

CLASSIFICATION, AGE, AND EXAMINATION OF PUPILS.

(E.—2, Tables C1—C6.)

Classification of Pupils.

The classification of school-children is for the most part carried out by the teachers, the Inspectors of Schools advising and assisting inexperienced teachers in the work. The Inspectors comment on the tendency to retain pupils too long in the preparatory classes, and also to demand too high a standard of proficiency before allowing them to enter S6. The practice of experimenting to excess with children in higher classes than they are fitted for and degrading them shortly before the Inspector's visit is condemned, as is also the mistake often made in small schools of promoting pupils against the teacher's better judgment on account of pressure brought to bear by parents.

The subject of the classification of pupils and of the time that should be spent on the various stages of education is receiving a great deal of attention in America and other countries, some of the general opinions expressed being to the effect that classifying according to age leads to errors of classification that should be corrected by applying some such mentality test as the Binet-Simon test, and that there is need for economy in the time expended on the general elementary curriculum.

The table below sets forth the ages and classification of the pupils of public schools in the Dominion :—

CLASSIFIED RETURN OF THE NUMBERS ON THE ROLLS OF PUBLIC SCHOOLS AT THE END OF 1916.

Ages.	Class P.		Standard I.		Standard II.		Standard III.		Standard IV.		Standard V.		Standard VI.		Standard VII.		Totals.	
	Boys.	Girls.	Boys.	Girls.	Boys.	Girls.	Boys.	Girls.	Boys.	Girls.	Boys.	Girls.	Boys.	Girls.	Boys.	Girls.	Boys.	Girls.
5 and under 6 ..	7,752	6,944	1	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	7,753	6,945
6 ..	10,185	9,284	116	151	6	6	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	10,307	9,441
7 ..	9,368	8,672	1,581	1,660	147	166	5	2	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	11,101	10,500
8 ..	5,097	4,333	4,562	4,418	1,493	1,472	158	161	6	12	4	..	..	..	..	..	11,320	10,396
9 ..	1,673	1,315	3,694	3,348	3,954	3,900	1,315	1,387	127	132	9	7	2	..	..	..	10,774	10,089
10 ..	462	372	1,500	1,286	3,596	3,346	3,730	3,558	1,196	1,257	163	144	6	5	..	..	10,653	9,968
11 ..	163	125	543	414	1,686	1,412	3,430	3,206	3,387	3,312	1,043	1,153	132	105	4	2	10,388	9,729
12 ..	84	50	143	159	681	442	1,806	1,651	3,360	2,972	3,118	3,009	908	1,000	44	42	10,144	9,325
13 ..	29	20	54	48	219	166	757	551	1,829	1,512	2,995	2,750	2,207	2,194	203	211	8,293	7,452
14 ..	12	7	12	14	51	35	179	115	607	395	1,288	1,014	1,748	1,797	362	394	4,259	3,771
Over 15 ..	..	3	2	2	7	4	24	10	108	74	321	215	689	627	524	666	1,675	1,601
Totals, 1916 ..	34,825	31,125	12,208	11,501	11,840	10,949	11,404	10,641	10,620	9,666	8,941	8,292	5,692	5,728	1,137	1,315	96,667	89,217

If the pupil begins his school life at the age of five years, and spends two years in the preparatory classes and one year in each succeeding standard, he should pass out of S6 at the age of thirteen years. It is found, however, that the average age for each class is about one year higher than would be the case if these conditions were universal. This is largely due, no doubt, to the entrance age being very often higher than five years. The figures within the heavy ruled lines in the table indicate children whose classification may be regarded as normal in comparison with the average ages prevailing. For example, nine years is the average age in S1 at the end of the year, therefore children between the ages of eight and ten years in that standard may be regarded as falling within the limits of a normal classification. The numbers above the upper heavy horizontal lines in the table indicate classification above normal and represent the brighter children, and those below the lower horizontal lines indicate classification below normal representing cases of retardation. It is not possible from the table to show cases above normal classification in the preparatory classes, or cases of retardation in S7.