

Three private schools open in December furnished returns showing 187 pupils on the rolls, with 180 present. The combined roll of public and private schools was therefore 2,480, as compared with 2,320 last year.

CERTIFICATES.—In remote schools the examination for proficiency was sometimes held at the time of the annual visit; but practically all pupils were able to come to one or other of the eight centres arranged in December. During the year, 179 pupils in public schools were examined in Standard VI; seventy-seven certificates of proficiency and fifty certificates of competency were awarded. In 1908 the numbers were seventy-seven and thirty-eight.

From private schools, fifteen candidates came for examination. Eleven proficiency and two competency certificates were awarded.

Ten schools in which all the standards were represented were placed in the "good" class—Picton, Tuamarina, Renwick, Grovetown, Waitohi, Marlboroughtown, Canvastown, Ward, Marshlands, Fairhall. The best all-round work of the year was found at Marshlands. The following schools which had one or more standards missing were also classed "good": Spring Creek, Riverlands, Ocean Bay, Ugbrooke, Tetley Brook, Waireka. The two Convent schools were in the "good" class.

The above list is larger than in the past years. Doubtless the excellent attendance during 1909 had something to do with the result. Four schools were classed "weak": they were all of grade 0.

ATTENDANCE.—The year 1909 was the jubilee year of Marlborough; the schools were therefore granted an extra week of holidays. This made the standard of attendance in half-days 410. Only twenty-nine schools reached this number. Forty-seven were open over 400 half-days.

Epidemics of measles and diphtheria were prevalent, affecting especially Picton and Tuamarina. Of the schools that were operating all the year, Tahuahua, with 353 half-days, had the lowest record.

Twenty-six of the forty-seven schools mentioned above recorded 90 per cent. of attendance. Those with an average of sixteen pupils at least were: Marshlands, 94.3 per cent.; Nydia Bay, 93 per cent.; Havelock Suburban, 92.5 per cent.; Renwick, 92 per cent.; Riverlands, 92 per cent.; Waitaria Bay, 92 per cent.; Grovetown, 91 per cent.; Rai Valley, 91 per cent.; North Bank, 90.6 per cent.; Spring Creek, 90 per cent.

The Truant Officer had practically no Court work.

The average roll of the whole district during the past year was 2,216; average attendance, 1,964, which is 88.62 per cent., the highest yet recorded in this district.

CLASSIFICATION OF TEACHERS.—In December, 1909, the following were the qualifications of the staff:—

	Certificated.	Licensed.	Uncertificated.	Total.
Head teachers	13	..	..	13
Sole teachers	12	1	52	65
Assistants	12	1	7	20
Totals	37	2	59	98

Pupil-teachers	..	..	..	6
Probationers	..	..	..	4
Cookery, woodwork, and agriculture (part-time) instructors	..	..	..	3

In December, 1908, there were only thirty certificated teachers; the increase to thirty-seven is highly satisfactory. Under the Act the uncertificated teacher holds a merely temporary appointment. Where the salary is equal to that of grade 1 the situation should, in the interests of the children, be advertised at intervals, unless the teacher be making some attempt to obtain a suitable qualification. There are thirty such positions held by uncertificated teachers in Marlborough. The salary of grade 1 is £90, rising by annual increments of £5 to £120, with £10 allowance in case of sole teachers. Eight of the thirty hold positions in grade 2, which, in the case of certificated teachers, would be worth £120, rising to £150, with £15 house allowance.

The great problem of the past year has been the small school. As mentioned elsewhere, twenty-two of these were working for only one, two, or three quarters. The broken time is due to various causes; among others may be mentioned the relatively small salaries exerting but a slight hold on the teacher, the household conditions of lodging, the remote situation of the schools, the uncertain nature of a teacher whose efficiency is for the most part only guessed at by the fact that she holds a Standard VI proficiency certificate. The teachers of these schools are mostly young, and they are faced, often without guidance for a time, with the problems of discipline and the preparation of a programme for their pupils. The ambitious teacher also finds herself far from assistance in private study. Such drawbacks—and they are not transient—make these schools a constant call on the advice rather than the criticism of the Inspector—advice in certain respects continually reiterated as the *personnel* of the staff changes. If this report enters frequently into matters of detail, the above are conditions that render the mode of treatment advisable, for the suggestions herein contained are, I find, readily followed by such teachers. The twenty-two schools mentioned contained 136 children, so that they cannot be neglected. When firmly established, these schools frequently produce very good work—not inferior sometimes to that of the largest schools; some have even produced scholarship-winners.

THE FINE ARTS EXHIBITION.—This was held in the Technical School, Blenheim, during jubilee week. Most of the exhibits were the work of school-children. His Excellency Lord Plunket visited