

The following table shows the classification, the number on the roll, the number present at the annual examination, and the average age of the pupils :—

| Classes.            |     |     |     |     |     | Number on Roll. | Present at Annual Examination. | Average Age of Pupils in each Class. |
|---------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
|                     |     |     |     |     |     |                 |                                | Yrs. mos.                            |
| Standard VII        | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 18              | 15                             | 14 11                                |
| " VI                | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 171             | 169                            | 14 0                                 |
| " V                 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 236             | 233                            | 13 0                                 |
| " IV                | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 321             | 311                            | 12 1                                 |
| " III               | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 308             | 301                            | 11 0                                 |
| " II                | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 314             | 308                            | 9 9                                  |
| " I                 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 319             | 305                            | 8 8                                  |
| Preparatory         | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 843             | 824                            | 6 8                                  |
| Totals for 1914 ... |     |     |     |     |     | 2,530           | 2,466                          | 9 8*                                 |

\* Mean of average age.

The average ages are very similar to those of last year, and the mean of the average ages compares favourably with other districts.

The following figures will show the gradual increase of the roll number for the past three years: 1912—Roll, 2,390; present at examination, 2,303. 1913—Roll, 2,465; present at examination, 2,337. 1914—Roll, 2,530; present at examination, 2,466.

*Efficiency.*—The efficiency of the schools is estimated as follows: Very good, 2; good, 26; satisfactory to good, 11; satisfactory, 37; fair to satisfactory, 11; fair, 1; moderate, 4. The efficiency of many of the smaller schools has greatly improved, and this may be attributed to the excellent instruction given at the teachers' classes held during the year. On Saturdays classes for teachers near the Blenheim centre were established, and for those teachers in remote places a three-weeks course was given in December. This necessitated the closing of some of the schools, but the results have proved the wisdom of the Board's action. No fewer than twenty-three of our teachers gained some success at the annual examination for certificates.

*Proficiency Certificates.*—For these certificates central examinations were held in December, and in remote schools candidates were examined at the annual visit. Out of 169 candidates, eighty-two gained proficiency, forty-one competency, and forty-six failed to qualify. Composition and arithmetic were the weak subjects.

*Schemes of Work.*—These were generally satisfactory, and in many cases carefully arranged and well distributed over the year. In some cases, however, only part of the year's work was shown, and some subjects were entirely neglected. The teacher should realize that making schemes as the year goes on is not according to regulations. The scheme which is the working syllabus of the school should be completed by the 1st March, and entered in the book which is supplied by the Board.

*English.*—Reading, which is the most essential subject in a primary-school course, has during the past year received considerable attention, and an improvement was decidedly noticeable. It was better in quality, more fluent, better modulated, and more expressive. From the improvement I should say there has been less hearing of the reading, but more actual teaching of it. In recitation the preparatory classes still excell. The pieces were carefully selected and well within the range of a child's understanding. In the upper classes, however, there was a want of life in the delivery, and the recitation was nothing more than a mere repetition of the words. These remarks do not apply to all schools, for in every desert an oasis is to be found. Writing has improved, but still varies much in quality. Where plenty of blackboard illustration is given and the supervision is not spasmodic the writing is generally good. The writing in the general exercises is not so good as in the copybooks. Spelling and dictation were generally good. Composition is carefully taught in most of the schools, and the results were highly encouraging. Oral composition in the lower classes was good. Punctuation still requires attention.

*Arithmetic.*—In all the classes up to Standard V the results were satisfactory. As many of the schools have the annual visit early in the second half of the year the tests were based on the work completed. In Standard VI cards were supplied by the Department, and quite half of the pupils failed to score 40 per cent. of marks. Insufficient drill in the tables, want of vigorous oral teaching, and careless reading of the questions may account for the apparent weakness of this class. Mental arithmetic was fairly satisfactory.

*Drawing.*—As most of the schools are well supplied with hyloplate, free-arm drawing is receiving more attention. In freehand the drawings were in many cases too small, and the lining-in was poor in quality. Drawing with instruments was fair. This could be improved if a better class of instruments was used. The compasses are clumsy, the pencils indifferently sharpened, and the results are in consequence inaccurate. Model-drawing was satisfactory in the schools where some instruction had been given in the principles of perspective. Brush drawing was good.

*Singing.*—A considerable advance has been made in the teaching of this subject. In some of the larger schools really good part singing was heard, and in the majority of the smaller schools a great improvement was noticeable. An effort should be made to secure a good tone, and loud and harsh singing should be discouraged.