

the names of 124 Board and household schools ; but in addition to these, seven Catholic schools and six private schools were visited and reported upon. Thus, 137 schools were working in this district during the year in accordance with departmental conditions, but attention is called to the fact that a number of schools are being carried on without inspection and without having obtained a certificate of exemption in accordance with section 151 of the Education Act, 1908.

At the time fixed for the annual examination, 10,194 children were returned as belonging to the Board schools, of whom 9,752 were present at examination ; 747 to Catholic schools, of whom 678 were present ; and 110 to private schools, of whom 102 were present ; the pupils present to those on the school registers being respectively 95.7 per cent. in the Board schools, 90.7 per cent. in the Catholic schools, and 92.7 per cent. in private schools. Thus 11,051 children were enrolled, and 10,532 were present in Board, Catholic, and private schools at the dates of the annual examination.

The increase in the school attendance continues to show a steady growth, but the regularity of attendance is even more marked than the increase in numbers. Thus, according to the school-rolls containing the names of pupils attending school, there was an increase of 362 children during the year 1909 ; but the regularity of attendance so improved that the actual increase on the attendance for the year 1908 was nearly 500. In the latter year the regularity at school was 86.8 per cent. of the roll, but last year it rose to 88.5 per cent., which is the highest average attendance that has been reached by the children of Hawke's Bay since the passing of the Education Act, 1877.

Perhaps the favourable weather for the year and the general absence of sickness among the children may in some measure account for the improving regularity ; but facts go to show that wherever teachers and Committees are in earnest about the attendance of children at school, and provide the slightest encouragement, the results at once become apparent. Improvement has taken place in town and country schools alike, and it is not an uncommon thing to find teachers directing our attention to the fact that their average regularity for the previous quarter was over 90 per cent. of the average roll. Silver medals and books are presented in alternate years by most of the School Committees to pupils making full attendance, and it is surprising to find the number of children that earn these prizes in some of the schools.

NEW BUILDINGS.—Five new buildings were opened during the year. The building at Otoko, between Te Karaka and Motu, was erected by the Public Works Department, under the direction of Mr. Armstrong, the Resident Engineer of the railway-construction works. It is so constructed that in a couple of days it can be taken down and erected elsewhere. The building is well adapted for school purposes, and the hygienic conditions are very satisfactory. The other new buildings are at Puha, near Te Karaka ; Ruahine, between the head of the Tuki-Tuki and Waipawa Rivers ; Raumati, four miles to the north-east of Dannevirke ; and Rangitane, in the Tamaki Block, six miles south-west of Dannevirke. The attendance at these schools suffices to show that they were required.

The accommodation provided in the larger centres continues sufficient for present requirements, except in the case of Gisborne, where a school is wanted at Milltown. This would ease the present congestion at the borough school, where the classes continue to be much larger than is necessary for efficient working.

Much care and attention have been paid to the painting of the school buildings of late, but this work would be of still further benefit were some attention paid to the interior as well as the exterior of the out offices. Some of the buildings continue to be affected by the borer, but the signs of destruction are not so common as they were a few years ago. Some attention has been paid to drainage, and the school grounds in many places are beginning to show some return for the time and labour expended on them in former years. Many trees ornament the school grounds, and the gardens in a number of schools present a neat and tidy appearance. In the small outlying districts a good deal of work is done by Committees in improving the school grounds, but often years are necessary to bring bush-covered lands into a condition fit for playground and flower-garden. The squaring and asphaltting of the grounds about the school buildings are being carried on with success, and we hope that before long every school under the Board's jurisdiction will be surrounded with well-kept garden and grounds.

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE.—The following summary contains the classification of the children according to standards, the number present at the annual examination, and the number of certificates of proficiency and competency gained by the Sixth Standard pupils. For purposes of comparison, the figures for 1908 are included.

Average Age.	Stand-ard.	Board Schools.				Catholic Schools.				Private Schools.	
		1909.		1908.		1909.		1908.		1909.	
		Roll.	Present.	Roll.	Present.	Roll.	Present.	Roll.	Present.	Roll.	Present.
14-7	VII	112	107	159	150	1	1
13-10	VI	633	622	586	575	66	65	51	51	12	12
12-10	V	901	860	877	846	74	70	66	65	5	4
12-3	IV	1,120	1,076	1,054	1,012	88	82	80	77	7	7
11-4	III	1,095	1,048	1,219	1,171	109	101	80	75	4	4
10-4	II	1,246	1,200	1,056	1,012	97	79	94	93	17	15
9-3	I	1,321	1,263	1,249	1,198	71	63	81	76	16	15
7-1	P	6,428	6,176	6,200	5,964	505	460	453	438	61	57
		3,766	3,576	3,632	3,380	242	218	189	173	49	45
		10,194	9,752	9,832	9,344	747	678	642	611	110	102