

## NORTH CANTERBURY.

SIR,—

Education Office, Christchurch, 31st March, 1911.

We have the honour to submit to you our annual report on the schools of this district for the year 1910.

**VISITS PAID.**—The number of public schools in operation at the end of the year was 209, showing a reduction of one on the record for the previous year. The small schools at Kyle and Ashburton Forks were closed, and a household school was opened at Heathstock. Eighteen private schools were also inspected. To almost every school two visits were paid, the exception being schools of the smallest size, or those that, for some reason or other, were found to be closed when an Inspector paid an unannounced visit. To several schools a third visit was paid when, owing to special circumstances, an additional visit was considered advisable.

**ATTENDANCE.**—The records of the annual examinations conducted by the teachers at the end of the year show an enrolment of 21,159 pupils, of whom 20,159 were present for examination. This return shows an increase of 313 and 711 respectively on the corresponding numbers for the previous year.

**AGE OF PUPILS.**—The average age of the pupils in each class of the Board's schools approximates very closely to the corresponding returns for last year. The mean of average age—eleven years five months—is one month lower than the record for 1909.

**STANDARD VI CERTIFICATES.**—The following tabular statement gives a brief form of the results of the examinations for Standard VI certificates:—

	Pupils examined.	Certificates of Proficiency.	Certificates of Competency.
Public schools	1,402	944	312
Private schools	86	44	26
Special examinations	51	21	13

**DISTRICT HIGH SCHOOLS.**—At the eight district high schools working in this district there was an enrolment of 283 pupils in the secondary departments at the end of the year, showing a slight increase on the return for 1909. The programmes of work attached hereto\* show that liberal courses of study have been followed, and good use has been made of the opportunities afforded to pupils desirous of continuing their studies beyond the primary stage. It is to be hoped that during the coming year the programme of work outlined by the Education Department as suitable for rural schools will be more generally adopted by the country district high schools.

**SCHEMES OF WORK.**—With increased experience of the working of the present regulations, fewer cases occur where exception has to be taken to the form in which the schemes of work are presented. It is imperative, however, that these should be ready for inspection at the beginning of the school year. Occasionally we have found that their preparation has been deferred for weeks after the year's work has begun. In such cases we feel justified in suspecting that the teaching at the beginning of the year has been of an aimless and desultory character.

**CHANGES IN THE INSPECTORATE.**—In the month of July the *personnel* of the Inspectorate was materially affected by two events—the resignation, closely followed by the decease, of Mr. T. Ritchie, the Board's Senior Inspector; and the promotion of Mr. E. K. Mulgan to the position of Chief Inspector under the Auckland Education Board. By the teachers with whom he was associated the late Mr. Ritchie will be held in grateful remembrance for his wise and useful guidance, and his warm sympathy with them in the difficulties connected with their calling. Than his fellow-Inspectors no one is in a better position to testify to his unselfish industry, sound judgment, hearty co-operation, and loyalty to the best traditions of the service. Mr. Mulgan returned to the scene of his former labours with the best wishes of his fellow-workers for a successful career in the wider sphere of influence he had been selected to fill.

**RURAL SCHOOLS.**—During the past year difficulties experienced in conducting the smaller rural schools of the Dominion have been the theme of public discussion. The matter has been the subject of consideration by the Education Committee of Parliament, which expressed the opinion that the Inspectors should give an increased measure of attention to the smaller schools, should visit more frequently such as may require assistance, and should exercise a more immediate supervision over them if necessary. With such a recommendation we are in hearty accord. At the beginning of the year we planned our work with the view of acting on the lines indicated in the report. A third visit was paid to some of the smaller schools, and many more schools would have received additional visits with the object of assisting the teachers had no unforeseen interruptions interfered with the programme we had prepared. We hope to make further developments during the coming year in the direction desired, and to keep more closely in touch with the work of inexperienced teachers.

**UNCERTIFICATED TEACHERS.**—It is to be noted, however, that the number of such teachers in the service of the North Canterbury Board has not assumed alarming proportions. From the last available departmental reports we gather that while in the Dominion 689 teachers (19 per cent. of the whole) possessing no examination status whatever were employed, such total included only twenty-seven of the 429 teachers in the service of the North Canterbury Board. With the facilities for travelling available in this district, most of the teachers are easily accessible, and will receive such attention as time and opportunity permit.

**CLASSIFICATION OF PUPILS.**—In promoting and classifying their pupils the teachers, on the whole, have displayed an increased measure of consideration and discretion. The occasions have been comparatively rare when in this connection the judgment of the teacher has been adversely criticized. In a few schools, mainly taught by novices in the art of teaching, an Inspector has found it necessary to reclassify the pupils, more especially when a newly appointed teacher has