

The following is a summary of the examination statistics for 1908 :—

Public schools—

Total roll at time of annual examination	..	..	..	..	147,865
Present at examination	..	..	..	..	139,764
Present in preparatory classes	..	..	..	..	50,618
Present in Standard VI classes	..	..	..	..	8,771
„ Standard VII classes	..	..	..	..	2,038
Standard VI certificates gained, viz.,—					
Certificates of proficiency	..	..	..	..	5,435
„ competency	..	..	..	..	2,218
					7,653

Details of these figures for each district are given in Table D1 of E.—2.

S6 Certificates.—The percentages of pupils who gained certificates of proficiency and certificates of competency respectively in the two years 1907–8 are shown below :—

				1907. Per Cent.	1908. Per Cent.
Gained certificates of proficiency	..	..	..	59.00	61.96
„ „ competency	..	..	..	23.98	25.29
No certificate	..	..	..	17.02	12.75
				100.00	100.00

The raising of the standard required for a certificate of proficiency, introduced by the regulations of last year, has not, therefore, apparently had the effect of lessening the number of such certificates awarded. But account must be taken of the fact that last year, for the first time generally for the Dominion, the examination for these certificates was held in November or December, so that many of the pupils had received instruction in Standard VI for a longer period than the usual twelve months.

Average Age.—The average ages of the pupils in the several classes for the two years 1907–8 were as follows :—

					1907. Yrs. Mo.	1908. Yrs. Mo.
Preparatory classes	..	..	..	..	7 1	7 2
Class S1	..	..	..	..	9 1	9 3
„ S2	..	..	..	..	10 1	10 3
„ S3	..	..	..	..	11 1	11 3
„ S4	..	..	..	..	12 1	12 3
„ S5	..	..	..	..	13 0	13 1
„ S6	..	..	..	..	13 10	14 0
„ S7	..	..	..	..	14 11	14 9
Mean of average ages	..	..	..	..	11 5	11 6

Details for the several districts will be found in Table D2 of E.—2.

Taking into account the difference in the date of examination already referred to, there does not seem to be any great difference between the average ages for the two years.

The average age for the Dominion of the pupils in Standard VI at the time of the annual visit of the Inspector was fourteen years. It may be worthy of serious consideration whether this age is not too high for the moderate standard of attainment reached by the pupils.

The numbers of pupils receiving instruction in the several subjects of the syllabus for each education district is shown in Table D3 (E.—2). In English, arithmetic, and drawing these numbers are practically identical with the roll-numbers. It may be interesting to note the continued increase of the numbers doing nature-study, handwork, and elementary agriculture :—

	Number of Pupils.		
	1906.	1907.	1908.
Roll	139,302	141,071	147,428
Nature-study	120,833	122,660	128,716
Handwork	98,465	105,514	112,952
Elementary agriculture (included in the above)	4,000	6,000	8,000