

But from the fourth and fifth lines of Table B it will be seen that, while the number of children in the Dominion between the ages of 12 and 15 has increased by 11·4 per cent., the number of such children attending public schools has increased slightly more—namely, by 11·6 per cent.; hence the increase in the proportion of young children on the roll is not due to a decrease of the percentage of the population between 12 and 15 who are attending public schools.

(4.) The children may be spending a longer time in the infant or preparatory classes than they formerly spent.

That this is so is suggested by the rise in the average age of the children in S1 classes from 8 years 11 months in December, 1905, to 9 years 2 months in December, 1909.

TABLE A.—NUMBER OF CHILDREN FOR EACH YEAR OF AGE BETWEEN FIVE AND EIGHT YEARS OLD, (1) IN THE POPULATION, (2) ATTENDING PUBLIC SCHOOLS (EXCLUDING MAORIS).

	Age, Years.	December, 1905.			December, 1909.		
		Boys.	Girls.	Total.	Boys.	Girls.	Total.
(1.) Population	5-6	9,487	9,256	18,743	10,564	10,314	20,878
	6-7	9,300	8,841	18,141	10,356	9,851	20,207
	7-8	8,973	8,717	17,690	9,991	9,712	19,703
	5-8	27,760	26,814	54,574	30,911	29,877	60,788
(2.) Attending public schools .. .	5-6	5,719	5,178	10,897	6,905	5,996	12,901
	6-7	7,193	6,539	13,732	8,364	7,667	16,031
	7-8	7,804	7,348	15,152	8,944	8,254	17,198
	5-8	20,716	19,065	39,781	24,213	21,917	46,130
(3.) Number attending public schools (2), expressed as percentage of population	5-6	60·3	55·8	58·1	65·4	58·1	61·8
	6-7	77·3	74·0	75·7	80·8	77·8	79·3
	7-8	87·0	84·3	85·7	89·5	85·0	87·3
	5-8	74·6	71·1	72·9	78·3	73·4	75·9

Causes (1) and (3) having been shown not to operate, and the increased enrolment (2) between 5 and 8 only partly accounting for the facts, (4) remains as the chief factor of the increase in the P. classes. This is still more clearly indicated by the figures in Table B, whence it appears that, whereas in December, 1905, there were nearly 3,000 children less in the preparatory classes than there were children under eight years of age (36,823, as against 39,781) in December, 1909, the number of children in the preparatory classes exceeded by over 7,000 the number of children under eight years of age (53,420 as against 46,130).

TABLE B.—NUMBER OF CHILDREN BETWEEN FIVE AND EIGHT YEARS OF AGE AND BETWEEN TWELVE AND FIFTEEN YEARS OF AGE IN THE POPULATION AND ON THE ROLLS OF PUBLIC SCHOOLS, AND NUMBER IN PREPARATORY CLASSES (EXCLUDING MAORIS).

	December, 1905.			December, 1909.			Increase per cent., 1905-9.		
	Boys.	Girls.	Total.	Boys.	Girls.	Total.	Boys.	Girls.	Total.
(1.) Number of population between five and eight years of age	27,760	26,814	54,574	30,911	29,877	60,788	11·4	11·4	11·4
(2.) Number of children attending public schools between five and eight years of age	20,716	19,065	39,781	24,213	21,917	46,130	16·9	15·0	16·0
(3.) Number of children in the preparatory classes of the public schools	19,580	17,243	36,823	28,353	25,067	53,420	44·8	45·4	45·1
(4.) Number of population between twelve and fifteen years of age	26,031	25,526	51,557	28,985	28,444	57,429	11·3	11·4	11·4
(5.) Number attending public schools between twelve and fifteen years of age	16,271	14,382	30,653	18,132	16,063	34,195	11·4	11·7	11·6

In other words, while the number of children in New Zealand between five and eight years of age increased by 6,214, and the number of children of those ages on the rolls of the public schools increased by 6,349, the number of children in the P classes increased by 16,597. Or, if we express the same statistics in percentages, from 1905 to 1909 the number of children in New Zealand of age 5-8 increased by 11·4 per cent., the number of children of those ages in public schools increased by 16 per cent., and the number in the P classes increased by 45 per cent. These facts are exhibited in detail in Table B.

[Neither in Table A nor in Table B has any account been taken of children attending private schools. If the rolls of the public schools had been increased through a smaller attendance at private schools our conclusions might have to be modified; but in reality during the years 1905-9 the percentage of the total population enrolled at private schools shows a slight increase—namely, from 1·88 per cent. to 1·91 per cent.]