

the number of such certificates awarded. But account must be taken of the fact that last year, for the first time generally for the Dominion, the examination for these certificates was held in November or December, so that many of the pupils had received instruction in Standard VI for a longer period than the usual twelve months.

Average Age.—The average ages of the pupils in the several classes for the two years 1907–8 were as follows :—

	1907.		1908.	
	Yrs.	Mo.	Yrs.	Mo.
Preparatory classes	7	1	7	2
Class S1	9	1	9	3
„ S2	10	1	10	3
„ S3	11	1	11	3
„ S4	12	1	12	3
„ S5	13	0	13	1
„ S6	13	10	14	0
„ S7	14	11	14	9
Mean of average ages	11	5	11	6

Details for the several districts will be found in Table D2.

Taking into account the difference in the date of examination already referred to, there does not seem to be any great difference between the average ages for the two years.

The average age for the Dominion of the pupils in Standard VI at the time of the annual visit of the Inspector was fourteen years. It may be worthy of serious consideration whether this age is not too high for the moderate standard of attainment reached by the pupils.

The numbers of pupils receiving instruction in the several subjects of the syllabus for each education district is shown in Table D3. In English, arithmetic, and drawing these numbers are practically identical with the roll-numbers. It may be interesting to note the continued increase of the numbers doing nature-study, handwork, and elementary agriculture :—

	Number of Pupils.		
	1906.	1907.	1908.
Roll	139,302	141,071	147,428
Nature-study	120,833	122,660	128,716
Handwork	98,465	105,514	112,952
Elementary agriculture (included in the above)	4,000	6,000	8,000

*Conveyance of Children.**

Conveyance by Rail.—Since the year 1895 children out of the reach of a primary school, but living near to a convenient line of railway, have been granted free passes to the nearest public school or private school; in 1902 this privilege was extended to holders of scholarships and free places in secondary schools, district high schools, and technical schools; and at the beginning of the present year, 1909, the same concession was granted to other secondary pupils who were compelled to travel by rail in order to attend school.

The amount paid in railway fares on this account for 1908 was £9,437, made up as follows :—

	£
Primary pupils	4,145
Holders of free places in—	
(a.) Secondary schools	1,489
(b.) District high schools	1,043
(c.) Technical schools	2,760
Total	£9,437

Conveyance by Road and Water.—For the last five years grants have been made to Education Boards for the conveyance of children from outlying localities to central public schools as contemplated by section 44 of the Act. The allowance has been made at the rate of 6d. per child per day of attendance at school; and in 1908 the grants to ten Boards for conveyance by road and water amounted to £1,905. The Grey and Westland Boards did not arrange for the conveyance of school-children

* NOTE.—Further reference to this subject is made on page 32.