

tively. Probably about 3,200 of these were over the age of fifteen, and the remainder nearly all between five and fifteen years of age. As the numbers for each year of age are not available, it is impossible even by combining Tables C and C1 to come to absolutely certain conclusions; but careful comparison of these and other facts seems to give reasonable ground for the following inferences:—(a.) 71 per cent. begin to receive instruction between the ages five and six, or at an earlier age; 21 per cent. begin between six and seven; and 8 per cent. do not begin until after they have reached the age of seven, that is, not until they are compelled by law to attend school. (b.) It is not easy to ascertain exactly how many evade attendance at school altogether, the number is certainly very small; but the greatest leakage appears to be at the age ten to twelve. As this is the age at which habits of truancy and nomadism, which are the recognised cause of juvenile delinquency at a later age, begin, the fact should not escape the attention of truant officers and others concerned. (c.) The same figures appear to indicate that nearly 3 per cent. of boys and 3 per cent. of girls cease to receive instruction at or before the age of twelve, 13 per cent. of boys and 18 per cent. of girls at or about the age of thirteen, 36 per cent. of boys and 32 per cent. of girls at or about the age of fourteen, and 44 per cent. of boys and girls cease to receive instruction soon after reaching their fifteenth birthday; in other words, about 96 per cent. of boys and girls receive no further instruction after the age of fifteen or sixteen. These numbers are only roughly approximate.

TABLE C1.—ATTENDANCE AT SCHOOLS, 31ST MARCH, 1901.

				Males.	Females.	Total.
Public Schools	..	..	..	68,810	63,931	*132,741
College, &c.	..	..	..	2,894	2,090	†4,984
Private Schools	..	..	..	2,294	4,203	†6,497
Denominational Schools	..	..	..	3,806	4,550	†8,356
Home Instruction	..	..	..	2,215	2,840	†5,055
Totals	..	..	..	80,901	77,614	157,633

\* Taken from Education Boards' returns.

† Taken from Census returns, March, 1901.

## INSPECTION AND EXAMINATION.

Table D is a summary for the whole colony of Table No. 2 in the Appendix, which shows the numbers in the several classes for the various districts. The proportion of pupils in the preparatory classes shows a further increase for the year, from 26·78 per cent. to 26·87 per cent. The proportions in classes S6 and S7 have also increased. The other classes present a slight decrease.

TABLE D.—CLASSIFICATION BY STANDARDS, DECEMBER, 1902.

Standard Classes.				Boys.	Girls.	Totals.	Percentages for Five Years.				
							1902.	1901.	1900.	1899.	1898.
Preparatory	..	..	..	18,897	16,638	35,535	26·87	26·78	26·00	25·09	24·52
S1	..	..	..	7,992	7,458	15,450	11·68	11·44	11·54	12·06	12·32
S2	..	..	..	8,299	7,634	15,933	12·05	12·11	12·25	12·44	12·77
S3	..	..	..	8,615	8,108	16,723	12·64	12·98	13·45	14·00	14·15
S4	..	..	..	8,682	7,987	16,669	12·60	12·73	13·38	13·65	13·67
S5	..	..	..	7,628	7,096	14,724	11·13	11·37	11·44	11·06	11·17
S6	..	..	..	5,947	5,318	11,265	8·52	8·35	7·91	7·63	7·28
S7	..	..	..	2,841	3,122	5,963	4·51	4·24	4·03	4·07	4·12
Totals..				68,901	63,361	132,262	100·00	100·00	100·00	100·00	100·00

As the total number of children under eight years of age in the public schools is only 38,438, the number in the preparatory classes (35,535) certainly seems high when the elementary character of the work, even in S1, is considered. It should be possible by improved methods, and perhaps also by employing a larger proportion of adult teachers in the infant classes, to lessen this apparent defect without in any way overtaxing the children.