

Table showing state of roll numbers for a period of five years:—

Year.	Roll.	Increase.
1909	17,761	...
1910	17,893	132
1911	18,089	196
1912	18,379	290
1913	18,865	486
1914	19,691	826
Total increase for five years		1,930

The increase for 1914 is the largest on record.

Efficiency.—The summarizing of our inspection and examination reports shows the efficiency mark of 140 schools to range from satisfactory to very good, that of nineteen to be fair, while seven are classed as distinctly inferior. The percentage of schools below satisfactory is somewhat larger than was the case last year, and though changes in the management have been made in the majority of these schools (which as a rule belong to Grade 0), the difficulty of finding suitable teachers for the more remote and isolated localities in the district is still very great.

English.—Our efficiency mark in reading is much the same as that of last year—that is to say, satisfactory on the whole. While really excellent reading is the exception rather than the rule, yet, on the other hand, many of the worst faults of former years have been largely eliminated. In general, we find intelligent comprehension of the matter of the lessons. Recitation on the whole cannot be regarded as better than fair. This is partly due to an unsuitable choice of subjects, and partly to the fact that the subject is not taught, children being simply set to learn the poetry by heart with little or no guidance from the teacher—a fault which is probably the outcome of a desire to save the teacher's time and to give each standard class a separate selection of poetry. In many schools a judicious grouping of classes would enable a teacher to devote more time to the actual teaching of the subject-matter of the poetry lesson. It is hoped that the Laureate Poetry-book now being issued will materially assist teachers in improving the recitation of their pupils. Our last year's remarks still hold good in most cases with regard to spelling and writing. In teaching spelling too much time and energy are expended on words that will never come into the child's vocabulary. We find that in teaching writing an increased number of teachers of the smaller schools are adopting the plan of at least one simultaneous writing-lesson per week with blackboard demonstration, as recommended in our previous reports. In composition we have no fault to find as to lack of matter or freedom of expression. The vocabulary of the average pupil is still more restricted, however, than might reasonably be expected from the amount of general reading which is done nowadays. This poverty of vocabulary is to blame for such faults as the misuse of the unfortunate words "get" and "got." The following sentences, for instance, collected from the composition exercises of a single school are examples of this failing: "After dinner I *get* cleaned." "Charles I *got* executed." "I've *got* a shilling in my pocket." "I *got* to school late." "I've *got* to milk ten cows." "The children *got* tired of playing." "When we *got* to Auckland we *got* our luggage together and *got* off the train."

Arithmetic.—In arithmetic the mechanical part of the paper-work continues to be satisfactory, though the efficiency of Standard V is still generally somewhat lower than that of the other standard classes. The increased freedom of classification allowed by the revised syllabus should result in the more rational treatment of arithmetic, especially in the last two years of primary work. Though there is some improvement in mental arithmetic, a large proportion of teachers still neglect this branch of the subject, the importance of which has been frequently emphasized in our reports. More especially is this neglect of mental arithmetic apparent in the Primer and Standard I classes, where we often find mental and oral work occupying a subordinate position, while at the same time too much written mechanical work is expected from the pupils.

Geography.—Improvement continues to be made in the treatment of geography, noticeably so in the schemes of work which are in operation. In those schools in which the whole of the senior division is under the charge of one teacher the best results have been obtained where all classes are grouped at frequent intervals for a combined lesson before the map of the world, irrespective of the special work of each division. This method has proved to be an excellent means of imparting a knowledge of world geography, and is deserving of more general adoption. The interest aroused by the war has naturally directed the attention of teachers and pupils alike strongly to European geography, and the same interest might be used with advantage to stimulate the study of production, commerce, and transit. An increasing use of outdoor lessons in the treatment of physical and, to some degree, of mathematical geography is recommended. In such lessons emphasis should be laid on the correct observation and recording of natural phenomena, rather than on the sometimes difficult and abstruse explanations which are too often taken word by word from a text-book.

History and Civics.—We are pleased to be able to report some improvement in history and civics, in respect both of the method of instruction and of the pupil's knowledge of historical events. At the same time it should be pointed out that teachers as a whole have not taken sufficient trouble to give their pupils any perspective in connection with historical events. There is a strong impression among pupils that everything happened "about a hundred years ago." Such improvement as we have noticed arises mainly from the fact that historical readers now occupy their proper place in the treatment of the subject, while more prominence is given to oral teaching. Good schemes of work were prepared at the beginning of the year, but in many schools these were abandoned at the outbreak of the war, attention being paid to former wars