

In the tables furnishing detailed statements relating to each school a matter claiming attention is a deficiency in the number of half-days the schools in general have remained open during the year 1905. In only six schools has this number reached 420, which leaves an aggregate of 100 half-days devoted to vacations and holidays, a number which is equal to ten full school weeks. While a large number of schools have nearly reached that standard, it is evident in other cases that there has been considerable laxity. As was urged last year it is impossible to secure the best results unless a full school year is maintained.

The pupils attending the classes higher than the Sixth Standard included forty in the secondary class of the Hokitika District High School, and only nine in the Seventh Standard of other schools. A separate report on the examination of the former shows that the class maintained a high degree of efficiency and this is further established by the success of a number of pupils in the Matriculation and Civil Service Examinations. The pupils in Standard VII this year followed the higher course required by the new syllabus and the results were uniformly satisfactory.

The higher education of the pupils beyond the Sixth Standard has embodied technical education to a very small extent. This is confined to the connection of a few boys with a woodwork class and of girls with a cookery class. The reason for this is that the industries requiring technical training are comparatively few in Westland, and the great majority of children who remain at school after the primary course is concluded do so for the purpose of obtaining general education or more especially of securing a pass for examinations leading to appointments in the Civil Service, in the schools, or in offices connected with legal or other professions. The demand must be supplied and a technical day-school would receive hardly any support. It is hoped, however, that, now a building for the purposes of technical education has been provided, it will be possible to establish in one centre useful evening classes in connection with which effective practical instruction in science and geometrical drawing may prove of sufficient service to secure a satisfactory attendance. A suggestion has been made also to introduce, both by inclusion in the curriculum of country schools and by the institution of evening classes, practical instruction in agricultural science. The scope for this is at present not wide, but if a beginning is made the interest in this form of education will, without doubt, increase.

The Sixth Standard, which is the only class examined for a pass in all schools by the Inspector, consists of seventy-five pupils, of whom forty obtained proficiency certificates and twenty-six competency certificates, while nine failed. The percentage of those obtaining full certificates has increased to fifty-three, and the percentage of those who failed altogether is twelve. While this result may be accepted as satisfactory it is very necessary that by careful classification and intelligent adoption of good methods the pupils shall be trained in the lower classes so that they may meet the final test with confidence. One difficulty that presents itself in connection with the examination of this class is that, while on the one hand it is required that in compulsory subjects the standard shall be the same for all classes, wide latitude is allowed to the teachers in the selection of the Course A in geography. This subject receives a considerable proportion of the marks and it is not very easy to maintain uniformity of treatment without placing the candidates from some schools at an unmerited disadvantage. Any middle course is scarcely feasible. Either a more definite course should be fixed or the subject should be omitted from the list of those to which marks are allotted, while, of course, it is maintained as compulsory.

A reference to the appended table discloses that all the larger schools and the majority of those under sole teachers have presented a year's work that reaches a good standard from every point of view, and the general result shows decided improvement. This indicates on the one hand that the new syllabus allows greater opportunity to achieve success and on the other that the teachers have readily seized that opportunity. By a loyal adherence to the spirit of the new course and to the methods necessary for its preparation they have reaped the reward afforded by the increased interest and intelligence displayed by the pupils. It may be expected, further, that the conditions in this respect will continue to improve. It is pleasing, also, to find that the teachers in most cases resolutely refuse to recommend the promotion of pupils that are at all backward. It is only by maintaining in each class a high standard of work that the full benefits of the training and instruction can be received by the pupils. It is hardly to be expected that this commendation can be applied to the whole of the schools in a district where so many of the teachers in charge of small schools are without training. It has to be said, however, that the number that by persistent effort and careful instruction fail to obtain a satisfactory measure of success are few, and in some schools lying in remote parts of the district there is presented work that would be creditable in any school.

During the past year the schools, with the advantage of suitable text-books, have all adopted in entirety the course prescribed in arithmetic. The reduction in the amount required in the upper classes and the more scientific arrangement of the course for the lower classes have continued to render the subject of more value as a means of education, and have in general reduced the amount of work. The latter benefit will, however, not be fully reaped until the pupils of the present junior classes advance to the upper part of the school. The instruction of the upper classes cannot reach the highest point of effectiveness until all the pupils have received in the earlier stages a thorough grounding in study based on concrete methods, which were not so feasible under former conditions. For the same reason great responsibility lies on the teachers charged with the instruction of the junior classes. While the exercises engaged in by these should not take the form of problems they should be as far as possible based on the concrete and the pupils of all classes should be trained in the clear, oral, or written description of the process of each exercise.

The preparation of the course in English is in general very satisfactory and good progress has been made. With reference to the power of expression, both oral and written, the necessity for regular and careful training is widely recognised. The study of the technical requirements, both analytical and synthetical, have also received a pleasing amount of attention. This, under the name of grammar, has in the past suffered by the inclusion of too wide a course, and severe pruning was absolutely neces-