

books tends to hinder rather than advance the progress of science, particularly science as it affects the organic world. Standard works of reference would foster inquiry, and teachers who reside in isolated localities would have the satisfaction of knowing that, with the aid of standard books of reference on the flora and fauna of this country, the book of nature need not remain closed to them.

DISTRICT HIGH SCHOOLS.—The number of proficiency and competency certificates issued on the result of Standard VI examination was : Proficiency, 319 ; competency, 192. In the four district high schools the numbers attending do not show a large increase. Hastings and Dannevirke are, however, prospering in numbers, Gisborne is just holding its own, but Woodville has gone back. With a large district school like that of Gisborne the smallness of the secondary department is to be regretted. It must, however, be set down to the local demand for boys and girls in the business houses, as the school is strongly and efficiently staffed. It appears to me that the time has arrived for all district-high-school pupils to be tested through the channel of the public examinations now open. The Junior Civil Service and Matriculation should be the objectives of every pupil. These examinations would supply a suitable leaving certificate, besides insuring in the schools systematic training and preparation. The range of subjects for examination is a wide one, so that studies could be easily adapted for the varying wants of each district.

WINTER SCHOOL.—The winter school which was held in Napier in July was much appreciated by teachers. The lectures given by Messrs. Kirk, Hamilton, Gilruth, Dinwiddie, Caughley, Watson, Smith, and Dr. Kennedy were inspiring and practical in their relation to school life and training. A request has come from the Poverty Bay teachers asking for a winter school at Gisborne during the midwinter vacation. Although the cost of carrying out a course of instruction for the benefit of teachers is somewhat heavy, the benefit to education is lasting, and of great advantage to the district. Perhaps the Board may see fit to accede to the application of the teachers from Poverty Bay.

SUPERANNUATION SCHEME.—This scheme has at last become a fact for teachers. It has been long in coming, and is not what was hoped for by some, but it contains something that will be welcomed by many teachers who have laboured well for the country when conditions were very different from what they are now. Several teachers in the Board's service will retire under the scheme, but those who remain should be required by the Board to join the superannuation scheme in anticipation of the future. Advantages are certainly offered to all members of the profession, and the provision that is allowed under the scheme is likely to keep the best teachers in the service.

CONCLUSION.—In conclusion I have to state that my reports on the different schools, including those controlled by the Roman Catholics, have dealt with the details of school-work and progress in each locality. The spirit of educational progress is working in most districts, and many committees continue to manifest much interest in the progress of the schools. Perhaps there is not as much voluntary effort apparent as was shown a few years ago, but the notion is abroad that the Government will supply everything, hence the incentive to provide locally for the petty wants of a school is dying, if not already dead. The tone of the schools continues good ; attention is paid to training in manners and behaviour, and a love of country is fostered among the pupils, both by precept and example. As a class, the teachers in all the larger schools are capable, and their attendance at the Saturday classes shows their desire to prepare themselves in the work required under the new regulations of the Department. Altogether, the past year's work has been one of general and satisfactory progress.

I am, &c.,  
H. HILL, Inspector.

The Chairman, Board of Education, Napier.

WELLINGTON.

SIR,—

Wellington, 24th February, 1906.

We have the honour to present our report for 1905 on the condition of the primary schools in the Wellington Education District.

STATISTICS.—At the close of 1904 the number of schools returned as being in active operation was 152 ; during 1905 five new schools were opened and three were closed, making a total of 154 in operation at the end of the year. Of these, 150 were examined, the remaining four (all in Grade 0) not being in operation at the time of the Inspectors' visits. Special examinations of the secondary classes of eight district high schools were also held. In addition to public schools, eight Roman Catholic schools were examined. The following is a summary of the statistics contained in the annual return forwarded to the Education Department :—

| Classes.     |     |     |     |     |     | Number on Roll. | Present at Inspector's Annual Visit. | Average Age of Pupils in each Class. |
|--------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
|              |     |     |     |     |     |                 |                                      | Yrs. mos.                            |
| Standard VII | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 513             | 490                                  | 14 7                                 |
| " VI         | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 1,344           | 1,311                                | 13 9                                 |
| " V          | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 1,665           | 1,626                                | 13 0                                 |
| " IV         | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 1,983           | 1,931                                | 11 11                                |
| " III        | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 2,016           | 1,939                                | 10 11                                |
| " II         | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 1,946           | 1,858                                | 9 9                                  |
| " I          | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 1,947           | 1,856                                | 8 8                                  |
| Preparatory  | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 5,091           | 4,499                                | 6 11                                 |
| Totals ...   |     |     |     |     |     | 16,505          | 15,510                               | 11 2*                                |

\* Mean of average age.