

NORTH CANTERBURY.

SIR,—

Education Office, Christchurch, 14th March, 1914.

We have the honour to present our annual report on the schools of the district for the year 1913.

Visits paid.—The number of public schools open at the end of the year was 220. To each of these, with the exception of two small household schools, two visits were paid. Two visits also were paid to each of twenty-three private schools. In addition to the work of inspection, examinations for the purpose of awarding certificates of proficiency were held at practically the same centres as in the previous year. In addition to the central examinations for this purpose, a special examination was held early in the year, and from time to time on Saturdays opportunities of presenting themselves were given to candidates desiring to obtain competency certificates.

Attendance.—The annual examination lists submitted at the close of the year show an enrolment of 22,546 pupils in the Board's schools, with an attendance of 21,186 at the annual examination, an increase of 558 on the rolls and 189 on those present at examination. Similar returns from private schools showed 1,949 on the roll, with 1,811 present at the promotion examination.

The following table is taken from the Inspectors' annual return to the Education Department :—

Classes.						Number on Roll.	Present at the Annual Examination.	Average Age of Pupils in each Class.
								Yrs. mos.
Standard VII	...	...	...	...	...	350	342	14 11
" VI	...	...	...	...	...	1,420	1,358	13 11
" V	...	...	...	...	...	2,086	2,022	13 1
" IV	...	...	...	...	...	2,381	2,290	12 2
" III	...	...	...	...	...	2,781	2,658	11 2
" II	...	...	...	...	...	2,875	2,759	10 0
" I	...	...	...	...	...	2,786	2,648	8 11
Preparatory	...	...	...	...	...	7,867	7,109	6 11
Totals	...	...	...	...	...	22,546	21,186	9 9*

* Mean of average age.

Age of Pupils.—In the Second and Third Standards the average age has been reduced by a month, but in other classes it remains the same as in previous years.

Standard VI Certificates.—The following is a summary of the results of examinations held for the purpose of awarding certificates of proficiency and competency :—

	Pupils examined.	Proficiency Certificates.	Competency Certificates.
Public schools	1,413	970	297
Private schools	104	63	27
Special examinations	82	41	30
Totals	1,599	1,074	354

This shows that 67 per cent. of those presenting themselves obtained proficiency certificates, and 22 per cent. competency, a decrease of 6 per cent. in proficiency and an increase of 5 per cent. in competency certificates.

District High Schools.—[See E.—6, Report on Secondary Education.]

Schemes of Work.—On the whole these are exceedingly satisfactory, and show that the teachers have exercised considerable judgment in mapping out their courses. It has been very refreshing to find during the past year few instances where the preparation of the schemes had been delayed. Under the new regulations it is mandatory that all schemes should be in a completed state before the 1st March.

Classification.—Teachers as a body are realizing the responsibilities attached to the promotion of pupils, and our experience justifies the opinion that the majority of teachers consider very carefully the merits of every case. Very marked efforts have been made on behalf of children whose attainments are below what reasonably might be considered satisfactory from an age point of view. These efforts have been the more laudable as they are generally put forth on behalf of "roving" children, who almost invariably move to new schools just as the teacher feels that an impression is being made. It is very gratifying to find that parents are taking great interest in the progress reports, and that these are gaining for the teacher home co-operation and sympathy.

Central Examinations.—These were conducted on similar lines and mostly at the same places as previously. A slight change was made this year by holding these examinations in the month of December, and although it meant a very strenuous time for the Inspectors, we believe the arrangement was appreciated by the teachers.

Schoolrooms and Grounds.—Many teachers realize the influence of bright surroundings, and recognize the depressing effect of bare walls. Ruskin says, "A room without pictures is like a house without windows." While congratulating many of our teachers on their efforts in obtaining pictures, we would emphasize the necessity for careful selection and for careful hanging. Pictures for illustration, if kept in a portfolio, would have increased length of life and be easily