

Standards III and VI are smaller this year by fifty-one and thirty-six respectively, but Standards V and VII are larger by thirty and twenty-eight respectively. Other classes show less variation. The increase in numbers in Standard VII is largely the result of a formation of Lower Takaka into a district high school with a roll-number of twenty-four in the secondary class, which in spite of satisfactory numbers has had in working to be content with a very limited space in the hired room temporarily provided. When the new class-room now in course of erection is completed, working-conditions will be much more favourable. We are pleased to note here that a Reefton winner of one of the two scholarships annually offered by the Nelson College Governors to pupils of our secondary classes who are under sixteen years of age has attained before entry a higher status than any previous scholarship-winner, as she has passed the Matriculation Examination.

The mean of average age as shown above is slightly higher this year—11 years 3 months instead of 11 years 2 months. In Standard VII it is higher by three months, in Standard II by two months, and in each of the other classes except Standards III, IV, and V by one month.

Though the number of children present at examination was smaller than usual, at thirty-six schools every child on the school roll was in his place and at three other schools each had but one absentee. Two hundred and twenty-five certificates of proficiency and 138 of competency were obtained by Standard VI pupils, as compared with 195 and 162 respectively last year. As the totals nearly correspond, evidently better results have been obtained in this class. We note here that by the new regulations as approved at the Inspectors' Conference, 1907, the qualification for the proficiency certificate will be raised, as 50 per cent. of the possible marks will be required in English as well as in each of the branches reading and composition.

The number of applications to sit for examination for certificates in classes below Standard VI still remains very small, only five competency certificates in Standard V being awarded.

In anticipation of these new regulations, which were expected to come into force at the beginning of 1908, it was found necessary to make some changes in the time and form of examination for certain schools. The regulations referred to will be based on the idea that, as a rule, promotions should be synchronous throughout all public schools, the children promoted taking their places in the higher standard classes on the 1st January or at the beginning of the school year, the final examination of the school by the head teacher having been held in the previous November or December. It is obvious that the Inspectors cannot possibly visit and examine all the schools of the district in the time mentioned, and provision is made for the results of the head teacher's examination being substituted for those of the Inspector. That the success of our system has been in the past largely due to the thoroughness and impartiality displayed by Inspectors in the course of their examination is generally acknowledged, and anything which would detract from the value of an independent examination is to be deplored. The examination by the Inspector, too, especially of Standard VI, furnishes in all classes a guide for the teacher as well as a stimulus for the child, and by demanding a full unvarying measure of attainment throughout the district tends to maintain the children's standard of scholarship at a high level. The value of the examination too has been amply demonstrated at those private schools which have of late years submitted themselves to public inspection. We therefore think it advisable that the pass examination of Standard VI, at least, should be retained in the hands of the Inspectors. To enable us in future to examine our largest centre nearer the end of the year than July, the Nelson City schools were taken rather later in the year and a separate examination made of their Sixth Standard classes. Some of the Waimea schools and Motueka and those in its immediate neighbourhood were in consequence examined somewhat earlier and in each case a later examination was held for the Sixth Standard children. A somewhat similar course may have to be adopted this year. Should a school be examined before its school year is complete, the examination must necessarily be confined to that part of the scheme of work that has been covered or to the work of the previous year.

The following briefly summarises our estimate of the efficiency of the schools examined: Good, 12; satisfactory to good, 21; satisfactory, 57—efficient, 90. Fair to satisfactory, 13; fair, 4; moderate, 1—inefficient, 18.

Of the twelve schools in which the work was classed as "good," six obtained the highest marks. Two schools under sole teachers were among those that attained distinction. The five most inefficient as well as most of those that more nearly attained the satisfactory limit were in Grade 0—that is, were schools of less than sixteen pupils in average attendance at each. For these it is difficult to obtain capable teachers and almost impossible to obtain experienced ones. All of the eighteen are conducted by sole teachers. In order to form as accurate a judgment as possible of the efficiency of a school in any subject requiring written papers and yet to avoid an excess of individual examination we have usually examined a section of each class in each subject. In Standard VI, however, and the lower-grade schools the full work of each pupil was taken.

From a comparison with the results of the previous year it will be seen that, though Standards III and IV show a slight improvement, there is a very pronounced falling-off in the work of Standards V, II, and I, while Standard VI apparently just maintains its position.

It is perhaps somewhat difficult to account for the disappointing result in Standard V arithmetic, but we find that in many other districts the poorest work comes from this class, so that it would appear to us that the difficulty lies to a certain extent in the scope of work allotted to Standard V as against the relatively easier range of work set down for the two previous standards. As regards the treatment of the subject in Standard I, we strongly advocate once more the importance of oral work in the lower classes, and the helpfulness of using actual objects in the first stages of number-building. At the same time it must be apparent that the mere construction and understanding of, say, the multiplication and addition tables covers but one side of the question—these tables must be learnt and known. It is in this mechanical side of the work that greater thoroughness should be demanded if the written work is to be within the same limits as the oral. Considerable advantage has been taken of the dual classification in English and arithmetic. We find alto-