

departments or in sole charge, 175 (36 males and 139 females) were assistants, and 129 (37 males and 92 females) were pupil-teachers.

The following table gives the number of schools, the number of children on the rolls, the number in average attendance, and the percentage of attendance at the close of each year since the Education Act came into force [not all reprinted]:—

Quarter ended 31st December.	District Schools.	Aided Schools.	Total of Schools.	On Roll.	Average Attendance.	Percentage.
1878 ...	106	4	110	13,647	10,076	73·83
1888 ...	155	1	156	20,388	16,395	80·42
1898 ...	186	16	202	20,618	17,152	83·19

NORMAL SCHOOL.—There were thirty-seven students admitted to the Normal School during the year, nine males and twenty-eight females. Full information upon the work of the training department is given in the Principal's report, which is appended.

SCHOLARSHIPS.—The annual examinations for scholarships were held on the 19th December and following days. The number of competitors for the junior scholarships was 109 (sixty-eight boys and forty-one girls), fewer by sixty-seven and twenty-four compared with 1896 and 1897 respectively. Eighteen candidates entered in the senior class, being seven less than in the previous year. Of the 109 competitors for the junior scholarships, fifty-nine came from schools defined in the Board's regulations as town schools, and fifty from country schools; four scholarships were secured by the first class of schools, and nine by country schools, but seven candidates of the latter class required the year's advantage in age.

The Gammack scholarship offered at the close of 1897 was awarded to Miss Mabel Connon, an old scholarship winner under the Board, and at one time a pupil in the Kaikoura Town Public School. Of the candidates that competed at the close of 1898, Mr. Frederick Kissel has secured the highest number of marks, and he will therefore be awarded the scholarship then offered as soon as the official return is available. Mr. Kissel is another candidate whose primary course was gone through at one of the Board's schools (Templeton), from which he entered the Boys' High School on one of the Board's ordinary scholarships.

MANUAL AND TECHNICAL INSTRUCTION.—The manual-training classes at the Normal School have been continued throughout the year. The work of both teachers and boys has been good; but, compared with the previous year, there has been a large decrease in the numbers attending, pointing to the conclusion that, whatever interest the novelty of the instruction aroused on the initiation of the classes, the advantages to be derived from the instruction are not so generally appreciated as was anticipated. It must be remembered, however, that the classes have not yet been brought into close touch with the bulk of the Board's teachers, or in reach of the majority of the schools in this district.

At Leeston, in addition to instruction in woodwork, cookery classes have been established, which promise good results, as also do those started with the same object at Amberley by local effort. So far the Board's applications to the Government for the means to establish technical schools at the several centres have failed to obtain that favourable consideration which was expected to result from the action of the House of Representatives when, at the close of the 1897 session, it passed such a substantial vote for the purposes of technical instruction.

The following table shows the number of teachers and boys that attended at the Normal School for manual instruction during each quarter, with the number of classes:—

Quarter or Term commencing	Number of Classes.	Number of Teachers.	Number of Boys.	Total.
February ...	8	40	78	118
May ...	8	25	87	112
July ...	5	...	92	92
October ...	7	17	84	101

IRREGULAR ATTENDANCE.—The attempt to enforce the compulsory clauses of the Act by the employment of Truant Officers has been by no means such an unqualified success as would justify the Board in proceeding to a more extended application of legal steps, although frequently requested to do so both by teachers and by School Committees. The first Truant Officer employed by the Board has, under the instructions of the Board, proceeded with great forbearance and good judgment, yet the resistance of some of the offending parents has been so violent that the officer has not escaped even from personal assaults; but his chief difficulty has arisen from the extreme reluctance of the Magistrates to put the law in force, and their positive refusal, even in the worst of cases, to inflict anything like a deterrent punishment.

The following table gives the number of cases, at their different stages, dealt with by the Truant Officer during the year:—

Notices delivered to parents or guardians	...	...	...	...	736
Summonses served	...	...	...	...	284
Fines imposed	...	...	...	...	197
Orders of the Court obtained	...	...	...	...	8
Dismissals	...	...	...	...	20
Withdrawals	...	...	...	...	2

An examination of the table showing average attendance discloses a feature of some importance which unfavourably affects the financial position of the Board. The total number of children on the rolls on the 31st December, 1890, was 21,240, and the number at the end of 1898 only 20,618, a