

was 31·5; in 1882 it was 31·9; and in 1881 it was 31·0. The average number of pupils to a teacher varied considerably in the different districts: it ranged from 24·6 in Marlborough to 39·1 in Otago. As a rule the more sparsely-peopled districts, in which there is of necessity a larger proportion of small schools, show lower averages than the others. The greater the proportion of large schools in an education district, the smaller, within proper limits, is the aggregate number of teachers needed in proportion to the school attendance. The employment of several teachers in the same school admits of a satisfactory classification of the pupils, and the formation of large classes under separate teachers; for it is evident that a given number of children equal in attainments can be more easily taught in one class than the same or even a smaller number of children of unequal attainments distributed into two, three, or more classes.

It is satisfactory to note that the proportion of certificated teachers to the whole number employed in the schools is yearly increasing. Table O shows that 365 of the teachers in the public schools had attended, for longer or shorter periods, one or other of the training colleges in the colony.

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE OF THE BOARDS.

The General Assembly last session voted money for the following purposes in connection with the public schools:—

1. For grants to Boards at the rate of £3 15s. for every child in average daily attendance at the public schools, in accordance with the provisions of the Education Act.

2. For supplementary grants to Boards at the rate of 5s. for each child in average daily attendance.

3. For grants to Boards, at the rate of 1s. 6d. for each child in average daily attendance, for the support of scholarships established by them in accordance with the provisions of the Education Act. These are the only payments from the consolidated revenue that the Boards can make applicable to scholarships.

4. For distribution amongst Boards of the sum of £4,000 by way of subsidy, with the view to aid and encourage them to make sufficient provision for the thorough and efficient inspection of the public schools.

5. For grants to Boards for the training of teachers. The amount voted was £8,000.

6. For special grants to Boards for school buildings.

7. For aiding Boards, in special cases, to acquire and improve grounds for recreation purposes. The amount voted was £1,200.

8. For enabling Boards to replace school buildings that had been destroyed by fire. The amount voted was £500.

The capitation grants are paid to the Boards monthly, in strict accordance with the ascertained average daily attendance of the preceding three months, as shown by the summary statements of the quarterly attendance furnished by the Boards in terms of the Order in Council of 28th May, 1878.

The reports of the several Boards for 1884 are printed in the Appendix; and a statement in detail of each Board's income and expenditure follows its report. Summaries of the Boards' accounts for the year are given in Tables Nos. 1 and 2, Appendix, pp. 1 and 2. A statement of expenditure and recoveries in respect of the public schools, and of all other services under the control or supervision of the Minister of Education during the financial year ending 31st March, 1885, is given in Table No. 8, Appendix, pp. 8-10.

Tables F1 and F2 contain summaries of the Boards' accounts for 1884 and for each of the seven previous years, so as to show at a glance the accounts of the eight years during which the schools have been maintained by grants from the colonial revenue:—