

TABLE M.—CLASSIFICATION ACCORDING TO STANDARDS IN THE LAST QUARTER OF 1884.

STANDARDS.	Boys.	Girls.	Totals.	Percentage.			
				1884.	1883.	1882.	1881.
Too young for line next following ..	14,238	12,385	26,573	27·33	27·62	27·32	25·45
Preparing for Standard I. ..	9,645	9,011	18,656	19·19	19·10	19·15	20·32
" " II. ..	8,071	7,628	15,699	16·14	16·21	16·12	16·83
" " III. ..	7,642	7,441	15,083	15·51	15·80	15·95	17·14
" " IV. ..	5,545	5,294	10,839	11·15	10·94	11·72	11·44
" " V. ..	3,157	2,938	6,095	6·27	6·32	6·21	5·73
" " VI. ..	1,559	1,603	3,162	3·25	2·91	2·64	2·38
Passed Standard VI. ..	531	600	1,131	1·16	1·10	0·89	0·71
Totals for 1884 ..	50,388	46,850	97,238	..	..	..	..
Totals for 1883 ..	47,704	44,772	92,476	..	..	..	..
Totals for 1882 ..	45,082	42,097	87,179	..	..	..	..
Totals for 1881 ..	43,484	10,103	83,587	..	..	..	..

As only about 52 per cent. of the children were presented in standards, some account may be demanded as to the children represented by the remaining 48 per cent. Table M may serve in some degree to show where these children are. At the end of the year 19·19 per cent. of the number then on the roll were reported as preparing for Standard I., and 27·33 per cent. were reported as too young to be preparing for that standard; so that, on the whole, it was estimated by the teachers that 46·52 per cent. were not ready to pass in any standard. This proportion probably corresponds pretty nearly to the number of children under the age of eight and a half years, since at the end of the year, as shown in Table B, the proportion of children between five and seven years old was 21·46 per cent., and of children between seven and ten years, 37·05. It is, however, by no means certain that this view of the case is a fair one. Table M shows that 70·5 per cent. (that is to say, all except those who had passed Standard VI. and those who were too young to be preparing for Standard I.) were at the end of the year preparing for examination in some standard, and, as the proportion was almost exactly the same at the end of 1883, it seems to follow that something like 70 per cent. of the children belonging to the schools at examination time ought to have been presented; and 70 per cent. of the mean of the roll numbers at the beginning and end of the year respectively would be equal to 68 per cent. of the roll number at the end of the year, instead of the 52 per cent. actually presented. Here, then, is an indication of the operation of some influence tending to hinder the presentation of something like one-sixth of the whole number of pupils. There is reason to believe that this state of things is partly due to the use often made of a formula not contemplated by the regulations, but which has sprung into existence under their operation, and is known as the "percentage of passes." It is evident that if the percentage of passes be calculated on the number presented, it can be augmented by not presenting the candidates who are most likely to fail. To some extent the policy of excluding backward candidates from the calculation of the percentage of passes has been recognized by Inspectors, and in one case at least by a Board, and rules have been formulated for throwing out of account the failures of children whose attendance has been very short or very irregular, or who are much below the age of their equals in standing. There has been no uniformity of method in this matter, though there have been some signs of a desire for it, such, for instance, as the suggestion often made that a minimum of attendances should be required as a pre-requisite to examination.

The Order in Council issued last June was designed to put an end to the withholding of pupils from examination on any account whatever, and at the same time to put into the hands of the teacher the means of protecting himself against a diminution of his percentage on account of the irregular or short attendance of some pupils. That part of the Order in Council which required that all children should be presented has met with much approval, especially because it explicitly requires that the preparatory classes as well as the standard classes shall be examined; but the plan of allowing a teacher to put a pupil back into a lower class has been the subject of much adverse comment, and it does not reappear in the regulations as recast by a new Order in Council to be issued this month. By the new regulations the expression "percentage of passes" is