

work done in the office, nor, during the last half of the year, for legal opinions, the Board having entered into an arrangement with its solicitors by which advice is given as it may be required in consideration of an annual fee. The annual rental of the reserves when the Board was instituted was £4,704 15s.; which has since risen, partly by new leases, and partly by the increase of the rent of each reserve at the end of the first seven years' tenancy, to £7,222 6s. 4d. This source of income might at once be made much more profitable by the issue of Crown grants for those reserves which, without definite survey and complete title, cannot be let. With one exception, the Crown grants which have been issued are in the Board's custody, and are ready to be handed over to the School Commissioners as soon as those officers are appointed.

Diligent efforts have been made to prepare an accurate list of school sites and of the titles to them, but complete success has not yet been attained. So much information on this subject as is at present available is supplied in Appendix F, and in the remaining cases of difficulty correspondence is still being carried on, which, it is hoped, will resolve all doubts and place this matter on a satisfactory footing.

The following table exhibits the progress made in the number of district schools, and the attendance, for successive years from 1863 to 1877:—

Quarter ending 30th September.	Number of Schools.	Number of Denominational and Special- Grant Schools.	Number of District Schools.	Number of Attendants.	Average Daily Attendance.
*1863	32	28	4	1,749	1,120—i.e., 64 per cent.
*1864	36	30	6	1,930	1,278 „ 66·2 „
1865	31	21	10	1,716	1,135 „ 66·1 „
1866	40	27	13	2,292	1,559 „ 68 „
1867	45	29	16	2,431	1,478 „ 52·5 „
1868	51	31	20	2,663	1,733 „ 65·1 „
1869	55	30	25	3,238	2,296 „ 70·9 „
1870	61	33	28	3,201	2,091 „ 65·3 „
†1871	69	32	37	4,096	2,919 „ 71·3 „
†1872	77	15	62	5,970	4,151 „ 70 „
†1873	§79	8	71	¶7,695	¶4,915 „ 69·5 „
1874	84	—	84	10,136	5,847 „ 57·7 „
1875	87	—	87	11,874	7,297 „ 61·5 „
1876	104	1**	103	13,534	8,884 „ 65·6 „
1877	117	2**	115	15,018	10,158 „ 67·6 „

* During the years marked thus, the returns for the three High Schools—Christchurch Grammar School, Christchurch High School, and Lyttelton High School—are included.

† The returns for the Christchurch Grammar School and Christchurch High School are included. The Lyttelton High School had ceased to exist.

‡ The Christchurch High School ceased to exist. Christ's College Grammar School is not included.

§ The temporary schools held in East and West Christchurch Districts are counted as one school in each district.

¶ The denominational schools temporarily aided by Government during this quarter are included.

|| This year all assistance to denominational schools ceased.

** These numbers refer to Westerfield and Long Bay aided schools.

As this table is merely an extension of that which has been given in the reports year after year, it has not been thought advisable to depart from the practice of showing the statistics for the quarter ending September. It should be noted, however, that the quarter ending December would in every case exhibit a larger roll and a higher number in attendance. For example, the roll numbers for 1877 for the September and December quarters respectively are 15,018 and 15,513, and the average attendance 10,158 and 10,736. Moreover, the comparison between the number of attendants and the average attendance as given in the table, without further explanation, is open to misunderstanding. The number of children attending at all during any quarter is of course higher than the number actually belonging to the school at any one time, and it is with this lower number that the average attendance should be compared. Great care has been taken during the year to have the roll of each school purged at least once a quarter of useless names. The tabular summaries now show the number belonging to each school at the beginning of the quarter, and the number belonging at the end of the quarter; and the mean of these two numbers may be taken as fairly representing the mean roll. Estimated in this way the attendance for the four quarters of last year is as follows:—

Quarter ending—	Belonging at beginning.	Belonging at end.	Mean Roll.	Working Average.	Working Average in terms of Mean Roll.	Strict Average.
March 31st ...	12,136	13,812	12,974	9,871	76·1 per cent.	9,622
June 30th ...	13,017	14,197	13,607	9,960	73·2 „	9,701
September 30th ...	13,068	14,275	13,671·5	10,158	74·3 „	9,908
December 31st ...	13,358	14,834	14,096	10,736	76·2 „	10,625

The wide difference between the number stated as belonging at the end of any one quarter and the number of these who actually attended during the next quarter, as shown by the statement of the number belonging at the beginning of that next quarter, indicates that towards, and at, the end of every quarter many useless names are on the roll, and that in order to establish a just statement of the percentage in average attendance still greater pains must yet be taken to purge the roll of such names. The injustice of comparing the average attendance with the number on a roll which retains to the end of a quarter all names once entered during that quarter is of the same kind as, and only in degree less than, the injustice of making the comparison between the average attendance and the whole number of attendants for the year, which for last year would stand thus: Attendants, 20,530; average attendance, 10,209; percentage, 49·7.