

Classification of Pupils.—In terms of the regulations, the classification of pupils is placed in the hands of the head teacher of the school, though it may be modified to some extent by the visiting Inspector. Under the new regulations the Inspector is required to do comparatively little examination himself, in order that he may devote a greater amount of time to investigating the character of the teaching. It is well recognized that the efficient teacher is fully capable of classifying his pupils, but there are many instances, especially in the smaller country schools, where classification is not carried out on satisfactory lines, and it is not from any intentional action on the part of the teacher, but from the fact that he has not the necessary skill to do the work, nor in many cases has he a standard on which to classify. In some cases we have ascertained that local pressure on the teacher rather than the ability of the pupil has determined promotion, the marks in the examination register showing failure to obtain even 30 per cent. of the possible. Freedom of classification imposes deep responsibility upon the teacher, and promotions should be effected with due appreciation of that responsibility, and without any consideration of external influence. Further, we have again, at times, found that pupils have been placed in a higher class "on trial." There can be no objection to the promotion of a pupil whose efficiency stands out beyond that of the rest of the class—indeed, this is the true spirit of the syllabus; but there can be no justification for placing in a higher class, at the request of the parent, the child who is well known by the teacher to be unfitted for the work which he will be called upon to undertake. In any case, no such trial should extend beyond the first term of the year, at the end of which period an investigation should be made by the teacher into the results of the trial and the child reclassified accordingly. We would earnestly impress upon teachers the need for the utmost care in the classification of their pupils.

National Scholarships.—We have to report that, as the result of the recent departmental examinations, sixteen Junior and ten Senior National Scholarships were obtained by Hawke's Bay pupils. This marks a distinct increase over last year's results, and is one with which the Board has expressed its great satisfaction. An analysis of the marks shows that the candidates from Hawke's Bay for the Junior Scholarships gained on the average the highest marks in the Dominion (560). Moreover, most of the pupils come from primary schools. The value of the scholarships to a town child is £5 per annum and free tuition, and to a country child it is £35 per annum and free tuition. The scholarship thus means more to a country child, and we have pointed this out to the Board in the hope that it will impress the country teachers with the need to have due regard to the interests of their pupils in this respect.

Uncertificated Teachers.—During the year instruction of the uncertificated teachers was afforded by correspondence classes conducted by specially qualified instructors chosen by the Board. The published results of the Teachers' Examination for certificates again show that these classes are accomplishing valuable work. Seventeen of the students were successful in passing the C or D examination or in obtaining some status towards these certificates. In connection with these classes a summer school was held at the end of the year, when the requirements for the practical certificate in science were met under direction of the Board's special instructors. Lessons were also given in school method and the art of teaching, while the Medical Inspector of Schools conducted lessons in first aid and hygiene, rendering assistance that was very much appreciated by all. Of those in attendance twenty-seven (including five of the correspondence class) passed the examination for D or were partially successful in the D and C examinations.

Grading of Teachers.—On the whole the grading of the teachers in this district appears to meet with the requirements of the Department with respect to the allocation of marks. There were nine appeals, one of which was successful. The Board carefully conserved the interests of the returned soldiers, who were given a special allotment of marks corresponding with their period of service.

We have, &c.,

WILLIAM W. BIRD,
D. A. STRACHAN, } Inspectors.
R. G. WHETTER, }

The Director of Education.

WELLINGTON.

SIR,—

Wellington, 26th February, 1920.

We have the honour to present our report for 1919 on the work and condition of the schools under the Wellington Education Board.

There were inspected 254 State schools (including eleven side schools), with a roll number of 25,183, and thirty-five private schools, with a roll of 3,714, a total of 289 schools in all, with 28,897 pupils on the roll, of whom 27,983 were present for the annual examination. Compared with the corresponding totals for 1918 the totals for the State schools show a decrease in the number of schools, and, for the first time on record, a decrease also in the number on the roll. The decrease in the number of schools is due to the closing of small household schools in the Marlborough Sounds for which it was not found possible to provide even unqualified teachers. The decrease in the State roll is mainly due to the establishment in the city of private primary schools, the roll number of these schools showing an increase of 568 over last year's roll. Details of standard numbers, average ages, &c., are set out in the following tables:—

Table I.—254 State Schools.

	Roll.	Present.	Average Age.	
			Yrs.	mos.
Standard VII	305	304	14	8
„ VI	2,099	2,071	13	8
„ V	2,610	2,553	12	10
„ IV	2,830	2,781	12	1
„ III	3,139	3,079	11	0
„ II	3,137	3,072	9	10
„ I	2,931	2,855	8	9
Preparatory	8,132	7,733	6	10
	25,183	24,448		