

SUMMARY OF RESULTS FOR THE WHOLE DISTRICT.

Classes.						Number on Roll.	Present at Inspector's Annual Visit.	Average Age of Pupils in each Class.
								Yrs. mos.
Standard VII	...	...	...	...	...	432	374	14 7
" VI	...	...	...	...	...	1,383	1,346	13 9
" V	...	...	...	...	...	2,025	1,966	12 11
" IV	...	...	...	...	...	2,322	2,266	12 1
" III	...	...	...	...	...	2,551	2,470	11 0
" II	...	...	...	...	...	2,398	2,316	10 0
" I	...	...	...	...	...	2,249	2,177	8 11
Preparatory	...	...	...	...	...	6,230	5,641	7 0
Totals	...	...	...	...	...	19,590	18,556	11 3*

* Mean of average age.

SOUTH CANTERBURY.

SIR,—

Timaru, 31st March, 1906.

We have the honour to present our annual report on the schools of South Canterbury District for the year 1905.

The number of schools in operation at the end of the year was seventy-four, the same as last year, but three small schools will shortly be added to the list. With the exception of the small school at Totara Valley, all the schools were examined during the second half of the year, and visits were also paid to nearly all the schools in the earlier part of the year.

The examination of the Roman Catholic schools took place at the usual time. The five schools have a roll-number of 554 pupils, of whom 491 were present at our annual visit. Of the forty-five pupils examined in the Sixth Standard twenty-five obtained certificates of proficiency, and nine obtained certificates of competency. These schools are conducted with very fair efficiency, and have been favourably reported on for order, discipline, and tone.

The examination of pupil-teachers was held in July. This was a less onerous undertaking than it was a few years ago, owing in the first place to the smaller number of pupil-teachers now employed, and in the second place to the fact that so many of those employed had already qualified for examinations of a higher grade. An entrance examination of those desiring to become pupil-teachers was held in December. Nine candidates—one boy and eight girls—presented themselves, and five passed. Eight pupil-teachers who had spent their period of service under this Board have proceeded to the Christchurch Training-college. In former years they would have continued in South Canterbury as assistants or as teachers in charge of small country schools, but of necessity only very partially equipped for efficient service in such positions. It should be of the highest advantage to themselves and to the country that instead of this they are now to undergo a period of special professional training, and our hope is that they may return to our district on the completion of their course well equipped for useful service, and with high ideals of their honourable calling. Three others that have not been pupil-teachers enter the Training-college from South Canterbury as scholarship holders—one who is a graduate of the University of New Zealand, one who has passed the first section of the B.A. degree, and one who obtained a place in the credit list of the University Junior Scholarship Examination.

This year, for the first time, candidates for the Board's Senior Scholarships took the examination conducted by the Education Department, a departure from our former practice which has the recommendation of lessening the number of examinations that pupils at this stage are compelled to undergo.

The Education Department's examination of candidates for Junior National Scholarships was held in December at suitable centres in all the education districts. One scholarship is offered for competition yearly to pupils in this district who fulfil the required conditions as to age, income of parents, &c., and ten candidates presented themselves for examination. To satisfy the requirements of the examination a candidate must receive 50 per cent. of the obtainable marks, and it is highly satisfactory to record that eight of the ten succeeded in doing so.

The higher work of the district high schools at Waimate, Temuka, Geraldine, and Pleasant Point was examined at the time of our annual visit to these schools, and special reports on the work were submitted to the Board. From these reports it will be seen that the four schools had a roll-number of 130 pupils in Standard VII, of whom 116 were present for examination. The rest of the pupils of Standard VII, to the number of forty-four, were distributed over twenty-two schools, and of these forty-four pupils twenty-nine were present at our visit, the percentage of absentees being out of all proportion to that in other classes. Most of those that faced the examiner to be tested on the work professed for the year showed that they had made good use of their time; but the large number of absentees seemed to argue an indifference to the opportunities for advancement afforded by this extra year's schooling, and should be fairly reckoned an unfavourable sign of the tone of the schools that contributed their quota of absentees.