

The following is a 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	...	...	...	...	...	174	145	15 0
" VI	...	...	...	...	...	384	378	13 8
" V	...	...	...	...	...	558	536	12 9
" IV	...	...	...	...	...	586	571	11 10
" III	...	...	...	...	...	605	584	11 0
" II	...	...	...	...	...	618	602	9 11
" I	...	...	...	...	...	591	574	8 10
Preparatory	...	...	...	...	...	1,565	1,439	7 0
Totals	...	...	...	...	...	5,081	4,829	11 3*

* Mean of average age.

Comparing this return with that of last year we note an increase of ninety-five in the roll-number of the Preparatory class, Standards I, II, III, and VII, and a decrease of eighty-seven in Standards IV, V, and VI, the net gain being only eight over the total roll-number for 1904. The attendance at the Inspectors' annual visit was 95 per cent. of the number on the roll, and 97.1 per cent. of those in Standards I to VI. The average age remains the same in Standards IV, V, and VI; it is lower by one month in Standard VII, and it has risen one month in the Preparatory class and in Standards I and II, and three months in Standards III.

It has been frequently remarked how keen an interest the general public take in matters relating to the management of our schools, and in view of this widespread interest it is well to point out again that the question of the fitness of pupils for promotion to a higher class is now determined by the periodical examinations held by the head teacher. In accordance with the regulations not fewer than three of these periodical examinations of the classes shall be held during the year on the schemes of work drawn up by the head teacher for all the classes in his school; and a record of the nature and results of these examinations must be kept for the information of the Inspector when he pays his annual visit. In general the promotion of a pupil to a higher class will take effect immediately after the Inspectors' examination of the school, but the promotion of a pupil of exceptional ability need not be delayed till that occasion. What the teacher has specially to guard against is not the keeping-back of bright pupils, but undue haste in promoting the unfit to the detriment of the pupils so promoted, and of the other members of the class on whom they act as a drag. The Inspector at his annual visit satisfies himself of the general efficiency of the instruction given in the school, and examines candidates for certificates of competency and certificates of proficiency.

We had only three claimants to be examined for certificates of competency in Standard V; two were pupils under fourteen years of age whose parents wished to obtain for them certificates of exemption from further school attendance, and one was a pupil wishing to enter a secondary school. In each case the necessary certificate was gained. Of the 378 Standard VI pupils present at the Inspectors' annual visit, forty-eight obtained certificates of competency and thereby became eligible for employment in certain branches of the public service. Of the others, 235 gained certificates of proficiency. This certificate entitles the holder to a free place at a district high school until he has reached his seventeenth birthday, or, with certain restrictions, to a free place for two years at a secondary school. Under the latest regulations respecting free places in secondary schools and district high schools, the treatment is more liberal than formerly in the case of a pupil who, being over fourteen years of age on the 1st December preceding the date of his admission to a secondary school, has obtained a certificate of proficiency. Once admitted to the secondary school he is assured of free tuition for two years or of such part of two years as brings him to his seventeenth birthday, no junior free place being tenable in any case after the holder has reached that age. Let it not be forgotten, however, that the clause of the regulations which defines the standard of attainment for a certificate of proficiency has been amended with a view to raising the standard, and thus enabling a clearer distinction to be drawn between the certificate of competency and the certificate of proficiency. To gain the latter a pupil will henceforth require to obtain at least 40 per cent. of the possible marks in English (including not less than 40 per cent. in reading and composition respectively); to obtain at least 40 per cent. of the possible marks in arithmetic; to obtain at least 60 per cent. of the possible aggregate marks in the following compulsory subjects—viz., English (reading, spelling, writing, and composition), arithmetic, geography, and drawing; and to satisfy the Inspector that he has received sufficient instruction in the other compulsory subjects. In consequence of the raising of the standard of attainment which this amendment is intended to bring into operation in the examination of Standard VI pupils, it is safe to predict that a considerable reduction may be expected in the number of those gaining certificates of proficiency with the privileges pertaining thereto. The certificate of proficiency will be a "merit" certificate, the certificate of competency a "pass" in Standard VI.

In our brief estimate of the efficiency of each school we have classed them as follows: Good to very good, fifteen schools with 2,403 pupils; satisfactory, thirty schools with 1,840 pupils; fair, fourteen schools with 516 pupils; inferior to moderate, fourteen schools with 322 pupils. In only four schools of this last group, which must be considered as "weak," were the teachers in charge of their schools from the time of our previous annual visit, and therefore responsible for the year's work. In their case it was mainly owing to their own shortcomings that their schools were placed in the lowest class. The other ten schools of the "weak" group had many difficulties to contend with, the con-