

Table C4 shows the average ages at which the children passed the several standards in the different districts, and the average ages in each case taking the colony as a whole. Standard V., the "standard of exemption," was passed in South Canterbury and Otago on the average at the age of 12 years and 9 months, and in Taranaki at the age of 13 years and 4 months, these being the lowest and highest respectively. For the colony the average age at which this standard was passed in 1903, as in 1902, was 13 years. The average age for passing Standard VI. is of importance at the present time in consequence of the discussion that is taking place with respect to the limit of age imposed by the regulations for free admission to secondary schools in the case of those whose only qualification is the holding of Standard VI. certificates of proficiency. The condition is that the candidate for a free place shall not be over fourteen on the 31st December preceding the date of his admission to the secondary school. The average age for passing this standard ranges from 13 years and 6 months in Auckland to 14 years and 2 months in Marlborough, the average age for the colony being, as it was last year, 13 years and 10 months, and there is therefore ground for the belief that competent children, for whom the privilege is mainly intended, are not likely to find the restriction interfere with their promotion to the secondary schools.

TABLE C4.—AVERAGE AGE OF PUPILS AT STANDARD EXAMINATIONS IN 1903.

Education Districts.			Average Ages of the Pupils in each Class.								Mean of Ages.	
			P.	I.	II.	III.	IV.	V.	VI.	VII.	1903.	1902.
			Yrs. mos.	Yrs. mos.	Yrs. mos.	Yrs. mos.	Yrs. mos.	Yrs. mos.	Yrs. mos.	Yrs. mos.	Yrs. mos.	Yrs. mos.
Auckland	..	..	7 2	9 0	9 11	10 11	11 11	13 1	13 6	14 7	11 3	11 9
Taranaki	..	..	7 2	9 2	10 3	11 7	12 7	13 4	13 10	14 5	11 6	11 10
Wanganui	..	..	7 0	8 11	9 11	11 3	12 3	13 0	13 10	15 0	11 4	11 6
Wellington	..	..	7 0	8 8	9 10	10 11	11 11	12 11	13 8	14 3	11 2	11 3
Hawke's Bay	..	..	7 7	8 9	9 11	11 1	12 3	13 2	14 1	14 5	11 5	11 5
Marlborough	..	..	6 8	8 7	9 7	10 11	12 0	13 2	14 2	15 1	11 3	11 5
Nelson	..	..	6 11	8 10	9 11	11 3	12 2	13 0	13 8	14 10	11 4	11 5
Grey	..	..	7 1	9 0	9 11	11 1	12 0	12 11	14 0	14 4	11 4	11 5
Westland	..	..	6 10	8 8	9 11	11 1	12 5	13 2	13 10	14 7	11 4	11 5
North Canterbury*	..	..	..	8 9	9 10	10 11	11 11	12 10	13 9	..	11 4	11 4
South Canterbury	..	..	6 11	8 10	9 9	10 9	11 10	12 9	13 8	15 0	11 2	11 3
Otago	..	..	6 7	8 11	9 11	10 10	12 0	12 9	13 9	15 2	11 3	11 0
Southland	..	..	7 1	8 9	9 11	10 11	11 10	12 10	13 8	14 7	11 2	11 4
Mean of all districts	..	..	7 0†	8 10	9 11	11 0	12 1	13 0	13 10	14 8†	11 4	11 5
Range (difference between highest and lowest)	..	..	1 0†	0 7	0 8	0 10	0 9	0 7	0 8	0 11†	0 4	0 10
Mean in 1902	..	..	..	8 10	9 11	10 11	12 0	13 0	13 10	..	..	11 5
Range in 1902	..	..	..	0 9	1 0	0 11	0 9	1 2	0 10	..	..	0 10

* Particulars for classes P. and S7 were not furnished by the Board's Inspectors. † Omitting North Canterbury.

In Table D is given the number of pupils receiving instruction in each subject of the syllabus. The most noticeable features are the large increases in the numbers learning handwork, singing, and drill, and the falling off in those learning grammar and elementary science.

TABLE D.—NUMBER OF PUPILS INSTRUCTED IN EACH SUBJECT, DECEMBER, 1903.

Education Districts.	Numbers being longed at End of Year.	Reading.	Spelling and Dictation.	Writing.	Composition.	Arithmetic.	Geography.	Drawing.	Grammar.
Auckland ..	29,258	29,258	29,258	29,258	14,563	29,163	17,258	28,991	13,407
Taranaki ..	4,718	4,718	4,718	4,718	2,120	4,718	2,733	4,076	2,050
Wanganui ..	11,802	11,802	11,802	11,802	7,125	11,765	7,593	11,156	5,940
Wellington ..	15,508	15,508	15,508	15,508	8,788	15,508	8,788	15,275	8,157
Hawke's Bay ..	8,426	8,426	8,426	8,426	4,551	8,419	5,304	8,317	4,295
Marlborough ..	1,962	1,962	1,936	1,962	1,021	1,962	1,265	1,938	1,009
Nelson ..	5,614	5,614	5,614	5,614	3,239	5,614	3,537	4,807	3,108
Grey ..	1,601	1,601	1,601	1,601	859	1,601	905	1,601	859
Westland ..	1,087	1,087	1,087	1,087	539	1,064	647	927	531
North Canterbury	19,579	19,579	19,579	19,579	10,123	19,579	12,154	19,298	9,700
South Canterbury	4,995	4,995	4,995	4,995	2,642	4,995	3,164	3,104	2,561
Otago ..	19,504	19,504	19,504	19,504	10,326	19,504	12,288	19,001	10,095
Southland ..	9,514	9,514	9,514	9,514	4,984	9,514	6,151	9,304	4,913
Totals for 1903	133,568	133,568	133,542	133,568	70,885	133,406	81,787	127,795	66,625
Totals for 1902	132,262	132,261	132,262	132,261	67,420	132,234	80,357	118,900	74,401
Difference ..	1,306	1,307	1,280	1,307	3,365	1,172	1,430	8,895	-7,776