

received. This discrepancy is accounted for by the circumstance that, in the case of a few schools, no returns have been furnished, and that, in other instances, the attendance at two or more schools under the same Committee is not given separately. In this enumeration, the Auckland College and Grammar School and the Dunedin High Schools are not included, although they were under the charge of the Education Boards of their respective districts until the end of last year. They are referred to in another part of this report.

In the list of schools are included 44 "half-time" schools, situated in the following named districts respectively: Auckland, 30; New Plymouth, 4; Wellington, 6; and Otago, 4. These half-time schools have been established in sparsely-settled localities, where the number of children of school age is considered too small to warrant the maintenance of an ordinary school. In such cases, it has usually been found advisable to place under the charge of one teacher two small schools, situated at a convenient distance from each other, on the understanding that such teacher should divide his time and attention as fairly as possible between the two schools. As might be expected, the average attendance at the half-time schools is extremely small, being in some instances under fifteen, and in nearly all under twenty pupils. There are, however, many schools to which the services of a teacher have been exclusively assigned, where the attendance is also very small. The following table furnishes information respecting the number of schools, and the state of the attendance, in the several education districts:—

TABLE A.—SCHOOLS.

EDUCATION DISTRICTS.	Schools reported as Open in the Year 1877.	Number of Separate Returns of Attendance.	Total Average Attendances for last Quarter of 1877.	Number of Schools in each Education District in which the Average Attendance for the Last Quarter of 1877 was									
				Under 15 Pupils.	15 and under 20 Pupils.	20 and under 25 Pupils.	25 and under 50 Pupils.	50 and under 75 Pupils.	75 and under 100 Pupils.	100 and under 150 Pupils.	150 and under 300 Pupils.	300 and under 500 Pupils.	500 Pupils or over.
Auckland ...	186	186	7,891	49	19	29	44	15	13	10	5	2	...
„ Training Schools ...	...	...	82	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
New Plymouth ...	25	25	496	11	4	1	9	...	...	...	...	...	...
Patea ...	6	6	180	...	2	2	1	1	...	...	...	...	...
Hawke's Bay ...	28	28	1,130	3	5	2	12	3	1	1	1	...	...
Wellington ...	79	73	3,583	9	17	12	9	11	4	8	3	...	...
Marlborough ...	18	18	761	3	2	4	4	3	1	...	1	...	...
Nelson ...	65	65	2,972	6	6	9	19	16	4	4	1	...	...
Westland ...	28	27	1,953	2	6	2	6	4	1	3	1	2	...
Canterbury ...	121	107	10,736	7	4	9	32	21	8	10	10	1	5
Otago ...	174	173	11,989	6	14	22	64	29	8	10	13	5	2
Totals ...	730	708	41,773	96	79	92	200	103	40	46	35	10	7

It is evident that an education district having a large proportion of its schools with small attendances is placed at a disadvantage, for such schools must either be maintained in an efficient condition at a very heavy cost per pupil, or they must be committed to the care of ill-paid and probably inferior teachers. The question of providing for the school education of the children resident in sparsely-peopled localities is an exceedingly difficult one to solve. With the means at their disposal, Education Boards are naturally reluctant to multiply the number of small schools, and yet at the same time there is an obligation under a national system to place the means of a good school education within the reach of the largest possible number of the youth of the colony. It remains to be seen to what extent the powers conferred on Boards by the 88th section of the Education Act will enable them to provide for the educational wants of "outlying districts" by means of itinerant teachers, aided schools, and half-time schools.

NUMBER OF TEACHERS.

The number of teachers employed in the schools under the Education Boards during the last quarter of 1877 is returned at 1,400. They may be classified as follows: Headmasters, 577; assistant masters, 71; male pupil-teachers, 82; head