

Average attendance : The average daily attendance for each quarter of the last three years, and the percentages of those attendances to the weekly roll number, are shown below :—

	Average Attendance.			Percentage Weekly Roll.		
	1910.	1911.	1912.	1910.	1911.	1912.
First quarter	17,963	18,784	18,992	91.2	93.6	92.6
Second quarter	17,869	18,434	18,647	89.9	91.3	90.4
Third quarter	17,828	18,328	18,219	89.3	90.3	88.0
Fourth quarter	18,608	18,988	18,758	91.6	91.2	89.9
	18,067	18,634	18,654	90.5	91.7	90.2

During the March, June, and September quarters almost the entire district was visited by a severe epidemic of measles, while in many localities scarlet-fever and throat troubles were also prevalent. To these causes are to be attributed the small increase (twenty) in the average over the whole district for the year, and the fall of 1.5 in the percentage of average attendance to weekly roll number, the latter being for the year 90.2.

During the prevalence of epidemics a great number of the schools are closed until at least a considerable abatement of the disease is manifested. As a preventive measure, this closing of the schools is not supported by medical opinion, and it probably has little effect in checking the progress of the disease. It cannot, however, in many cases be avoided, owing to the small proportion of the pupils who attend during the epidemic period. In this connexion it is to be noted that the grading of a school being contingent on the average attendance, the positions of teachers are seriously menaced by these epidemics, and the Board is of opinion that the interests of schools and teachers are not sufficiently safeguarded by the existing provisions of the Act and regulations. Instead of the substitution of the average of only two quarters of the previous year, it should be permissible to make such a substitution for any quarter the average of which has been detrimentally affected by the prevalence of disease.

Ages of pupils : The average ages of the pupils in the various classes were : Preparatory, 6 years 10 months ; Standard I, 9 years ; Standard II, 10 years 2 months ; Standard III, 11 years 3½ months ; Standard IV, 12 years 3 months ; Standard V, 13 years 2½ months ; Standard VI, 14 years 0½ month ; Standard VII, 15 years 1½ months. The only changes in these figures from those of the previous year are an increase of a half-month in Standard III, Standard V, and Standard VII, and an increase of one month in Standard VI.

The number of pupils between five and eight years was 6,525, or 31.3 per cent. of the total roll. The number of pupils in the preparatory classes was 7,399, or 36.6 per cent. of the total roll. These figures show very little variation from those of the previous year. There is certainly no marked tendency towards the curtailment of the time the pupils spend in the infant room. The figures relating to number of pupils under eight, and number of pupils in preparatory classes, are given below in comparison with those for the two previous years and for the year 1906 :—

	1906.	1910.	1911.	1912.
Pupils between five and eight ..	5,661	6,473	6,566	6,525
Percentage of roll number ..	29.8	31.8	31.8	31.3
Pupils in preparatory classes ..	4,996	7,449	7,494	7,399
Percentage of roll number ..	26.4	36.8	36.3	35.3

Sex of the pupils : The number of boys on the school-rolls at the end of the year was 10,845 (52.1 per cent.), and of girls 9,956 (47.9 per cent.) ; the ratio of boys to girls being 100 to 92 girls, practically the same as in the previous year. There were forty-six male and forty female Maori or half-caste children on the rolls at the end of the year.

Scholarships.—For the five Junior National Scholarships provided under the Act, and the ten Junior Board Scholarships, there were 180 competitors. Of these, 117, or 65 per cent., passed the examination, and sixty-three, or 35 per cent., failed. For the ten Senior Board Scholarships there were seventy-three competitors, of whom sixty-seven, or 92 per cent., passed the examination, and six, or 8 per cent., failed. The number of competitors shows a slight increase as compared with the previous year. The five Junior National Scholarships were awarded as follows : For schools with an average attendance not exceeding thirty-five, Eleanor Darton Fyfe, Kartigi ; for schools with an average attendance between thirty-six and 200, Vera Kate Harrison, Romahapa. All schools—Howard Keddell Sumpter, Oamaru North ; Elizabeth Margery Dowden, George Street ; Sydney Robert Crimp, Green Island.

With the funds available the Board was able to award seventeen Junior and thirteen Senior Board Scholarships, as follows :—*Junior*—Division A (for pupils from schools with an average attendance below thirty-six) : Amelia Isabella McGill, Ettrick ; Catherine Landreth, Sandymount ; Rachel Muriel McLay, Katea. Division B (for pupils from schools with an average attendance between thirty-six and 160) : Mona Sutcliffe Woodhead, Hampden ; William Urquhart Mathieson, Hampden ; George Andrew Holmes, Waikari ; Hazel Ella Nicolson, Hampden. Division C (for pupils who have made the highest aggregate of marks) : D'Arcy Harper Moir, Mosgiel District High ; Sydney Noel Gillman, Otago Boys' High ; Margaret Theodocia McDougall, Kaikorai ; Gilbert Eric McAhan, Green Island ; Albert Robertson, Oamaru North ; Alice Margaret Shelton, Alexandra District High ; Airini Isabel