

Taking all schools below 50 in average attendance, there was an increase in the number of schools of 37 during the year—viz., from 1,131 to 1,168; there was, on the other hand, a diminution of 16 in the number of schools of 50 and upwards in average attendance—viz., from 493 to 477; in other words, the larger schools, or town schools generally speaking, show a falling-off in attendance, while the number of small schools, or country schools, is greater than in the previous year. The number of half-time schools remained about the same as in 1898; while the number of subsidised schools, which in December, 1898, showed the large decrease of 39, again increased from 176 to 205. The half-time schools and subsidised schools are given separately in two columns of Table J, but are also included in the other figures of that table.

The number of schools closed during 1898 was 24; as the net increase in the number of schools was 21, apparently the number of schools opened or re-opened during the year was 45.

In December, 1899, there were employed in the public schools of the colony 3,614 teachers, exclusive of sewing-mistresses; of these 2,592 were adult teachers, and 1,022 pupil-teachers. Of the former, 1,220 were men and 1,372 were women; there were 230 male pupil-teachers and 792 female pupil-teachers. The number of adult male teachers was thirteen less, and the number of adult female teachers was two more, than in December, 1898. At the end of last year there were thirty-nine fewer female pupil-teachers and one more male pupil-teacher than at the end of 1898. Taking the working average for all the schools, the average number of children in attendance to one teacher in the last quarter of 1899 was 30·2.

TABLE K.—SCHOOL STAFF, DECEMBER, 1899.

Education Districts.	Principal.		Head of School.		Head of Department.		Sole Teachers.		Assistant Teachers.		Pupil-teachers.		Total.			Average Attendance in Fourth Quarter.	Average Number of Pupils to One Teacher.	Sewing-mistresses
	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	All.			
Auckland .. .. .	..	..	135	9	..	..	107	102	34	163	49	190	325	464	789	22,534	28·6	80
Taranaki	1	..	23	4	..	1	12	23	4	13	10	22	50	63	113	3,091	27·4	23
Wanganui .. .. .	..	..	57	7	..	..	*42	26	11	29	36	74	*146	136	*282	8,144	28·8	..
Wellington .. .. .	..	..	56	10	..	..	22	58	31	68	22	153	131	289	420	11,739	28·0	12
Hawke's Bay	1	..	32	8	1	..	9	25	13	38	17	77	73	148	221	6,241	28·2	..
Marlborough .. .. .	..	..	8	2	..	..	11	41	1	11	..	15	20	69	89	1,741	19·6	6
Nelson .. .. .	..	..	32	9	..	..	14	68	9	†23	11	43	66	143	209	4,658	22·3	..
Grey	1	..	7	2	..	1	2	17	2	13	2	11	14	44	58	1,411	24·3	..
Westland .. .. .	..	..	7	3	..	..	5	18	2	12	1	9	15	42	57	1,129	19·8	..
North Canterbury	23	..	77	5	1	28	44	50	35	129	31	86	211	298	509	16,745	32·9	35
South Canterbury	4	..	25	1	..	4	11	26	12	29	11	18	63	78	141	4,391	31·1	11
Otago .. .. .	..	..	81	..	..	..	57	84	48	135	27	55	213	274	487	17,365	35·7	31
Southland	17	..	28	1	..	17	54	41	12	18	13	39	124	116	240	7,877	32·8	..
Totals for 1899	47	..	568	61	2	51	*390	579	214	681	230	792	*1451	2,164	*3,615	107,066	29·6	198
Totals for 1898	50	..	573	69	2	55	384	548	225	698	229	831	1463	2,201	3,664	107,904	29·4	191
Difference	-3	..	-5	-8	..	-4	6	31	-11	-17	1	-39	-12	-37	-49	-838	0·2	7

* Includes one vacancy.

† Includes one general kindergarten instructor.

The proportion of pupil-teachers to adult teachers at the end of 1899 was 1 pupil-teacher to 2·54 adults, or, roughly, two apprentices to five adult teachers. The proportion varies considerably in the various education districts. An undue number of pupil-teachers must obviously be regarded as a source of weakness; and, as far as this element is concerned, all the North Island districts are weaker than the South Island districts, the weakest being Hawke's Bay, with 1 pupil-teacher to 1·35 adults; Wellington, with 1 to 1·4; and Wanganui, with 1 to 1·56. Omitting the districts where small schools not having pupil-teachers are numerous, the strongest in adult teachers are—Otago, 1 pupil-teacher to 5 adults (nearly); Southland, 1 to 3·6; and North Canterbury, 1 to 3·35.

A set-off against these figures may be found in the fact that, as shown in Table K, the number of pupils per teacher is smaller in the North than in the South, but the difference is not enough to counterbalance the disadvantage of having too many pupil-teachers. One school, an infant-school, has only two adult teachers and eleven apprentices. It is difficult to imagine on what grounds such an arrangement could be defended. But this is only one of many anomalies, for there are in New Zealand nearly as many methods of staffing schools as there are education districts.