

TABLE B.—SCHOOLS, ATTENDANCE, AND TEACHERS.

Year.	Number of Schools.	Mean of Average Weekly Roll.	Average Attendance, Whole Year.	Average Attendance as Percentage of Weekly Roll.	Number of Teachers.					
					Adults.			Pupil-teachers.		
					M.	F.	Total.	M.	F.	Total.
1878	748	..	*48,773	..	707	454	1,161	118	332	450
1888	971	90,859	69,838	76·9	905	656	1,561	159	571	730
1888	1,158	113,636	†90,108	79·3	1,039	887	1,926	219	694	913
1893	1,375	125,692	‡100,321	79·8	1,107	1,096	2,203	238	825	1,063
1898	1,655	133,732	111,636	83·4	1,234	1,370	2,604	229	831	1,060
1899	1,677	133,540	110,316	82·6	1,221	1,372	2,593	230	792	1,022
1900	1,707	132,897	111,748	84·1	1,216	1,415	2,631	206	749	955
1901	1,715	132,868	111,797	84·1	1,222	1,446	2,668	184	771	955
1902	1,754	133,952	113,711	84·9	1,272	1,685	2,957	143	604	747
1903	1,786	134,748	113,047	83·9	1,270	1,726	2,996	147	552	699
1904	1,827	136,282	116,506	85·5	1,272	1,797	3,069	144	505	649
1905	1,851	138,471	120,265	86·9	1,302	1,835	3,137	151	528	679
1906	1,921	140,320	121,958	86·9	1,314	1,887	3,201	153	518	671
1907	1,963	141,946	120,026	84·6	1,332	1,955	3,287	172	478	650
1908	1,998	145,974	127,160	87·1	1,331	2,021	3,352	161	476	637

* Average of three quarters.

† Strict average.

‡ Working average.

For the details of these facts relating to the several districts, Tables B1, B2, B3, may be consulted.

The roll statistics cannot be considered as complete unless there are included all the children for whose primary education the State is responsible. To the above figures we must add the number of pupils in the Maori village-schools and in the schools of the Chatham Islands, which are under the direct control of the Department; the complete roll for all public primary schools at the 31st December, 1908, then appears as follows:—

Public schools	145,974
Maori village-schools	4,479
Chatham Island schools	85
Total	150,538

Attendance.

As was mentioned in last year's report, the total average attendance for the year 1907, owing to epidemics of sickness in almost all parts of the Dominion, was lower than that for 1906. In 1908 this cause did not exist, and, as has been already pointed out, the roll-numbers were considerably higher than in the previous year; accordingly, it is not surprising to find that the total average attendance in the public schools for last year shows a very marked increase on that for 1907, the actual figures being—1907, 120,026; 1908, 127,160; an increase of 7,134. Here, again, an increase is shown in every education district.

The high standard of regularity of attendance—86·9 per cent.—reached in 1905 and 1906 was again reached in 1908, and even slightly surpassed, being 87·1 in the last-named year. Otago (89·2) stands highest in New Zealand, and the Wellington District (88·1) second in New Zealand and highest in the North Island. As a whole the South Island shows a greater degree of regularity of attendance than the North, the respective rates being 87·6 per cent. and 86·7 per cent. of the average weekly roll. In 1907 the figures were 85·6 and 83·7 respectively. There is no reason, however, why the standard should not be higher still. In this connection it is worthy of note that several Education Boards call attention to a practice that seems to be growing up—some parents, relying on the fact that the law inflicts no penalty unless a child is absent without reasonable excuse at least three half-days out of ten, keep their children from school one day a week. It may be expedient, in the interests of the children and the State, to amend the Act so as to provide that every child must attend school whenever it is open, unless some reasonable ground for exemption can be shown.