

daily attendance." The existing regulation seems to go as far in the direction indicated as it could fairly be carried without the sanction of the Legislature.

Although epidemics amongst children may somewhat seriously affect the average attendance in the particular districts suffering from them, yet the returns show that for all the colony the proportion of the average attendance to the roll-numbers has been almost the same for all the years during which the Education Act has been in operation, the proportions being 76·4 per cent. in 1882, 76·4 per cent. in 1881, 76·6 per cent. in 1880, and 76·1 in 1879. The last column of Table A shows the proportion of average attendance to the roll-numbers in each of the education districts for the past year. The lowest proportion (69·1 per cent.) was in the Taranaki Education District; the highest (82 per cent.) was reached by Otago. In Auckland District the percentage in 1882 was only 75·5, as compared with 77·4 in 1881 and 1880. In the District of Hawke's Bay the proportions were 74 per cent. in 1882, 74·2 in 1881, and 74·4 in 1880. As compared with 1881, there has been an increase in the percentage of average attendance in the Districts of Wanganui, Marlborough, North Canterbury, South Canterbury, Westland, Otago, and Southland; while in Auckland, Taranaki, Wellington, Hawke's Bay, and Nelson there has been a falling-off to a greater or less extent. The following are the corresponding percentages for the principal towns of the several education districts: Auckland, 80·7; New Plymouth, 73; Wanganui, 77·5; Wellington, 77·2; Napier, 73·7; Blenheim, 77; Nelson, 83·7; Christchurch, 73·4; Timaru, 77·7; Hokitika, 76·1; Greymouth, 76; Dunedin, 85·6; and Invercargill, 77·9: average for the whole of these towns, 78·8.

The roll-number for the year upon which the foregoing calculations are based is ascertained as follows: There is reason to believe that the number of pupils on the roll at the end of the quarter fairly represents the actual number belonging to the school, although its accuracy depends very much upon the care with which redundant or useless names are removed as soon as possible from the roll. The numbers returned as belonging to all the Board schools in the colony for each of the four quarters of 1882 were respectively 86,702, 85,942, 86,605, and 87,178; giving an average for the four quarters of 86,606. The average attendance (66,145) for the whole of the year was therefore at the rate of about 76·4 per cent. of the average number (86,606) belonging to the schools for the same period. The corresponding proportion for 1881 was exactly the same. By the same process similar information is obtained as regards each of the Board districts as given in the last column of Table A.

Although the payments to Boards are necessarily regulated by the average daily attendance, yet the number of children really belonging to a school at any time, and not the bare number in average daily attendance, may be fairly taken as representing the children deriving benefit from the school. The attendance of a number of children, owing to causes frequently beyond their control, may be somewhat irregular, especially in the rural districts during winter, and yet they undoubtedly profit to a greater or less extent by their attendance at school, broken though it may sometimes be. The number of scholars returned as belonging to the public schools for the year 1882 (*i.e.*, the average of the four quarters) was 86,606, and this number has been made use of in calculating the last line of Table J.

The following is a summary of the Boards' returns of the Maori children and those of mixed race at the public schools at the close of 1882. As compared with the returns for 1881 a decrease is shown in all the columns of the table, the greatest proportionate decrease being in the case of Maori girls. The difficulty not unfrequently experienced in rendering public schools near Native settlements equally available for Maori and European children is, no doubt, owing in a large measure to the circumstance that the personal and domestic habits of the Maori, even when some improvement may have taken place, have not yet become so closely assimilated to those of the European as to induce the families of the latter to consent to such close contact on the part of the two classes of children as attendance at the same school necessarily involves. The numbers in Table B are included in the column of Table A headed "Numbers belonging at End of Year":—