

The proportion of children in the preparatory classes, it is to be regretted, shows again a tendency to increase. The proportion decreased from 37·30 per cent. in 1911 to 36·22 in 1913. In 1914 it rose again to 36·33 per cent. There has been no corresponding increase in the proportion of children between the ages of five and eight years, the percentage being 30·4 for both years 1913 and 1914.

Table D1A in E.-2 gives more detailed information in regard to the classification and age of pupils.

The following is a summary of the examination statistics for 1914 as compared with the figures for 1913 :—

	1913.	1914.
Total roll at time of annual examination ...	173,459	179,697
Present at examination ...	164,197	172,115
Present in preparatory classes ...	57,869	60,987
Present in classes S6 ...	10,283	10,967
Present in classes S7 ...	2,006	1,997
Standard VI certificates gained, viz.,—		
Certificates of proficiency ...	7,489	{8,195}
" competency ...	1,835	{1,964} 10,159

Details of these figures for each district are given in Table D 2 in E.-2. The variation in the percentages of certificates granted in the several education districts is very marked. In the case of proficiency certificates the percentages varied from 49 to 82 in 1914, and in the case of competency certificates from 10·5 to 27. It will be interesting to observe, in the future, if the centralization of the inspectorate will result in minimizing these differences. The percentages of certificates granted for the whole Dominion in 1914 were—Proficiency, 74·7 per cent.; competency, 17·9 per cent. .

*Average Age.*—The average ages of the pupils in the several classes for the two years 1913 and 1914 were as follows :—

	1913.	1914.
	Yrs. mos.	Yrs. mos.
Preparatory classes .. .. .	7 1	7 1
Class S1 .. .. .	9 1	9 1
" S2 .. .. .	10 2	10 1
" S3 .. .. .	11 3	11 2
" S4 .. .. .	12 2	12 3
" S5 .. .. .	13 2	13 1
" S6 .. .. .	14 0	13 11
" S7 .. .. .	15 0	15 2
Mean of average age .. .. .	9 10	9 9

Details for the several districts will be found in Table D 3 of E.-2. The mean of the average age varies very little from year to year.

#### PRIVATE PRIMARY SCHOOLS.

By section 133 of the Education Act, 1914, where the teacher or managers of any private school apply to have such school inspected the Director is required to arrange for the inspection of such school, to be conducted in like manner as the inspection of public schools. If the Senior Inspector reports such school to be efficient the school is thereupon to be registered as a primary or secondary school, as the case may be. As, subject to the provisions of the Act, every child between the ages of seven and fourteen years is required to attend a public school or other registered school, there is indirectly a compulsion on all private schools to become subject to inspection.

The following are particulars in regard to private schools inspected in 1913 and 1914 under the provisions of the Education Act of 1908 :—

	1913.	1914.
Total number of schools subject to inspection .. .. .	166	186
Total roll number .. .. .	15,350	16,309
Average attendance .. .. .	13,513	14,809
Total roll at annual examination .. .. .	14,659	16,440
Number present at annual examination .. .. .	13,773	15,431
Number present in preparatory classes .. .. .	5,806	6,690
Number present in S6 .. .. .	912	1,055
Number present in S7 .. .. .	205	231
Number of proficiency certificates issued .. .. .	511	607
Number of competency certificates issued .. .. .	181	198

Particulars for various education districts are given in Table D 4 of E.-2.