

Standard Classes.			Presented.	Absent.	Excepted.	Failed.	Passed.	Average Age of those that passed.	
								Yrs.	mos.
Above Standard VI.	...	...	84	...	...	...	...	...	...
Standard VI.	...	...	225	9	17	25	174	14	0
" V.	...	...	391	21	10	84	276	12	11
" IV.	...	...	602	33	27	127	415	12	2
" III.	...	...	770	40	32	142	556	11	2
" II.	...	...	662	20	7	46	589	10	1
" I.	...	...	685	23	19	54	589	8	9
Preparatory	...	...	1,583	...	...	...	...	...	...
Totals for 1892	...	...	5,002	146	112	478	2,599	11	6*
Totals for 1891	...	...	4,975	184	131	616	2,322	11	6*

\* Mean average.

The number of pupils presented on the examination schedules was 5,002, of whom eighty-four had already passed the Sixth Standard, 1,583 were in the preparatory classes, and 3,335 were entered for examination in one or other of the standards. Of the 3,335 in Standards I. to VI., 3,189 were at school on the day of examination, and 2,599 passed the standards for which they were presented. Of those who were not successful, 112 were exceptions, and 478 failures. The percentage of failures, estimated on the standard class rolls exclusive of absentees and exceptions, was 15·5, as against 20·9 for last year. The percentage of passes was 51·9, as against 46·6 for last year ; but it is to be remembered that the highest possible percentage of passes is not 100. Had no child been absent from the examination, nor any one failed in his standard, the highest possible percentage of passes would then have been achieved, and in this district it would have been 66·4, which is the proportion that the number presented in Standards I. to VI. bears to the total school-roll. The average percentage of marks for "class"-subjects was 52, and the average of marks for additional subjects 55. The results as a whole indicate an advance in the efficiency of our schools, and this is quite in accordance with what has come under my notice, both on my inspection and on my examination visits.

In accordance with Regulation 5, whenever children more than eight years old were presented in Class P. the teachers gave me a written explanation of the reason for not presenting such children in Standard I. The number of cases requiring explanation amounted to 281, and they were distributed over fifty of the fifty-eight schools examined. After a careful analysis of the explanations submitted, I find that 40 per cent. are set down to irregularity of attendance, no particular cause being assigned for this irregularity ; 10 per cent. to irregularity caused by the delicate health of the children ; 30 per cent. to shortness of the period of attendance since their first enrolment ; while 20 per cent. of the children were returned as too dull to be prepared for the examination. As far as the teachers are concerned, I am quite satisfied that they have honestly striven to do their best for the children, and that their explanations on the whole should be received as sufficient. I say "on the whole," for I believe that several of the teachers have made a little too free with the plea of dulness on the part of the children, when a truer explanation might have been found in some deficiency of teaching skill on their own part, an explanation, however, which it would be too much to expect to be forthcoming. Though the teachers may be exonerated from blame with respect to the irregular attendants, from the parents the plea of irregularity could never be accepted as a sufficient reason for their children's backwardness, for they might very well be asked to go back a step and account for the irregularity. In my opinion, the total number of children concerning whom an explanation was demanded is too great by about one-third, and those parents whose negligence or indifference leads to the too frequent absences of their children will be most to blame if a substantial reduction is not made in the future.

"PASS"-SUBJECTS.—In the majority of our schools one generally finds the reading of most of the pupils pleasant to listen to. Now and then, however, a school is visited where this part of the examination is a trying ordeal for the scholars and a tiresome business for the examiner. The usual excuse proffered by the teachers in these cases is that with so many subjects to attend to they cannot give the necessary time to the teaching and practice of reading. But this explanation counts for very little, since in other schools where the stress of subjects is equally heavy, and the conditions as to staff and numbers are in every way similar, not only is the reading of first-rate quality, but the other subjects also are successfully taught. It is not a question of a little more or a little less time that makes the difference ; it is altogether a matter of teaching. More time might mean more practice ; but this might not mend matters ; it is practice of the right kind that tells.

The dictation and spelling tests have in every instance been taken from the reading-book in use by the class, so that none can complain that the pupils were given words to spell with which they had never had an opportunity of becoming acquainted. And, further, it has always been my practice to allow the class-teacher to give out the passages for dictation and the spelling tests. Even with these advantages, the appearance made by the pupils in a great many schools was disappointing. There were some splendid exceptions, prominent amongst which were the two largest schools in the district. On examination-day, if strict account were taken of all mistakes in spelling occurring in the compositions and letters of the children, the number of those who pass in spelling would be considerably reduced. Teachers and examiners get used to seeing the commonest words tortured almost beyond recognition ; and one must groan or smile, according to his humour, as he scores his pencil through the blunders in the body of a pupil's letter ; but there is clear proof of negligent supervision when one letter after another has the familiar "Yours truly" written "your's