

The following summary for the whole district has been, as usual, compiled for the Inspector's annual return :—

Classes.					Number on Roll.	Present at Inspector's Annual Visit.	Average Age of Pupils in each Class.
							Yrs. mós.
Standard VII	...	...	...	...	103	88	14 8
" VI	...	...	...	...	490	485	13 8
" V	...	...	...	...	519	506	12 11
" IV	...	...	...	...	659	646	11 11
" III	...	...	...	...	691	676	10 11
" II	...	...	...	...	638	630	9 8
" I	...	...	...	...	649	632	8 10
Preparatory	...	...	...	...	1,846	1,672	6 10
Totals	...	...	...	...	5,595	5,335	11 2½*

* Mean of average age.

Included in Standard VII are sixty pupils attending one or other of our three district high schools. In connection with these pupils, we think they could with advantage begin to specialise in the direction of studies particularly suited to their environment.

The Preparatory class again shows an increase of forty-five, and Standard IV of forty-one, whilst Standards VI and VII are higher by twenty-six and eight respectively; but Standard II and Standard V are much smaller by seventy-six and eighty-five respectively. The total, though higher than in 1904, is thirty-seven below last year's return.

It is a curious fact that as usual the number of boys in this district, as well as in other parts of the colony, greatly exceeds that of the girls. The last report of the Minister of Education—that for the year 1905—states: "The proportion of boys to girls is almost the same as for the previous five years, 52·28 per cent, as compared with 47·72 per cent. Taking the average for the last five years, it is found that for every 100 boys on the roll there were ninety-two girls." On the roll for our September quarter we find only eighty-nine girls to every 100 boys.

The average age in Standard I and Standard V is the same as that recorded last year; in all other classes it is one or two months younger, so that the mean, eleven years two months, has fallen by one month. The average for the colony for the last two years has been eleven years three months.

The number present at our examinations, though not so high as last year, was exceedingly creditable—95·3 per cent. At forty-seven schools again every child on the school-roll was present. The number of proficiency certificates issued at public-school examinations was 195, and of Standard VI competency, 162 (last year 249 and 125 respectively). Fifteen schools, all under sole teachers, had no pupils in Standard VI, and in thirty-three that presented candidates no certificates of proficiency were gained.

In accordance with Regulation 18, twenty-one candidates in Standard V, and one in Standard IV, sat for certificates of competency.

The average age of those that obtained the proficiency certificate was thirteen years six months. The examination-time extends from the 1st July to near the end of November, or five months at most; so that those of average age that passed earliest are still one month under fourteen years of age on the 1st December. Clearly, then, the great majority of certificate-gainers have qualified for free places at secondary schools, awards that are evidently within the reach of all possessing more than average ability. Only 40 per cent. of these sitting obtained the certificate, the requirements for which were, since August, 1905, more exacting, while the nature of the tasks set for composition this year added fresh difficulty to that part of the examination.

In estimating the general efficiency of a school we have attached a definite value to every subject taught in a school of that grade, and the conclusion we arrive at is based upon the average mark assigned to each of those subjects. In schools under sole teachers the compulsory subjects only are exacted, so that work done in any of the additional subjects brings extra credit, as it increases but cannot diminish the average assigned for the compulsory subjects. Many causes may contribute to the inefficiency of a school, for to fulfil our idea of efficiency a school must have been satisfactorily conducted throughout the whole of the year. Sixteen schools in all failed to attain a satisfactory standard; but in only five cases can we attribute the blame to the inefficiency of the present experienced teacher. In all others the inexperience of the teacher, a change of teachers in the course of the year, or loss of time on the children's part, has had a deleterious effect. It might be argued that where the Inspector gives greater attention to the method of teaching than the knowledge acquired by the children, causes such as these should have little effect. But, unfortunately, we find that a change of teachers often reveals glaring lack of method. For example, subjects of instruction or branches which should have been begun at the commencement of the school year and systematically co-ordinated with other branches, have been entirely omitted with the intention possibly of rushing through them at the close of the year. A teacher with such methods has evidently failed to keep faith with his own time-table, and probably neglected to adhere to or perhaps to draw up quarterly programmes of work. Given such conduct one cannot reasonably expect the pupils of the school to be receiving the highest moral training.

ENGLISH (COMPOSITION, ETC.).—The following figures give a comparative estimate of the work done for the last two years in this branch of English in Standards III to VI. The figures indicate the per-