

Classes.					Number on Roll.	Present at the Annual Examination.	Average Age of the Pupils in each Class.
							Yrs. mos.
Standard VII	...	...	...	...	144	143	15 3
" VI	...	...	...	...	363	358	14 0
" V	...	...	...	...	560	547	13 1
" IV	...	...	...	...	619	597	12 2
" III	...	...	...	...	668	648	11 2
" II	...	...	...	...	692	676	10 2
" I	...	...	...	...	787	764	9 0
Preparatory	...	...	...	...	2,113	2,013	6 11
Totals	...	...	...	...	5,946	5,746	9 9

The figures in this table show for the year an increase of 177 in the roll number. There is a decrease of eighty-one in the Sixth Standard and of twelve in the Fourth Standard, but there is an increase in all the other classes.

The following is the summary for the Roman Catholic schools:—

Classes.					Number on Roll.	Present at the Annual Examination.	Average Age of the Pupils in each Class.
							Yrs. mos.
Standard VII	...	...	...	...	10	10	15 2
" VI	...	...	...	...	41	38	14 4
" V	...	...	...	...	40	39	13 4
" IV	...	...	...	...	56	56	12 8
" III	...	...	...	...	62	60	11 9
" II	...	...	...	...	57	55	9 11
" I	...	...	...	...	64	59	8 11
Preparatory	...	...	...	...	143	128	6 9
Totals	...	...	...	...	473	445	10 1

In 1911 the roll number of our public schools was 5,769, Standards I to VII having 3,673 pupils, and the preparatory classes 2,096, the percentage of the roll in the preparatory classes being 36·3 as compared with 37·3 for the schools of the Dominion as a whole. For the year just ended the roll number is 5,946, Standards I to VII having 3,833 pupils, and the preparatory classes 2,113, the percentage of the roll in the preparatory classes being 35·5. In view of the fact that the Inspector-General has directed attention to the astonishing increase in the percentage of pupils in the preparatory classes during recent years, it is some satisfaction to find that in this district this percentage shows a decrease during the past three years, the percentages being 36·8 in 1910, 36·3 in 1911, and 35·5 in 1912.

It should be known as widely as possible that the standard of exemption is now Standard VI, and that unless a pupil has passed Standard VI it is compulsory that he shall attend school until he reaches the age of fourteen years. We have warned teachers to keep a sharp look-out for cases of the withdrawal of children before they have reached the requisite age or the requisite standard, the need for the warning being evident when we note how the roll number diminishes from Standards IV to V and from Standards V to VI.

In our estimate of their efficiency we group the schools as follows: Good to very good, fifty schools, with 5,097 pupils; satisfactory, twenty-one schools, with 495 pupils; fair, nine schools, with 313 pupils; inferior to moderate, four schools, with forty-one pupils. Of a total of eighty-four schools reported on, seventy-one, with 5,592 pupils, are to be considered as conducted with efficiency; while the remaining thirteen schools, with 354 pupils, must be declared unsatisfactory. The corresponding figures last year were seventy-two schools, with 5,417 pupils, and eleven schools, with 352 pupils. The schools that have been reported as inefficient are sole-teacher schools, with the exception of three that belong to Grade IV—that is, schools taught by a master and an assistant—and it is disappointing to find that two of those three schools were in this unenviable position last year.

The examination of the pupils of Standard VI was conducted by us at the beginning of December, the examination being held at nine centres. The candidates at Hakateramea and at Hakateramea Valley were examined by the Inspector in their own schools at the time of his annual visit. Of the 354 candidates who entered for the examination, 349 were present, 248 gained certificates of proficiency, and seventy-two gained certificates of competency, the percentage of passes for the higher certificates being 71, and for the lower 20·6. The corresponding percentages last year were 62·8 and 22·5. The striking increase in the percentage of those that gained certificates of proficiency was mainly due to the tests in arithmetic being less severe in character than those of previous years. We are of opinion that it would be in the best interests of our schools still further to reduce the demands in arithmetic, and we should then feel justified in asking for a higher level of attainment to be reached by the candidates in their English composition. From the Roman Catholic schools thirty-nine candidates were presented for the Sixth Standard examination, and all were present; seventeen gained certificates of proficiency, and sixteen gained certificates of competency. The average age of candidates from the public schools was fourteen years, and from the Roman Catholic schools fourteen years and four months.