

The following figures show the increase of roll number since the amalgamation of the Marlborough District with Wellington: Combined roll—1916, 23,928; 1917, 24,725: increase, 797. The percentage of roll in each class was as follows:—

		P.	S1.	S2.	S3.	S4.	S5.	S6.	S7.
Dominion ..	..	35.5	12.7	12.3	11.9	10.9	9.3	6.1	1.3
Wellington ..	..	32.5	12.6	12.8	11.9	11.0	9.9	7.9	1.4

Summary of efficiency: Good to very good, 78 schools; satisfactory to good, 129 schools; fair to moderate, 40 schools; inferior, 4 schools: total, 251. As in previous years, the schools classified as unsatisfactory are, with two exceptions, in Grades 0, I, and II, and are situated in remote parts of the district. The problem of finding competent teachers for such places has always been a difficult one, and matters have not improved under war conditions. A separate report is attached giving details of action taken in regard to the most unsatisfactory of these schools.

Syllabus.—We here briefly summarize our estimate of the efficiency of the district as a whole in the various subjects of the syllabus. English: Reading—accuracy and fluency, good; comprehension of subject-matter, satisfactory. We are asking, however, that more attention be paid to the general meaning of the paragraph, and that the upper standards should have more practice with pencil or brush in the interpretation of details in the subject-matter of the reading-lesson. Faults in articulation and enunciation are more apparent than they should be, and we have had to call attention to the absence from many schemes of work of any method—critical or constructive—of dealing systematically with common faults in the spoken language. Recitation is satisfactory so far as the memorizing of the regulation number of lines is concerned, but seldom shows any elocutionary merit, and in many instances the pieces are, moreover, selected with too little regard for correlation either with the matter of other subjects of the syllabus or with the pupils' own experience. Essay-writing is good, particularly in schools in which teachers show sound judgment in the selection of topics which are of live interest to the pupils. Letter-writing is not so satisfactory, and we shall expect teachers to deal definitely with such details as the correct setting-out of the superscription and subscription of the more common types of letters. Writing and spelling range from satisfactory to good. Arithmetic is on the whole good, though we have noticed some neglect of the syllabus requirements in the P. and S1 classes. We have found a tendency on the part of many teachers to deal with numbers considerably beyond the limit set for these classes by the regulations, the result being that ready knowledge of the composition of numbers below 100 and facility in oral work as specifically required by the regulations are sacrificed to long and laboured operations in tens, and even hundreds, of thousands. History and geography are naturally closely correlated with the circumstances of the war, and are on the whole receiving intelligent treatment—that is, so far as examination requirements will allow. We regret that drawing can be classed as fair only. Though very good work is being done in some schools, the results attained in the district as a whole are disappointing. Specific directions have been issued to teachers with a view to ensuring more progressive treatment of this subject from class to class, and its greater co-ordination with other subjects of the syllabus. The efficiency mark for handwork ranges from good to very good.

We find evidence of very satisfactory progress being made in the teaching of elementary agriculture. As showing the benefits to be derived from well-directed courses of cottage gardening and nature-study, the Chief Instructor remarks on the gradual but steady improvement in many of the school-grounds, and the greater adaptability for agricultural work shown in the district high schools by the average proficiency pupil of to-day.

Medical inspection and physical instruction: The Medical Officer reports that upwards of three thousand children in the Wellington District were medically examined. Lectures and demonstrations were also given to training-college students, and, wherever practicable, meetings with parents were arranged and addresses given. The establishment of the school-nurse system has provided a most desirable and effective link between the school and the home in regard to cases reported by the Medical Inspector as defective, and has resulted in nearly 70 per cent. of these cases receiving the necessary treatment, a result which, in the circumstances, the Medical Inspector considers satisfactory. Excellent results are being recorded with regard to the corrective classes which have been established in connection with schools of Grade IV and upwards. Satisfactory reports have also been received from the physical instructors, some 195 schools, representing upwards of twenty thousand children, having been visited and inspected. Swimming is receiving attention wherever the necessary facilities exist, and we have to express appreciation of the action of the City Council in placing the Municipal Baths at the disposal of the schools.

District High Schools.—[See E.—6, Report on Secondary Education.]

General.—The spring school of agricultural instruction for teachers was held in Masterton with very gratifying results; a similar school was also held with equal success in Blenheim. A training-camp for physical instruction was held in the early part of the year, and one for training-college students in November. The physical instructors emphasize the importance of these camps as “refresher courses” for all teachers. During the year addresses on educational matters were delivered by the Inspectors to gatherings of teachers at Wellington, Masterton, and Pahiatua, and head teachers have several times met in conference with the Senior Inspector to discuss matters in connection with the interpretation and administration of the Department's regulations.

The demands of military service have seriously depleted the ranks of our male teachers, many of whom have, indeed, already made the supreme sacrifice; and while we have felt it our duty to draw attention to shortcomings in the method and management of some of our schools,