

the age-limit should be done away with, and that the Standard VI competency certificate should be the qualifying test for a free place. The Standard VI competency certificate represents a substantial measure of attainment—a higher one than that usually required of paying pupils. The barrier of age should not be permitted to prevent any one from reaching the higher walks of education. Mr. Foster Fraser ("Pictures from the Balkans") informs us that in Servia (three millions population) education is free from the elementary school to the university. New Zealand may learn from even reputedly backward States.

The following is a general summary for the district :—

Classes.						Number on Roll.	Present at Inspector's Annual Visit.	Average Age.
								Yrs. mos.
Standard VII	...	...	...	...	...	42	36	14 9
" VI	...	...	...	...	...	175	168	13 9
" V	...	...	...	...	...	224	220	13 0
" IV	...	...	...	...	...	275	270	11 9
" III	...	...	...	...	...	251	246	10 11
" II	...	...	...	...	...	262	259	9 8
" I	...	...	...	...	...	243	237	8 11
Preparatory	...	...	...	...	...	558	489	7 1
Totals ...						2,030	1,925	11 3*

* Mean of average age.

At the close of the year twelve small schools were without teachers. The chief hope of these schools must lie in trained monitors, for they will always be too small to attract qualified teachers. In this direction the teachers of the larger schools may and do help the outlying parts of the province. There were also seven pupil-teachers.

That the improvement looked for in the work of the pupil-teachers at the time of last report has come about is shown by the fact that all of those who sat locally improved their standing. The criticism lessons, while not yet quite satisfactory, revealed a higher measure of skill. There is manifest also among the adult teachers a widespread effort either to obtain a certificate or to improve the one already held. There have been many changes of the staff during the past year, quite a third of the schools being affected. The causes are various—marriage, retirement, promotion, and travel with a view to greater efficiency, all contributing. Three of the older teachers have retired on superannuation. It is grateful to think that their country has recognised their life's work, and has given a solace to their declining years.

READING.—In the definition of reading for the teachers' D certificate, the following aspects of the subject are referred to: Enunciation, pronunciation, tone, inflection, fluency, expression, character, and intelligence. The teacher would do well to keep this list of characteristics before him during the reading-lesson, and to study the efforts of the children from each point of view. Insufficient advantage appeared to be taken of the privilege of selecting a number of lessons from the reading-book for special study. Those teachers that did make selection sometimes chose too few. The syllabus suggests six of the best prose lessons and the pieces chosen for recitation. The trouble with "h" was less pronounced this year, and there was evidence of an organized attempt to deal with it. There was also noticeable in some schools a more careful syllabification, accompanied by a slow and clear enunciation; a number of schools might benefit by giving attention to the rate of reading. On several occasions pupils pronounced "saw" as "sor," "idea" as "idear." No one who has listened attentively to the rich tones of the Maori speaking English would like to reduce their vocalization to the thinner mode of some other parts of our nation. It is questionable how far the use of "oi" for "i" comes under this head. The dropping of "h" and the use of "sor" for "saw" are a different matter, being simply barbarisms.

In the upper standards there might be more correlation of reading and spelling under the head of "Word-building." Some teachers seemed to have a wrong notion of what was required in regard to prefixes and suffixes. It is the meaning of these particles that should be emphasized. Their origin is of merely third-rate importance. It is much more to the point that the pupil should understand that "ex" in "expel" and the first "e" in "eject" mean "out," and that "pro" in "propel," means "forward," than that they should know that these prefixes are of Latin origin.

Six schools made considerable additions to their libraries. £47 12s. 6d. was granted by the Board in pound-for-pound subsidies on libraries and apparatus.

SPELLING improved considerably, especially in Standard VI, where the percentage of success was 66 as compared with 60 of the previous year. Of the larger schools Renwick and Blenheim girls may be noted, and of the smaller ones Ugbrooke deserves mention for skilful treatment of this subject.

WRITING.—Seventy-three per cent. of Standard VI met the requirements in 1905, and 84 per cent. in 1906—a very satisfactory result. There are, however, still several comparatively large schools that leave something to be desired. The neatness of the general writing improved greatly. Transcription usually consisted merely in writing a passage from a book. To write out the advertisements of the itinerary of the leading shipping companies as seen in the chief papers of the colony would be a useful correlation. This would give an idea of trade routes as well as practice in transcription. By exhibits in writing at the New Zealand International Exhibition, Tira Ora obtained two gold medals and Okaramio a bronze one.