

The money thus expended by the Board in the first instance is recouped by quarterly deductions from the School Fund of the premiums payable on the estimated value of the property insured in each school district.

**TEACHERS AND SALARIES.**—A large proportion of the schools in this district show an average attendance of 30 and under, the salaries attached to which are insufficient to secure the services of competent teachers. The Board has had great difficulties to contend with in this direction, and has been obliged in not a few instances to employ young men of limited experience as a temporary expedient for supplying the demand for teachers in the "weak schools." As population increases, however, the difficulty will gradually disappear, and the opportunity afforded by the Government of sending to a training school for two months in the year some of the young teachers of promising ability will have the excellent effect of improving their knowledge of method and school organization. Teachers' salaries in some individual instances may be lower under the new Act than under the Otago Ordinance, but on the whole there is an upward tendency, as may be shown by the following table:—

No. of Schools in	Under £100.	£100-£150.	£150-£200.	£200-£250.	£250-£300.
1877	11	15	9	2	1
1878	7	20	11	2	3

It is to be hoped that next report will show a marked improvement on the incomes of teachers, for unless a good salary is provided it cannot be expected that young men will devote themselves to a profession the emoluments of which are less than the annual wages of an artisan, or even of a common labourer.

**ATTENDANCE.**—The compulsory clause of the Education Act has been adopted by a few School Committees, but I am not aware that in any district it has been put in force. As regards attendance, however, there is no ground for dissatisfaction: the percentage which the average attendance bears to the number enrolled for the last quarter of 1878 is 86·2, while in the Australian Colonies it ranges from 45·2 to 51·6, showing a very great disparity between the working average and the number enrolled. But it must be borne in mind that in Australia, when a child's name is once enrolled, it remains there till the end of the year, and thus swells the number of enrolments, and also that in a country having a number of large towns, containing two or more schools, the children have much greater facilities for moving about from one school to another, and, in doing so, unduly augment the number enrolled. As there is only one town in Southland with more than one school, and as the names of those children who leave school are expunged from the roll, the facilities for duplicate attendances are at a minimum. In instituting a comparison between the attendances in the schools in Australia and those in New Zealand, due weight ought to be given to these considerations. Still, in all State schools where education is free, a stringent compulsory clause is a *sine quâ non* in order to insure regularity of attendance, which is so essential to the steady progress and proficiency of the pupils. "The Education Act, 1877," requires amendment in this direction.

**SCHOOL STATISTICS.**—Considering the short period which this report covers, it cannot be expected that statistical tables, showing the progress made in the schools, can be presented. It will be sufficient to state that, at the end of the year, the number of schools in operation was 46; about to be opened with an estimated attendance of five hundred pupils, 4; new school-buildings sanctioned in old district, 3; in new districts, 7; extension of present buildings, 2; new districts defined, 7; number of teachers, 69; of pupils enrolled, 2,900, and in average attendance 2,507. The ages of the pupils, their classification as regards the prescribed standards, and the numbers learning the various branches of the school course, may be ascertained by a reference to Table IV. Besides what are usually called the common branches, history has been taught in nineteen schools to 529 pupils; elementary science in twelve schools to 208 pupils; drawing in twenty-one schools to 618 pupils; object-lessons in fifteen schools to 908 pupils; vocal music in eight schools to 577 pupils; sewing in nine schools to 692 pupils; and domestic economy in three schools to 65 pupils. It may be expected that the next annual report will show a marked increase in the number of schools in which these branches of instruction are taught. Teachers should be disabused of the idea which seems to be prevalent among them that these subjects are entirely optional, and reminded that, by the Education Act, they form a part of the school course, and should therefore find a place in the time-table of every public school.

**DRILL INSTRUCTION.**—School drill, as a means to an end, viz., discipline, without which the work of instruction can never be satisfactorily or successfully carried on, has been very much neglected in the schools of this district. The Board has not overlooked its importance and necessity, and has resolved to place in the hands of every teacher a copy of Norman's "Schoolmaster's Drill Assistant," in order that systematic drill may be daily practised in every public school. For those situated in the centres of the population properly-qualified instructors have been appointed. The importance of drill as an aid to discipline cannot be over-estimated. Success in this, as in every other branch of instruction, depends in a great measure on the character and energy of the teachers themselves, for it is a well-known adage "As is the teacher so is the school;" but, if drill is introduced and honestly carried out, habits of order, sustained attention, steady work, and good conduct will be the inevitable results.

**REGULATIONS, ETC.**—Rules for determining the staff necessary for each school, the amount of salary paid to teachers, and the distribution of the School Fund among the various Committees, based on the average daily attendance, have been adopted by the Board.

Regulations for the instruction and remuneration of pupil-teachers, as well as a programme for their examination, have been prepared and sanctioned by the Education Department.

A syllabus has been drawn up to regulate the course of instruction in the special branches taught in the District High School.