

We fear that if the number of days or half-days on which school-work has been suspended in some schools were listed the list would be formidable enough to cause serious misgivings. We are strongly of opinion that schools can take reasonable part in the social life of the community without unduly trenching on the time which should be spent in their legitimate work.

GENERAL EFFICIENCY OF THE SCHOOLS.—From a scrutiny of the year's reports we estimate the general efficiency of the schools of Grade 1 and upwards as follows :—

					Public Schools.	Private Schools.
Good to excellent	..	..	..	..	66	3
Satisfactory	..	..	..	..	122	21
Lower than satisfactory	..	..	..	..	6	4
					194	28

In addition to the above public schools there were eleven schools of Grade 0 doing work which may be classified as fair to good.

DESTINATION OF S6 PUPILS.—The very satisfactory interest in the secondary education of their children taken by parents in this district is shown by the fact that of schools having S6 pupils no less than 72 per cent. sent on children to the secondary schools, while from 60 per cent. of them more children continued work in advance of the primary course than left to take up occupations.

The following figures, summarized from returns furnished by head teachers, give the destinations of the S6 pupils for the 1922-23 period :—

- (1.) Number of 1922 S6 pupils who undertook some form of secondary education during 1923 : College or secondary school, 287 ; district high school, 155 ; technical school or technical college, 272 ; S7 in own or other primary school, 45 ; repeated S6 work in own school, 178.
- (2.) Occupations of 1922 S6 pupils and others who left after the 1922 Proficiency Examination or during 1923 : Postal service, 22 ; Railway service, 6 ; factory-work, 40 ; farm-work, 169 ; domestic service, 63 ; domestic duties at home, 186 ; sawmill-work, 13 ; carpenter, 5 ; dressmaker, 5 ; milliner, 3 ; clerk, 14 ; shop-assistant, 55 ; plumber, 4 ; engineering, 12 ; sundry, 15 ; unknown, 16.

HAWKE'S BAY.

The number of public schools open in the district at the 31st December was 193, and the roll number 16,063. If we were asked to classify the schools reported on during the year according to the general efficiency we should do so as follows : Excellent, 16 ; very good, 30 ; good, 57 ; very fair, 67 ; fair, 19 ; weak, 1.

While we do not wish to detract from the value of arithmetic, we think that teachers are somewhat prone, especially in connection with the Proficiency Examination, to regard arithmetic as the all-important subject. We therefore consider it advisable to stress the need for more careful attention to English composition. Most frequently the only evidence before the public of the child's standard of education is his English, and the teacher's success is judged on this subject alone. Proficiency in composition is held to be the surest sign of a high degree of mental intelligence, and a child who cannot at the end of his primary course express himself in correct English cannot have been properly taught.

OCCUPATIONS OF PUPILS WHO LEFT SCHOOL AT THE END OF 1923.—Returns giving information as to the destination of pupils who left school at the end of the year produce the following :—

					Passed S6.	Did not pass S6.	Total.
Secondary schools	..	..	..	..	641	24	665
Farming	..	..	..	..	62	93	155
Domestic duty	..	..	..	..	161	106	267
Trades	..	..	..	..	38	18	56
Commerce	..	..	..	..	29	17	46
Clerical work	..	..	..	..	16	1	17
Postal and Railway	..	..	..	..	9	2	11
Hospital assistant	..	..	..	..	1	0	1
Unskilled	..	..	..	..	21	21	42
					978	282	1,260

Comparison with a similar return for 1921 shows that while unskilled or blind-alley occupations continue to claim the same percentage (3 per cent.) the number proceeding to secondary schools has increased by 83 per cent. This is probably to be discounted by the fact that the returns for 1921 were far from complete ; nevertheless, a substantial improvement is manifest.

EDUCATIONAL INVESTIGATION.—At the end of the year we tested the power of reading of a large infant division of two hundred pupils. Ballard's test was used for the purpose, our object being to test both the pupil's ability and also the efficacy of the method in use. The results, which have been forwarded to the Department, were very gratifying indeed, the norms being generally higher than those given by Ballard for children tested at Home. An interesting return was also obtained from a large school showing the kind of reading-lesson most appreciated by the pupils. The lessons in each part of the *School Journal* were considered, and votes or marks awarded by the children according to a scale assigned. An investigation of this kind made over the whole district would no doubt prove very useful to the Department.