

As some indication of the extent to which this holds good, I may mention that in this school last year, out of forty-eight children who were granted free places, no less than eight, or about 16 per cent., entered during the last term for the reasons above stated, and were thus compelled to accept a fifteen months' instead of a two years' course, with little likelihood of being able to qualify for a further term.

2. The fact that Education Boards fix their Junior Scholarship age at fourteen, thirteen, or twelve certainly proves that, in their opinion, children deserving of secondary education show merit before that age. But it must be remembered that—(a) in every education district there exists hardships and anomalies arising from the age-limit; (b) and these scholarships are comparatively very few, and are gained by only the very brightest children, who, in most cases, have been specially prepared for the examination; (c) and the full powers of many children develop at a later age.

3. The important point, from the view of the small secondary schools, is that pupils before entering shall have passed Standard VI. I am of opinion that the admission of any children below that standard militates against the organization of such schools by increasing the number of classes under the direction of the individual teacher.

4. The age of admission seems unimportant; the standard of attainment, measured by a Sixth Standard pass, is all-important.

6. Yes. But in the case of this school, which, on account of the smallness of its revenue, is allowed only three free places, the proportion would have to be largely increased to meet all cases of hardship in connection with the age-limit.

In conclusion, it is my firm conviction that the abolition of the age-limit is the only way of doing away with the existing anomalies. That these anomalies are not unimportant is proved by the fact that out of sixty-three pupils admitted last year twenty-one were adversely affected by the age-limit; of these, some were admitted during the third term, in order to get free places for fifteen months instead of two years, some were granted exhibitions, the remainder paid the ordinary school fees.

For all these reasons I am strongly of opinion that the age-limit should be abolished.

Yours, &c.,

T. R. CRESSWELL, M.A., Headmaster.

The Chairman, Board of Governors, Rangiora High School.

CHRISTCHURCH BOYS' AND CHRISTCHURCH GIRLS' HIGH SCHOOLS.

SIR,—

Canterbury College, Christchurch, 29th June, 1904.

I have the honour, by direction of the Chairman, to acknowledge receipt of your letter of the 26th May, which was placed before the Board at a meeting held on the 27th instant, when the following resolution was passed: "That with respect to 'The Secondary Schools Act, 1903,' and clause 3 thereof, it is inadvisable at present to make the alteration suggested by the Board of Governors of the Otago High Schools, in the direction of doing away with the age-limit of fourteen years."

I have, &c.,

The Secretary for Education, Wellington.

A. CRACROFT WILSON, Registrar.

CHRIST'S COLLEGE GRAMMAR SCHOOL.

SIR,—

Christ's College, Christchurch, 16th June, 1904.

I have the honour, by direction of the governing body of Christ's College, to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 26th May last, enclosing copy of a letter received by the Education Department from the Board of Governors of the Otago High Schools.

After consultation with the headmaster of Christ's College Grammar School, I have the honour to reply with respect to clause 1 of your letter: From the fact that the average age of passing Standard VI. is 13 years 10 months, it seems plain that a boy or girl with ability above the average would probably pass Standard VI. before reaching the age of fourteen, not improbably before the age of thirteen.

With respect to clause 2: The widespread implied belief, that a boy or girl deserving of free secondary education would generally show merit before the age of fourteen, thirteen, or even twelve years was reached, seems to be founded upon good reason.

With respect to clause 3: The governing body of this College is of opinion that it would not be desirable to postpone the commencement of secondary education until a boy has reached the age of fourteen or fifteen years.

With respect to clause 4: The admission of a large number of pupils of fourteen or fifteen years of age who had only just passed Standard VI. would prejudicially affect the organization of this school.

With respect to clause 5: The test for admission to this school is made more strict for those of advanced years.

Clause 6: I have no remark to make.

Clause 7: No case of hardship under the present regulations has come under the notice of the governing body of this College.

I have, &c.,

The Secretary for Education, Wellington.

WALTER HARPER, Sub-Warden.

ASHBURTON HIGH SCHOOL.

REPLIES to Department's circular letter of the 26th May, 1904:—

1. Admitting the fact that a bright pupil should pass the Sixth Standard under fourteen years of age, there are likely to be always a few who, owing to accidents, have not been able to do so. The age