

Table showing variation in roll number of each standard as compared with 1914:—

Year.	Schools.	Prepara- tory.	Standard I.	Standard II.	Standard III.	Standard IV.	Standard V.	Standard VI.	Standard VII.	Totals.
1914 ..	166	6,651	2,334	2,472	2,328	2,149	2,029	1,463	265	19,691
1915 ..	166	6,831	2,550	2,500	2,488	2,234	1,951	1,706	274	20,534
Increase or decrease	..	-180	+216	+28	+160	+85	-78	+243	+9	+843

Table showing average ages of pupils in preparatory and standard classes compared with Dominion averages:—

Average Age for	Prepara- tory.	Standard I.	Standard II.	Standard III.	Standard IV.	Standard V.	Standard VI.	Standard VII.
	Yrs. mos.	Yrs. mos.	Yrs. mos.	Yrs. mos.	Yrs. mos.	Yrs. mos.	Yrs. mos.	Yrs. mos.
Dominion, 1914	7 1	9 1	10 1	11 2	12 3	13 1	13 11	15 2
Wellington, 1915	6 11	8 7	9 10	10 11	12 0	12 10	13 9	14 11

Percentage of children in preparatory classes—Dominion, 36·3; Wellington, 33·3.

Table showing state of roll numbers for a period of five years:—

Year.	Roll.	Increase.
1910 ..	17,893	..
1911 ..	18,089	196
1912 ..	18,379	290
1913 ..	18,865	286
1914 ..	19,691	826
1915 ..	20,534	843

Total increase for five years 2,641

Efficiency.—On summarizing our inspection and examination reports we gauge the efficiency of the schools as follows: Satisfactory to very good, 130; fair, 28; inferior, 8. An increase is thus shown in the number of schools below satisfactory (36, as compared with 26 in 1914). In our last report we emphasized the difficulty of finding suitable teachers for the remote and smaller schools. During the past year this difficulty has been augmented owing to the increased shortage of teachers caused by the war; and it is to this cause mainly that we attribute the lowering of the efficiency of some of the country schools.

Certificates.—Of the 1,706 pupils in Standard VI, 1,157 were awarded proficiency and 370 competency certificates—a percentage of 67·8 and 21·6 respectively. We were from the very first opposed to the dual certificate in S6. It never was of much educational value, and now that proficiency has been made the school-attendance-exemption certificate, and also the minimum educational qualification for entry to the Clerical Divisions of the Government Postal and Railway Departments, the value of the competency certificate has become more depreciated than ever, and the sole purpose it would now appear to fill is to emphasize the fact that the holder has failed for proficiency. It should either be abolished or some measure of value as an educational qualification should be restored to it.

English.—The reading of the pupils on the whole continues to be satisfactory, and we are able to report that the pupils in most schools appear to show a more intelligent appreciation of both the matter and the language of the lessons. This improvement is no doubt due to the broader field opened to them by the issue of supplementary readers and the increase of school libraries. In the latter respect most teachers and many Committees are to be commended for their efforts to obtain for the pupils an adequate supply of good literature. We wish in this connection to express our appreciation of the *School Journal*, which has done much to foster in the children a love of reading. We are assured that its arrival each month is awaited with eagerness, and that its sphere of usefulness is not confined to the school only. Recitation is marked in our reports as fair to satisfactory on the whole. We find, in general, satisfactory comprehension of the pieces learned, and there is also an improvement in the selection of subjects. We should like, however, the upper classes at least to present one or more prose passages from good authors. Spelling still continues to be a very good subject, and there are few schools or classes where it was marked lower than satisfactory. On the whole we find little fault with the writing of the schools. We have consistently urged teachers to make full use of the blackboard for instruction in this subject, and (in the smaller schools) to group the classes. We find that the general adoption of this plan has borne good fruit, and has somewhat modified that falling-off in the quality of the writing which is often observed in the two higher standards. Our remarks of last year with respect to poverty of vocabulary still hold good, but with this reservation we find composition more than satisfactory. We find, generally, that the pupils are able to write freely on the simpler subjects