

The tendency for the last few years has been for the number of children in preparatory classes to increase in undue proportion to the total number of children under eight years of age. The figures for 1905 indicated that this tendency had received a check. The figures for 1906 confirm this view. In the proportion of children enrolled in preparatory classes, a further increase of 1·08 per cent. is shown over the figures for 1905, but the returns record a much larger increase in the totals under seven years of age, in which an advance from 25,312 to 26,320 is to be noted, an increase of 3·87 per cent.

Table D2 gives the number of children on the rolls of the schools in each district and the number present at the time of the Inspector's annual visit, and also shows the number of certificates of proficiency and competency issued. From this it will be seen that 9,929 pupils were present at the annual examination in Standard VI, of which number 5,507, or 55·46 per cent., gained a certificate of proficiency, and 2,680, or 26·99 per cent., gained a certificate of competency; a total of 8,187, or 82·45 per cent., gaining either the proficiency or competency certificate. For 1905 the respective percentages were 66·54, 17·85, and 84·31. The fall of 11 per cent. in the certificates of proficiency awarded is chiefly due to the stricter test imposed for that certificate, and this view is borne out by the fact that there is a difference of only 1·86 in the number of certificates awarded at both examinations last year as compared with 1905.

TABLE D2.—EXAMINATION STATISTICS FOR 1906.

Education Districts.	Number of Pupils.					Standard VI Certificates granted.		
	Total Rolls on Day of Annual Visit.	Present on Day of Annual Visit.	Present in Preparatory Classes.	Present in Standard VI Classes.	Present in Standard VII Classes.	Pro-ficiency.	Compe-tency.	Total.
Auckland	32,697	30,955	11,395	2,104	134	1,437	443	1,880
Taranaki	5,079	4,805	1,526	313	87	86	182	268
Wanganui	12,645	11,975	3,867	848	224	349	263	612
Wellington	16,809	15,741	4,589	1,343	541	809	369	1,178
Hawke's Bay	9,057	8,455	2,738	481	124	245	132	377
Marlborough	2,030	1,925	489	168	36	48	28	76
Nelson	5,595	5,335	1,672	485	88	195	162	357
Grey	1,590	1,540	624	110	19	70	38	108
Westland	1,047	1,000	347	73	48	59	10	69
North Canterbury	19,620	18,617	5,888	1,430	329	810	442	1,252
South Canterbury	5,149	4,830	1,460	398	132	182	145	327
Otago	19,413	18,693	6,053	1,427	366	867	326	1,193
Southland	9,653	9,230	2,851	749	197	350	140	490
Totals	140,384	133,101	43,499	9,929	2,325*	5,507	2,680	8,187†

*Including secondary departments of district high schools. † The number of certificates included in this total granted to children of Maori and mixed races is shown in Table B4.

Table D3 shows the average ages of the children in the several standards at the time of the Inspector's annual visit, also the mean of the average ages in each case for the colony as a whole. The average age of those in Standard V, the "standard of exemption," was in Grey 12 years and 3 months, and in Westland 13 years and 2 months, these being the lowest and highest respectively. For the colony the average age of the children in this standard in 1906 was 12 years and 11 months, about the same as that for the previous year.

TABLE D3.—AVERAGE AGE OF PUPILS IN 1906 AT THE TIME OF ANNUAL VISIT.

Education Districts.	Average Ages of the Pupils in each Class.								Mean of Ages.	
	P. Yrs. mos.	I. Yrs. mos.	II. Yrs. mos.	III. Yrs. mos.	IV. Yrs. mos.	V. Yrs. mos.	VI. Yrs. mos.	VII. Yrs. mos.	1906. Yrs. mos.	1905. Yrs. mos.
Auckland	6 4	9 3	10 2	11 2	12 1	13 0	13 10	15 11	11 6	11 4
Taranaki	7 0	9 0	10 2	11 3	12 5	13 0	13 11	15 2	11 6	11 5
Wanganui	6 11	9 0	9 11	11 0	12 1	12 11	13 8	14 11	11 4	11 4
Wellington	6 11	8 8	9 10	10 11	11 11	12 9	13 8	14 7	11 2	11 2
Hawke's Bay	6 10	8 11	10 1	11 1	11 11	12 11	14 0	14 11	11 4	11 4
Marlborough	7 1	8 11	9 8	10 11	11 9	13 0	13 9	14 9	11 3	11 3
Nelson	6 10	8 10	9 8	10 11	11 11	12 11	13 8	14 8	11 2	11 3
Grey	6 9	8 8	10 0	10 7	11 9	12 3	13 8	14 8	11 1	11 2
Westland	6 8	9 1	9 9	11 6	12 2	13 2	13 5	15 9	11 5	11 5
North Canterbury	7 0	9 0	10 1	11 1	12 1	13 0	13 9	14 9	11 4	11 3
South Canterbury	6 11	8 10	10 0	11 0	12 0	12 11	13 8	15 1	11 4	11 3
Otago	6 11	8 11	9 11	11 0	12 0	12 10	13 8	14 11	11 2	11 4
Southland	7 0	8 10	9 11	11 0	11 11	12 9	13 8	14 10	11 3	11 3
Average for colony	6 9	9 0	10 0	11 1	12 0	12 11	13 9	15 1	11 4	..
Range (difference between highest and lowest)	0 9	0 7	0 6	0 11	0 8	0 11	0 7	1 4	0 5	..
Average for colony, 1905	7 1	8 11	10 0	11 1	12 0	12 10	13 9	14 9	..	11 3
Range (difference between highest and lowest)	0 8	0 6	0 9	0 7	0 4	0 8	0 5	1 2	..	0 3