

into yearly portions. There is exactly one year's difference of average age between those who passed the Third and those who passed the Fourth in Southland. In North Canterbury the difference is also exactly a year; but for one part of this district the numbers given are of those presented, and not of those who passed. In Otago, where also the numbers stated are of children presented, the difference is greater by three or four months. It will not be safe, however, to draw any important conclusion from data of this kind until children who have been thoroughly taught in all the lower standards advance to the higher, when it will probably be found that the step from one standard to another will be taken with more rapidity and ease in the majority of cases than at present.

It is frequently alleged that the standard programme is unduly severe, and more comprehensive than those of other countries. This is not the place for an exhaustive comparison of different standards; but a few facts may be stated which should have some weight in this connection. The "Course of School Instruction" for the "Fifth Class" in New South Wales (where there is no "Sixth") is as follows:—

"*Reading* : The 'Fifth Reading-book,' sanctioned by the Council.

"*Writing* : On paper, plain and ornamental.

"*Arithmetic* : Decimals, roots, mensuration.

"*Grammar* : Syntax, prosody, analysis of sentences, composition.

"*Geography* : The world, physical and descriptive.

"*Object-lessons* : Arts and manufactures, laws of health, social economy, duties of a citizen, the laws, experimental physics.

"*Singing* : Tonic Sol-fa method, established notation.

"*Drawing* : Perspective, drawing from models.

"*Geometry* : Euclid, Book I.

"*Algebra* : To simple equations of two unknown quantities.

"*Latin* : Smith's 'Principia Latina.'

"*Scripture Lessons* : As in Fourth Class" [*i. e.*, Old and New Testaments, No. II. of the Irish Board of National Education.]

This programme must be compared, not with the New Zealand Fifth Standard, but with the Sixth. The first five subjects are common to the two schemes, and the work required in them by both is so nearly alike that it is not worth while to discuss the minute differences. The same may be said with regard to the singing and drawing. The last four subjects, geometry, algebra, Latin, and Scripture, are required by the New South Wales programme, but have no place in the New Zealand standards. History is required in New Zealand, but not in New South Wales. Needlework and drill are not mentioned in the New South Wales list: but the schoolmistresses have to pass an examination in needlework, and it is taught in the schools; and it may be safely assumed that drill is not neglected. So far, then, it appears that the Sydney programme exceeds that of New Zealand by the inclusion of geometry, algebra, Latin, and Scripture; and that, as a partial set-off against these, the New Zealand programme includes English history. The only other difference is rather apparent than real, and lies in the terms used to describe a certain kind of instruction, which is known here as "elementary science," but is given in New South Wales under the name of "object-lessons." It will be seen that some of the "object-lessons" indicated in the Sydney list stand related to history, and in the New Zealand scheme are associated with history, and described by the term "social economy." The rest of the "object-lessons"—"laws of health," "experimental physics"—are practically identical with parts of what is here known as "elementary science," other parts of which are described in the New South Wales Fourth Class Course as "elementary mechanics," "science of common things," and "the mechanical powers." The fact is, that what is denoted in the New Zealand programme by the term "elementary science" has, for the last thirty or forty years, been taught in common schools, and has formed a considerable part of the matter of the reading-lessons in the higher classes of those schools.

In England and Scotland the distribution of subjects of instruction under standards is affected by a principle which the New Zealand Education Act does