

The following figures represent the total number of children (of whom the average weekly roll number was given above) in average attendance at registered schools giving primary instruction :—

Public schools (excluding secondary departments of district high schools)				1919.	1920.
..	..	..	..	172,610	168,816
Native village and mission schools				4,632	4,861
Registered private primary schools				18,472	19,162
Lower departments of secondary schools				608	688
Totals				196,322	193,527

CLASSIFICATION, AGE, AND EXAMINATION OF PUPILS.

(Tables C1 and C2 in E.-2.)

Classification and Age of Pupils.

The classification of the pupils is for the most part carried out by the teachers, and Inspectors of Schools report that on the whole the task is well performed. In small country schools local influence brought to bear upon the teacher sometimes results in children being promoted too soon. One result of the work of the organizing teachers is, however, a more uniform classification in the small schools under their supervision. There is still a general tendency to retard pupils in the preparatory classes; on the other hand, it is reported that the retardation in S5 previously remarked upon is not so evident. Retardation of the brighter pupils is frequently found, the opportunity of promoting such children twice in a year, especially in the lower classes, not being sufficiently taken advantage of. There is reason to suspect that examination results sometimes influence the teacher to the detriment of the advance of the more clever pupils.

The question of retardation is at present receiving the attention of the Department, the necessity of the time spent in the primary school being used to the pupil's greatest advantage being recognized as a most important matter. Standard tests of mental efficiency suitable for New Zealand children will require to be devised, and although the work which is now being entered upon by a special committee presents many difficulties, the Department has every assurance that the results to be attained will fully compensate the work and trouble involved.

The following table shows the classification of pupils of primary schools, the numbers between the heavy horizontal lines representing children regarded as of normal classification, those above the upper lines children brighter than the average, and those below the lower lines children below normal classification :—

CLASSIFIED RETURN OF THE NUMBERS ON THE ROLLS OF PUBLIC SCHOOLS AT THE END OF 1920, EXCLUDING SECONDARY DEPARTMENTS OF DISTRICT HIGH SCHOOLS.

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 ..	7,532	6,716	..	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	7,532	6,717
6 .. 7 ..	10,745	9,932	64	103	3	7	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	10,812	10,042
7 .. 8 ..	10,330	9,261	1,506	1,709	70	77	5	5	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	11,911	11,052
8 .. 9 ..	5,459	4,524	4,946	4,884	1,313	1,392	100	128	2	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	11,820	10,929
9 .. 10 ..	1,672	1,236	4,033	3,469	4,502	4,325	1,342	1,376	96	99	5	9	..	..	..	..	11,650	10,514
10 .. 11 ..	541	386	1,711	1,270	3,822	3,431	3,899	4,096	1,226	1,298	107	100	6	11	..	1	11,312	10,593
11 .. 12 ..	188	142	556	380	1,807	1,391	3,800	3,570	3,666	3,856	1,134	1,127	123	116	1	2	11,275	10,584
12 .. 13 ..	76	62	211	149	750	504	2,064	1,769	3,535	3,272	3,355	3,354	1,014	988	10	4	11,015	10,102
13 .. 14 ..	33	19	61	41	246	177	898	670	2,144	1,900	3,363	3,070	2,649	2,688	47	48	9,441	8,613
14 .. 15 ..	9	11	16	12	52	33	228	142	636	495	1,581	1,268	2,451	2,176	36	30	5,009	4,167
15 .. 16 ..	2	2	5	3	12	5	47	26	106	66	416	282	918	756	15	15	1,521	1,155
16 .. 17 ..	..	..	2	2	2	4	1	2	9	4	35	19	82	85	7	4	138	120
Over 17 ..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1	2	5	1	11	10	..	2	17	15
Totals, 1920 ..	36,587	32,291	13,111	12,023	12,579	11,346	12,384	11,784	11,421	10,993	10,001	9,230	7,254	6,830	116	106	103,453	94,603

NOTE.—The number of S6 pupils in this table differs from that shown in Table C2 in E.-2 for the reason that pupils who did the work of S6 but left before the end of the year are included in this table.