

previous year; this was true also in 1909; accordingly, it is not surprising to find that the total average attendance in the public schools for 1909 shows a very marked increase on that for 1908, the actual figures being—1908, 127,160; 1909, 132,773: an increase of 5,613. 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, and even slightly surpassed (87·1) in 1908, was still further exceeded in 1909, being 87·8 in the last-named year. Otago (90·2) stands highest in New Zealand, and the Westland District (89·8) second in New Zealand, Wellington (89·6) being highest in the North Island. 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. The existence of this evil was mentioned in a previous report, and there is no doubt that the time has now come, 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.

The districts having the lowest average are North Canterbury, 86; Grey, 86·7; Wanganui, 86·8; Taranaki, 86·9; Nelson, 86·9. It is a matter for congratulation that the North Island has now attained the same high standard of regular attendance reached by the South Island, the ratio of total average attendance to total average roll being the same. In this connection the following figures are interesting:—

				Attendance per Cent. of Roll.	
				North Island.	South Island.
1907	...	...	...	83·7	85·6
1908	...	...	...	86·7	87·6
1909	...	...	...	87·8	87·8

The average daily attendance, in actual numbers and as a percentage of the average weekly roll number, for each quarter of the years 1908 and 1909 was as follows:—

				Actual Attendance.		Per Cent. of Roll.	
				1908.	1909.	1908.	1909.
First quarter	...	...	...	125,288	131,438	86·9	87·9
Second quarter	...	...	...	126,597	131,837	87·2	87·7
Third quarter	...	...	...	126,581	132,376	86·7	87·4
Fourth quarter	...	...	...	130,175	135,442	87·7	88·2
Whole year	...	...	...	127,160	132,773	87·1	87·8

If to these numbers we add the average numbers in attendance at Native schools and at the schools in the Chatham Islands, we find the total average attendance at all public primary schools for the years 1908 and 1909 in the Dominion to have been as follows:—

				1908.	1909.
Public schools	...	...	...	127,160	132,773
Native schools	...	...	...	3,781	3,680
Chatham Islands schools	...	...	...	72	91
Total	...	...	...	131,013	136,544

#### *Age and Sex of Pupils.*

Table C shows the age and sex of the pupils on the rolls of the public schools of the Dominion at the end of 1909, and the percentage of the roll for each age.