

ATTENDANCE.—The number of school districts in North Canterbury at the close of 1879 was 102, and the number of separate schools, including the practising department of the Normal School, was 120. Four of these, viz., Broughton, German Bay Side, Waiau, and Westerfield, are aided schools. The total number on the rolls was 15,230, and the average attendance for the quarter 11,381. The following table shows the number of schools maintained or aided by the Board, with the number of children and the average attendance for the two years since the present Act came into operation :—

Quarter ended 31st December.	District Schools.	Aided Schools.	Total of Schools.	On Roll.	Average Attendance.	Percentage.
1878	106	4	110	13,647	10,076	73·83
1879	116	4	120	15,230	11,381	74·72

At the end of March, 1878, the number of children in the schools of the whole Provincial District of Canterbury was 15,107, with an average attendance of 10,964. The above figures show that the numerical loss sustained through the division of the district has already been repaired, and that the number of children attending the schools of North Canterbury alone is equal to the number which, less than two years ago, belonged to the schools of both North and South Canterbury. Moreover, it should be observed that this remarkable increase owes nothing to the effect of any new or suddenly applied stimulus. It is not here as in some parts of the colony, where the free education offered by the Education Act of 1877 brought into the schools crowds of children who had previously been left almost or altogether uneducated. In Canterbury, the system introduced in 1877 was no novelty. The financial provisions of the Act of the General Assembly were founded on the principles that governed the Provincial Ordinance of 1873, and in this part of New Zealand its application did but continue a state of things which had been fully established four years before. The steady increase in the attendance in the Canterbury schools during the last two years is, therefore, not at all attributable to any favourable change of circumstances, but is solely the result of ordinary causes, the growth of settlement and population. The following table, which has been prepared for the purpose of comparison, exhibits the progress made in the number of schools, and the attendance, in North Canterbury, for successive years from 1863, when the Board of Education was first established, to 1879. It includes only so much of the Provincial District as lies north of the Rangitata, and now forms part of the education district of North Canterbury, omitting on the one hand all the schools of the South Canterbury District, and on the other, the three schools at Kaikoura and Waiau :—

Quarter ended 31st December,	District Schools.	Denominational Schools.	Aided Schools.	Total of Schools.	Number on Roll.	Average Attendance.	Percentage.
1863	2	31	...	33	1,605	1,030	64·17
1864	7	22	...	29	1,718	1,164	67·75
1865	9	23	...	32	1,989	1,331	66·92
1866	12	25	...	37	2,194	1,507	68·68
1867	14	29	...	43	2,614	1,805	69·05
1868	18	30	...	48	2,761	1,871	67·76
1869	23	29	...	52	3,149	2,214	70·31
1870	26	29	...	55	3,411	2,444	71·65
1871	35	28	...	63	3,924	2,904	74·00
1872	56	12	...	68	5,439	3,694	67·91
1873	73	*	...	73	7,238	4,631	63·98
1874	79	...	...	79	9,524	6,366	66·84
1875	80	...	...	80	10,473	6,935	66·21
1876	98	...	1	99	12,144	8,295	68·30
1877	100	...	2	102	12,464	9,068	72·75
1878	104	...	3	107	13,516	9,975	73·80
1879	114	...	3	117	15,046	11,245	74·73

* Aid to denominational schools ceased on 30th September, 1873.

NORMAL SCHOOL.—Mr. Howard's engagement as Principal of the Normal School terminated in the beginning of July. The Board invited applications for the appointment, by advertisement, throughout New Zealand and the Australian Colonies, and from among sixteen applicants, selected Mr. W. Malcolm, head master of the Tokomairiro District High School, Otago. Mr. Malcolm's engagement dates from the 1st January, 1880. During the second half of the year 1879, the Normal School was under the charge of the senior tutor, Mr. E. Watkins, whose report for that period is given in the appendix. In August a tender was accepted for the additions to the building referred to in former reports as a work of urgent necessity, which will be ready for occupation in about two months from the date of this report. The Kindergarten and infant schools will then be capable of receiving their full development, and it will be possible to carry into effect several considerable improvements, which it is hoped will add in a marked degree to the efficiency and usefulness of the institution.

INSPECTION.—The annual reports of the Inspectors are given in the appendix. During the year 1879, 12,018 children were examined; 7,260 being presented in standards. Of this number 6,450 passed; an average of 88·84. The average age at which each standard was passed, is as follows:—VI, age, 13·6; V, 13·1; IV, 12·6; III, 11·6; II, 10·4; I, 8·9. These examinations were the first under the new standards, and in estimating their results, allowance must be made, as explained by the