

to so inconvenience the examination of the school that in future we must claim the liberty given in the regulations, and refuse to re-examine any applicant within three months. The chief incentive towards getting the proficiency certificate is that it may lead to obtaining a free place at a secondary school. The latest regulation *re* free places is again in the direction of extension, as junior free places may be held up to the age of seventeen, and senior to nineteen years, and the day on which the junior free place holder must have been under fourteen is changed from 31st December to 1st December. Ten per cent. of free places may be also awarded to those who have obtained the certificate, but are over fourteen years of age. The Nelson College Governors have, we understand, decided to allot these according to merit, the marks obtained when sitting for the certificate being taken as the basis of calculation. To put the matter baldly, every child possessing a proficiency certificate and under fourteen years of age on 1st December is offered a free college education, which with diligence may be extended to five years. We notice, too, that by the latest amendments the age of entry for the Junior National Scholarships has been lowered from fourteen to thirteen years of age on the first day of the month in which the examination is held.

A special examination was also held in Nelson in November, when nine candidates presented themselves for the sixth proficiency and one for the fifth competency certificate, five being successful. Three other special examinations, in each case of a single candidate, one taking Standard V work and the others Standard VI, were held, and all passed, one proficiency and two competency certificates being granted. At the school examinations we received a very small number of applications to sit for certificates of competency in Standard V, and none in Standard IV, parents being still, we suppose, unfamiliar with the conditions, or having no immediate requirements for such awards. No one whose name was not on some school roll applied to sit at any school examination.

The schools have now had a full year's working under the new syllabus, and though misconceptions still exist in regard to the requirements, as well as concerning the very nature of the work itself, we are well satisfied with the conduct of the great majority of our schools throughout the year, teachers having as a rule more than held their own, improvement being general. The difficulty of making out systematic and intelligible programmes of work was too great for some of our beginners, so that we found it advisable to suggest to our sole teachers a course in certain subjects. This, being almost everywhere eagerly adopted, relieved the young teacher of worry and responsibility and helped to simplify our labours.

The figures submitted show our classification of the schools examined, according to general efficiency: Good, 24; satisfactory to good, 4; satisfactory, 69; efficient, 97. Fair to satisfactory, 6; fair, 10; non-efficient, 16. Our troubles are chiefly to be found in the smallest schools of Grades 0 and 1. The perpetual changes of staff, the lack of competent teachers on account of the smallness of the salaries and the isolation of life, the teacher's consequent inexperience, want of scholarship or of training, as these schools too often must be managed by novices, are insuperable drawbacks to complete efficiency. The remedy is, as we have already pointed out, to have as few separate small schools as possible, and to bring together the children of two or more schools so that one may be formed sufficiently large to requite the services of a competent teacher. The increased grant made by the Department for the conveyance of children over three miles to and from school, though it does not yet err on the side of extravagance, should help to foster the system, which has done so much for rural schools in the United States and in Canada.

Except in arithmetic and in geography A, but little has yet been done to supply suitable text-books, a matter to which we last year called attention; and really good historical and geographical readers would be of great benefit to small schools. Writing and drawing books adapted to the syllabus are also required.

The table submitted shows our opinion of the quality of the work done in each of the compulsory subjects. The term used denotes a certain percentage and corresponds to the average marks for the subject of each class from Preparatory to Standard VII, which again are averaged, the higher term being used if the value of the mark is over half.

	Excellent.	Good to Ex- cellent.	Good.	Satisfactory to Good.	Satisfactory.	Efficient.	Fair to Satisfactory.	Fair.	Moderate to Fair.	Moderate.	Inferior to Moderate.	Inferior.	Non-efficient.	Total School.
Reading ...	...	...	12	15	74	101	6	6	...	...	...	...	12	113
Composition ...	...	1	21	14	46	82	9	18	2	1	...	1	31	113
Writing ...	...	...	20	9	57	86	12	15	...	...	...	...	27	113
Spelling ...	9	5	32	10	28	84	6	12	...	11	...	...	29	113
Recitation ...	1	...	25	13	66	105	3	5	...	...	...	...	8	113
Arithmetic ...	...	...	14	7	35	56	8	35	2	11	...	1	57	113
Drawing ...	...	...	13	9	67	89	11	11	...	1	...	...	23	112
Singing ...	1	3	19	12	41	76	6	16	...	1	...	1	24	100
Physical Instruction...	5	2	32	14	32	85	9	11	...	1	...	1	22	107
Geography ...	...	...	4	1	26	31	6	42	5	21	1	5	80	111
History ...	...	...	13	12	26	51	11	18	9	4	...	3	45	96
Model-instruction ...	...	...	3	...	107	110	1	2	...	...	...	...	3	113