

Board is obliged to build a school for the accommodation of a few children who live beyond travelling distance from any other school. The circumstances of different localities are so various that it is scarcely possible to fix a minimum number of scholars for all cases. Each application is dealt with on its merits, and with a due regard to surrounding circumstances. Wherever it has been possible to do so, the Board has adopted the half-time system."

The returns show that 14 small schools were closed during the year. The closing of such schools has been owing to the one or other of the following causes: Two weak half-time schools have been closed, and a full-time school erected in their stead, in a central locality; or the weaker of two schools has been discontinued, and the stronger converted into a full-time school: in other instances a weak school has been closed and a strong school established in another part of the district, which a larger number of the children can attend. In not a few instances such changes are greatly promoted by the formation or the improvement of roads, and by the bridging of streams and rivers. Although so many small schools were closed during the year, yet the number of schools with a less average attendance than 15 had increased from 40 to 46. This shows that as Boards are able, from the causes just mentioned, to close small schools in the older districts, they provide schools for the families in newly-settled and remoter localities. The existence of so many small schools throughout the colony cannot but be regarded as a satisfactory feature in the administration of educational affairs, since it affords evidence of a determination on the part of the Boards to keep pace with the wants of a growing and spreading population, notwithstanding the temptation, from a pecuniary point of view, to maintain a comparatively large number of strong schools within their several districts.

NUMBER OF TEACHERS.

The following table shows the number of teachers employed in the public schools of the several districts at the close of the year. Table No. 9, Appendix, pages 9-43, contains a nominal list of the teachers, with their position in the school, and their rates of emolument:—

TABLE F.—NUMBER OF TEACHERS.

EDUCATION DISTRICTS.	Number of Teachers, exclusive of Teachers of Sewing, employed during the last Quarter of 1882.						7. Totals.	8. Average Attendance for last Quarter of 1882.	9. Average Number of Pupils to each Teacher.	10. Teachers of Sewing not included in preceding columns.
	Males.			Females.						
	1. Teachers.	2. Assistants.	3. Pupil-Teachers.	4. Teachers.	5. Assistants.	6. Pupil-Teachers.				
Auckland	*157	24	20	52	77	116	446	12,641	28·3	42
Taranaki	21	...	...	16	11	6	54	1,424	26·4	...
Wanganui	48	3	10	13	17	24	115	3,843	33·4	...
Wellington	37	18	3	13	28	55	154	4,617	30·0	2
Hawke's Bay	26	3	8	9	8	35	89	2,633	29·1	1
Marlborough	19	2	...	6	7	4	38	1,047	27·5	...
Nelson	41	5	...	36	31	...	113	3,222	28·5	...
North Canterbury	116	18	43	81	34	120	412	12,747	30·9	37
South Canterbury	37	6	5	4	14	23	89	2,944	33·0	11
Westland	25	4	15	6	18	16	84	2,281	27·2	...
Otago	146	42	58	77	31	77	431	16,605	38·5	11
Southland	64	5	7	14	5	23	118	4,284	36·3	7
Totals for 1882	737	130	169	327	281	499	2,143	68,288	31·9	111
Totals for 1881	719	124	176	311	296	461	2,087	64,744	31·0	120
Increase or decrease	18	6	- 7	16	- 15	38	56	3,544	0·9	- 9

* Including 6 visiting teachers.

The increase (56) in the number of teachers during the year is much smaller than it was in any former year; the increase for each of the four previous years, from 1881 to 1878 inclusive, having been 116, 198, 162, and 211 respectively. The largest increase (38) is in the number of female pupil-teachers; the increase in all the other classes of teachers being only 18. It is a matter for regret that the number of male pupil-teachers has fallen from 176 to 169 during the year. There is also a decrease in the number of female assistants and of teachers of sewing. The number of teachers has scarcely kept pace with the attendance, the average number of pupils to each teacher at the close of the year being 31·9, as against 31