

Act, the increase in salaries, though large, being still disproportionate to the increased cost of living and to the higher remuneration paid in other callings, and the failure of the Training College, perhaps merely on account of the shortness of time, to supply this district, at any rate, with any trainees. Now, and for the next year or two, the difficulty will be accentuated on account of the larger number of positions as assistant teachers formed by the Amendment Act of 1908—for example, the assistant allowed for a school of thirty-six in average attendance, the additional one at eighty-one, and those required to replace the pupil-teachers now employed. As an uncertificated teacher can by the Act be employed only temporarily, it would be well for the Board to insist upon every such appointment being for the current year only, and, as a condition for re-appointment, the appointee's presenting himself for the Department's certificate examination at the end of the year. This, without detriment to any worthy applicant, would deter those who have no serious intention of taking up professional work in earnest from attempting to make a convenience of the service.

The following table is taken from the Inspectors' annual return:—

Classes.					Number on Roll.	Present at the Annual Examination.	Average Age of Pupils in each Class.
							Yrs. mos.
Standard VII	...	...	...	...	113	104	14 9
" VI	...	...	...	...	441	437	13 8
" V	...	...	...	...	603	587	12 9
" IV	...	...	...	...	631	614	11 11
" III	...	...	...	...	662	639	11 0
" II	...	...	...	...	632	622	9 11
" I	...	...	...	...	588	573	8 11
Preparatory	...	...	...	...	2,019	1,848	6 11
Totals for 1908					5,689	5,424	11 3*
Totals for 1907					5,564	5,211	11 3*

* Mean of average age.

Of the number in Standard VII, eighty-four are members of the secondary classes of our district high schools. Though those in Standard I number fifty-nine less, the Preparatory class, which has been increasing of late, is larger this year by 160, and that without any alteration of the average age of the class, and now represents 35 per cent. of the total roll. The number in the Preparatory classes of the Dominion last year was 31 per cent. of the whole roll. We notice in the last report of the Minister of Education that the proportion of children in the Preparatory classes has been steadily increasing, while the proportion in the higher standards, VII to IV, has been falling.

The children mustered well at the Inspectors' visit. At forty schools every child whose name was on the school roll was present. One hundred and eighty-one certificates of proficiency and 155 of Standard VI competency were gained, the examination of the candidates being taken by ourselves as hitherto. The corresponding numbers last year were 225 and 138. The greater difficulty of the examination occasioned by the raising of the minimum marks required in reading, composition, and English would probably account for the greater number of failures.

In continuation of the altered scheme of examinations adopted last year, we have, in order to adhere as closely as possible to the time of the head teachers' final examinations, conducted our own examinations of schools in the larger centres as late as possible in the year, and held in November and December central examinations for Standard VI certificates at Nelson (3), Wakefield, Motueka, and Westport. Candidates who were not within easy reach of a centre were examined at their own schools at the time of the Inspectors' visit. Consequently it will now be possible in the great majority of our schools to make, without any dislocation of school work, all necessary promotions at the beginning of the school year. By anticipating the change last year, the arrangements made or suggested by us have enabled the average child to spend about fourteen and a half months instead of the usual year in the same standard class. As the district is so scattered and travelling throughout is so difficult, we find it almost impossible to centralise the whole of the district for Standard VI examinations, and also to conduct the examination of all schools within the time at our disposal. This year, in spite of very favourable weather-conditions, we were not able to fully complete the task in the half-year, and the extra labour entailed by the alteration of the usual arrangements made the work arduous, and kept us constantly employed without intermission for the many other duties that fall to the Inspector's lot. As the new class-lists containing columns for the marks assigned by the head teacher at his annual examination, the final one for the year, did not arrive in time for general distribution, and some teachers failed to hold an examination for the purpose, while several of the forms as returned to us were not in order, we decided for the sake of uniformity to make up our returns from the class-lists presented to us at the time of our visit, thus treating the head teacher's examination made immediately prior to that visit, as the final one for the year. We hope soon to have a uniform system adopted. In order to obtain time for the checking and the return of the duplicate schedules, it will be necessary for all the head teachers' annual examinations to be held before the end of November, so that the schedules may be forwarded to us for signature by the 1st December. If three term examinations are thus held by head teachers in June, September, and November, the courses of work on which those