

The average age of the total roll has increased owing to the greater percentage continuing on to the higher standards. It will be observed that the percentage in Standards VI and IV compares favourably with that for the Dominion; the improvement may in part be due to the operation of the regulations making Standard VI the standard of exemption. It will also be noted that retardation—i.e., delay in promoting Class P pupils to the standards—is not so pronounced in Hawke's Bay as in the rest of the Dominion. Freedom of classification has had very little effect in raising the average age per standard. There are, however, still some schools wherein pupils spend an undue time in attaining the modest entrance requirements of Standard I.

Roman Catholic Schools.

						Roll.	Present.	Average Age.
								Yrs. mos.
Standard VII	..	..	..	..	..	13	10	15 8
" VI	..	..	..	..	..	78	73	14 2
" V	..	..	..	..	..	105	103	13 6
" IV	..	..	..	..	..	97	93	12 5
" III	..	..	..	..	..	118	117	11 10
" II	..	..	..	..	..	104	102	10 6
" I	..	..	..	..	..	116	115	9 3
Preparatory	..	..	..	..	..	424	400	6 11
Totals	..	..	..	..	..	1,055	1,013	9 10*

* Mean of average age.

Standard Certificates.

					Proficiency.	Competency.	Deferred.
Public schools	...	...	...	...	438	159	94
Catholic schools	...	...	...	...	29	17	12
Other private schools...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...
Native Boys' and Girls' High Schools	...	...	...	...	11	6	4

Attendance.—Notwithstanding the prevalence of various epidemics (measles, croup, whooping-cough, and other forms of children's ailments), and the dislocation of many schools by the smallpox scare and consequent vaccinations, the high average of 89·7 was attained. If in the Department's method of calculation it may be relied on that the basis of comparison is the same, the above is a better average than that attained in England, Scotland, Ireland, the United States of America, or the Dominion at large. It is a working average—i.e., excepted half-days, on which less than half the pupils are present, are excluded from the computation. The closing of schools in order that teachers might undergo a course of physical culture caused the number operating 420 half-days to be fewer than usual—in fact, only two attained 420; twenty-nine others recorded 400 half-days and upwards. We consider there are too many odd holidays, especially in the earlier part of the year, when the school-work is liable to be broken into and disorganized by functions that might equally well be arranged during the vacation.

We have records which prove that the exploitation of child-labour in dairying centres is still prevalent. Long hours of toil before and after school leave no space for the glamour of youth, and the future of the children is enormously prejudiced by robbing them of the educational advantages which, though provided at great cost to the State, they cannot avail themselves of owing to the lassitude that accompanies their hours in school.

Teachers.—Return of Teachers as at 31st December, 1913.

						Certificated.	Licensed.	Uncertificated.	Total.
						M. F.	M. F.	M. F.	M. F.
Head teachers	..	..	..	..	..	53 5	1 0	1 0	55 5
Sole teachers	..	..	..	..	..	9 21	0 2	10 30	19 53
Assistant teachers	..	..	..	..	..	25 88	..	5 30	30 118
Totals	..	..	..	..	..	87 114	1 2	16 60	104 176
Pupil-teachers	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	8 35
Probationers	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	2 19
									114 230
Other instructors permanently engaged—Cookery (2), woodwork (2), and agriculture (2)	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	2 4
Grand total	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	350