

motions. A number of pupils who acquitted themselves satisfactorily in English and arithmetic have had their certificates deferred pending satisfaction of the above-named requirements. For this examination 839 pupils were entered as belonging to Standard VI at the date of the Inspectors' annual visits to the schools, but only 761 were present at the final examination; 104 candidates from the Roman Catholic schools also sat, and thirty-six from various private and high schools, the total number examined being 901. The number of certificates of proficiency and competency granted were :—

	Proficiency.	Competency.
Board schools	496	127
Catholic schools	51	24
Private schools	3	...
High schools	12	8
	562	159

Some of those who have failed or gained only competency will have their claims reconsidered at the end of March. The average standard of work sent in by the pupils was for the most part satisfactory, but geography and history suffer very much from ill-defined programmes and preparation that too frequently leave the pupil with only a vague apprehension of the subject-matter.

Scholarships.—Sixty-six candidates qualified in the Junior National Scholarship test. The regulations require teachers to notify that candidates from their schools have a reasonable chance of success. This should tend to judicious choice, and prevent the sending-in of whole classes, greatly adding to the work of examiners, to no purpose. The examination-marks show that English has improved, but here also the marks gained in history and geography are low, and suggest some neglect in teaching the subjects or indifferent preparation. The small school at Kumeroa enjoys the distinction of being, for the second year in succession, the only school in its grade to send forward a successful candidate.

School Progress.—The system now adopted in the inspection and examination of the schools calls for the application of more critical methods when dealing with the various subjects of instruction under the regulations. These, however, are dealt with in separate reports as they affect the different schools and the teachers working in them.

Among teachers there has grown up the desire to make the schoolroom and everything belonging to it clean, attractive, and useful. Year by year the schoolroom, like the school-grounds, is undergoing change. The old furniture is being replaced, slowly it is true, but the work is going on, and when once the benefit of the single desk for the seniors comes to be realized the process of change will be rapid. The decision of the Board to provide a model infant and kindergarten department in each of the three wards that make up the education district is a real step in advance, for the lady teachers will be able to see for themselves the line that should be taken in the preparation and training of the youngest children seeking admittance to the schools. The system of school-staffing does not sufficiently recognize the importance of specialization among teachers, particularly in the training of young children. The infant departments in all the larger schools are doing satisfactory work, but there is plenty of room for the adoption of newer methods. In two schools only has there been any attempt to introduce and adapt Montessori methods into the junior department, but the return of the teachers from their college training may have a beneficial effect in this direction in the near future.

The high regularity of attendance maintained throughout the year is of itself a proof that the children appreciate school life in its many and varied aspects, but it is our duty once more to direct attention to the serious leakage that goes on in the upper classes just at a time when the benefits of education are most needed by children. Manifestly, if all pupils promoted, for example, from S4 to S5 in December of any year remained at school, the number in the latter standard at the end of the year would closely approximate the number in the lower standard the previous year; and a similar remark applies with respect to promotions from S5 to S6. A reference to the summary table at the opening of this report shows that of every 100 pupils in S1 there were 98 in S2, 95·2 in S3, 82·6 in S4, 73·3 in S5, and 47·8 in S6, and this proportion is also approximately correct for the Dominion, as shown in the departmental report, page 27, for 1913. These figures show that the leaving-period begins to be marked following promotions to the Fourth Standard class. The leaving-period is less pronounced between the Fourth and the Fifth Standards, but as soon as the latter standard has been reached 25·5 per cent. of the pupils are lost to the schools, or at least quit school before passing Standard VI. The leakage is too serious to disregard, because it shows how large a proportion of the country's future citizens enter upon life without the advantages that are offered by the State to every child if only parents did their duty. The Education Act provides for the passing of every boy and girl through the full standard course, and great care is taken to train teachers so as to introduce higher ideals of duty and living among the children. Yet with all the heavy expenditure in money and effort, with education free and compulsory, and with labour laws in operation, barely one-half of the children who pass S3 ever pass S6. The question is an important one in relation to those whose school life terminates so early. The scheme of education under which the schools are taught formulates an ideal that in a large measure anticipates a secondary and technical period of training. Either the children should be required to finish their training in the way laid down for their benefit or some modified scheme should be devised that would better anticipate their early entrance into life as hewers of wood and drawers of water. A comparison between the number of children in standard classes in the Board and the Roman Catholic schools of this district is suggestive, and calls for a further and even a wider inquiry. Thus for every 100 children severally in S1 in Board and Roman Catholic schools, in S2 there are 98 in Board schools and over 100 in Roman Catholic. In S3 the proportion is 95·2 in Board schools and in Catholic 79·2. S4 is represented by 82·6 pupils in Board schools and 98·4 in Catholic. In S5 the proportion is represented by 73·3 in Board and 75·2 in Catholic. Finally, in S6 the