

There still is need for vigilance in checking the indulgence in an excessive amount of holiday time. Only thirty schools were kept open 420 times, though one industrious household school was in operation 470 times, and a school in Grade I worked on 454 half-days. Nineteen schools that operated throughout the four quarters, and should in ordinary course have done more, failed to attain to 400 times. In the case of at least six of these, all higher-grade schools, it is only fair to say that their being compelled to close for some weeks on account of the measles epidemic made it difficult for them to reach a high standard.

The classification of the 185 teachers in the employ of the Board on the 31st December is shown in the appended table:—

Grade.	Head Teachers.		Assistants.		Secondary Assistants.		Sole Teachers.		Total.
	Certificated.	Uncertificated.	Certificated.	Uncertificated.	Certificated.	Uncertificated.	Certificated.	Uncertificated.	
0	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	18	18
1	..	..	..	..	..	..	9	18	27
2	..	..	..	..	..	..	25	3	28
3	..	..	..	..	..	..	6	1	7
4	24	..	11	11	..	..	..	..	46
5	6	..	6	1	1	..	..	..	14
6	5	..	6	2	2	..	..	..	15
9	3	..	24	1	2	..	..	..	30
1911 ..	38	..	47	15	5	..	40	40	185
1910 ..	40	..	50	15	5	..	25	51	186

From the above table, in the compilation of which licensed teachers have been counted as certificated, it will be seen that the status of our staffs has much improved, especially in the number of certificated sole teachers. The proportion of uncertificated teachers is 29 per cent., as compared with 35 per cent. in 1910, and 31 per cent. in 1909; whilst that for New Zealand last year, calculated upon a somewhat similar basis, was 26 per cent. If we omit from such a calculation schools in Grade 0, for which a salary of only £6 a head, with a maximum of £48, is allowed, our percentage is 22 per cent. A large proportion of this 22 per cent. should be eliminated, and a beginning might well be made by insisting upon the sole teachers of Grade II schools and the assistants in schools above Grade IV being certificated. There are already in the service certificated teachers who might with advantage be transferred on promotion to such positions.

There were in addition twenty-eight pupil-teachers and ten probationers, the latter being over and above the regular staff of the schools. During the coming year, 1912, the pupil-teachers in schools of Grades V and VI—that is, with attendances of from 81 to 160—are being replaced by assistant teachers, all such changes having to be effected by January, 1913. Provided qualified assistants can in all cases be secured, the staffs of the schools concerned will be greatly strengthened, but we rather regret the prospect of the extinction of the pupil-teacher system, which with all its faults has hitherto proved the best means of supplying the service with capable teachers. We hope that a corresponding extension of the probationer system will be made, so as to enable more to readily gain admission to the service, which has suffered of late years from a dearth of qualified applicants.

Most of the items in the following summary for the public schools of the district form part of the Inspector's annual return:—

Classes.				Number on Roll.	Present at the Annual Examination.	Average Age of Pupils in each Class.	Average Age for the Dominion in 1910.
						Yrs. mos.	Yrs. mos.
Standard VII	...	...	...	137	118	14 7	15 0
" VI	...	...	...	366	350	14 0	14 0
" V	...	...	...	511	495	13 2	13 1
" IV	...	...	...	632	611	12 4	12 3
" III	...	...	...	685	667	11 4	11 3
" II	...	...	...	746	728	10 3	10 2
" I	...	...	...	725	708	9 1	9 2
Preparatory	...	...	...	2,349	2,170	7 0	7 0
Totals for 1911				6,151	5,847	9 9	9 10
Totals for 1910				5,966	5,671	9 9	9 10

The ages of children have in all cases been computed as on the 1st December. In some, especially of the very small schools, the figures have been taken from schedules prepared at our last inspection visit, but in the main they are compiled from the teacher's class lists, showing the