have been generally higher.

The additional subjects have been reduced to include only drill, singing, and sewing. Early in the year a circular was issued by the Board containing directions for the instruction of all pupils in drill and physical exercises, and a copy of McDonald's "Drill Manual for Schools" was forwarded to every school. This action of the Board, synchronising with the military enthusiasm evoked by the stirring events of the year, has brought about a marked improvement in the teaching of drill and physical exercises. Singing, if it has not gained in sweetness, has, at all events, lost nothing in swing and heartiness from the introduction of many popular patriotic songs. The