

for a school is not always associated with the best interests of the children. Only a few weeks ago I visited a new settlement where a school had just been opened, ostensibly for the benefit of a dozen or more children in the district, but although the school had been in operation for seven or eight months two of the principal settlers had not even taken the trouble to send their children to school. At the same time these settlers were clamouring for a school building in a place more convenient to themselves.

The classification of the pupils at the date of my visits to the schools will be seen from the accompanying table, which gives the roll-number for each standard class, the number present at my annual visit, and the average age of the pupils:

Classes.							Number on Roll.	Present at Inspector's Annual Visit.	Average Age of Pupils in each Class.
Standard VII	...	...	...	...	...	134	124	Yrs. mos. 14 11
" VI	...	...	...	...	...	490	481	14 0
" V	...	...	...	...	...	868	825	12 11
" IV	...	...	...	...	...	996	959	11 11
" III	...	...	...	...	...	1,159	1,114	11 1
" II	...	...	...	...	...	1,154	1,111	10 1
" I	...	...	...	...	...	1,162	1,103	8 11
Preparatory	...	...	...	...	...	3,094	2,738	6 10
Totals	...	...	...	...	...	9,057	8,455	11 4*

* Mean of average age.

The results here given, except in the case of Standards VI and VII, are based on the promotions made by the principal teachers of the different schools.

It is difficult to show how wide the differences are between the old methods of examining and the new. The teachers carry on their own work and hold term or quarterly examinations, and the records are kept for the information and guidance of the Inspector at the time of his visit to a school. Detailed examinations by an Inspector are discontinued, his attention being more directed to methods of instruction, to general progress, to new needs, and to the conditions prevailing for the betterment of education in a district. Standard VI alone has been left for the Inspector, but there is no reason whatever why even this standard should not be examined by the headmaster in schools where the mark "efficient" has been earned. Certificates are issued by the Inspector alone, these being either certificates of competency or proficiency, as defined under the regulations. Unfortunately the opening of small schools in the remoter places of settlement has brought into existence again the uncertificated teacher, and schools in charge of such must be controlled and examined, and in fact the school-work generally must be directed by the Inspector, if the syllabus of requirements is to be carried out with even fair hope of success. It is manifestly wrong to intrust the advancement of children from class to class to those who know very little of the art of school-teaching and nothing of departmental regulations.

In the matter of certificates of proficiency the plan of holding a synchronous examination early in December in a number of centres was carried out, and the results warrant a continuance of the plan. For the first time in the history of the district all promotions in all schools were made in December, in anticipation of the work to be commenced at the opening of the schools in the New Year. This important step will unify the work of the schools in the matter of promotions from class to class, so that in future there need be no complaints about the weakness of children when moving from school to school in this educational district.

In connection with the work of the schools it is necessary that attention be called to certain desirable alterations in the staffing. Some of the schools, owing to inelasticity in the regulations, work under conditions that ought not to be permitted either on account of the pupils or the teachers. It must not be supposed that because the average number of children to a teacher is between thirty and forty for all the schools that therefore there is no cause for complaint as to the staffing. An average does not represent in a proper light the working-conditions as they exist in different schools. Thus in this district the Wigan School has seven pupils, Arowhana three, Rakauoa five, Te Aroha ten, Patoka seven, Pohui fourteen, Patangata fourteen, Ti-tree Point nine, Mangatuna eight, Makaretu School eight—or an attendance of eighty-five pupils for ten schools. In other words, ten teachers have each on the average 8.5 pupils to instruct, whilst the average number of pupils for each teacher at the time of my annual examination was—at Gisborne District High School 73.2, at Napier Main School 63.5, and at the District High School, Hastings, 65.3.

Attention was drawn last year to the interest shown by an increasing number of teachers and Committees in the school grounds and general surroundings of the schools. It seems to me a pity that so little actual encouragement is given by educational authorities to what may appropriately be called "school externals in relation to education." Apparatus and appliances—scientific and modern—are deemed indispensable for children in the schoolrooms, but outside little or no provision is made for them, although the physical, the æsthetic, and the observational sides of training and culture are to be developed and encouraged in the playground and surroundings, if anywhere. School games constitute in a large measure the basis of all the higher forms of government. In fact, they are the