

The following cases taken from the summaries for June, 1879, will show the character of the mistakes that are frequently made in the returns which are sent in to the department:—

SCHOOLS.	NUMBERS ON ROLL.						AVERAGE ATTENDANCE.			REMARKS.		
	At beginning of Quarter.	At end of Quarter.			Average Weekly Number.			Strict Average.	Working Average.			
		M.	F.	Total.	M.	F.	Total.		M.		F.	Total.
A	1,014	..	..	1,048	..	..	1,108	..	..	..	..
B	359	..	..	370	..	..	277	269	..	..	280	
C	80	44	41	85	33	30	63	60	33	30	63	
D	371	..	..	419	..	..	339	..	..	..	..
E	22	..	..	27	11	9	20	19	10	10	20	
F	384	..	..	380	211	199	410	190	120	100	220	
G	92	..	..	90	33	34	67	68	35	36	71	
H	63	..	..	60	13	19	32	22	16	23	39	
I	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	155	..	..	154	

In case A, the average weekly number on the roll could not have been so greatly in excess of the numbers at the beginning and end of the quarter, unless there had been an extraordinary addition of new pupils early in the quarter, and an extraordinary subtraction of pupils leaving a little before the end of the quarter. The same remark applies to case F, where it is also to be noticed that, if the average roll is stated correctly, the attendance of the girls is seriously irregular; that, in fact, 99 out of 199 are absent on an average every day. Case B represents an error of an altogether different kind. If the number on the books at the beginning of the quarter was 359 (reduced from 400, as appears by the return of the previous quarter) and the number at the end of the quarter was 370, it is impossible to suppose that during the quarter so many left as to reduce the number on the roll below 277 to such a degree that, though the number on the roll afterwards rose to 370, the average number belonging was only 277. Besides, the average attendance for the quarter is stated at 280, and it is impossible that the attendance should be in excess of the roll. It is possible that the teacher in such a case (and there are many such cases) has not read the instructions, and supposes that the "weekly roll number" means the number of children who have attended at all during a given week. Case G is of the same kind as case B, with this difference: that it shows an average roll lower than even the strict average attendance. Case D, so far as it is stated in the table given above, is of the same kind as cases B and G. In case C, the teacher seems to have simply copied the figures for working average, instead of ascertaining the weekly roll number according to the instructions. In case E, the average weekly number is certainly too low, and it professes that the girls belonging to the school are less in number than those attending. Case H presents no new feature, except that it shows such a difference between the strict average and the working average as ought to be very fully explained by the school authorities to the Board.

A more minute examination of the returns which have been furnished with regard to case A shows that it is possible that the average weekly roll number may be as stated, since a very large number of pupils entered during the quarter, and a very large number left. There were 1,052 pupils on the books at the end of March quarter; 38 of these did not attend during the June quarter; during the last-mentioned quarter 193 new pupils entered; and, of those who attended at some time during the quarter, 159 left before the end of it: that is to say, more than one-eighth of the whole school during the June quarter consisted of new pupils, and yet the school was smaller at the end of the quarter than at the beginning. If one-eighth of the pupils of a school pass through it in a quarter, the average time of each pupil at the school is only two years; so that there must be very frequent migrations from one school to another, to the great detriment of the schools and of the scholars. The more frequent such changes are, the more necessary it becomes for teachers to keep the roll number as close as possible to the actual facts of the case, in order that the real number of children under instruction may be known. The standard-certificates, if strictly used according to Regulation 4 of the Order in Council relating to standards, may be made to constitute a check upon undue migration from school to school. The last part of that regulation is as follows: "Every scholar transferred from one public school to another shall be required to exhibit his last certificate to the head teacher of the school."

Case I is an example of a kind of mistake which might have been thought impossible. The working average is made to appear less than the strict average. Another mistake, which often occurs in the returns, consists in stating the number belonging at the beginning of a quarter (line III., after deducting line II. from line I.) as actually higher than the number belonging at the end of the previous quarter (which number should be copied in line I. from line VII. of the return of the preceding quarter). But by far the larger number of the errors which can be detected by inspection, are such as relate to the weekly roll number. Unfortunately, so many mistakes that can be detected throw doubt upon the accuracy of the returns in general.

The Education Department is primarily charged with the administration of a very large amount of the Public Revenue annually voted by Parliament for education, and it feels very strongly the necessity of being enabled to furnish very full and trustworthy information as to the number of the youth of the colony who are receiving the benefit of such education. The department therefore feels constrained to appeal to Education Boards, School Committees, and Public-School Teachers for their hearty co-operation