

The quarterly returns, besides enabling Boards to report to the Department as to the numbers in attendance, should also prove of much value to them by affording periodical information respecting the state of the schools, in such a shape as to enable them to form a tolerably correct opinion concerning the sufficiency or otherwise of the staff employed in each school, and also to regulate the rates of salaries and other allowances.

As prescribed by regulations under the Education Act, the average daily attendance is ascertained by dividing the total number of morning and afternoon attendances taken together by the total number of times (morning and afternoon taken separately) that the school has been at work during the period for which the computation is made. The result of this computation is termed the "strict average." In order, however, that the capitation allowance may not be unduly affected by bad weather, epidemics, or any unusual occurrence, a second computation is made, throwing out of account the mornings and afternoons on which the attendance has been less than one-half of the children then belonging to the school. The payments to Boards are based upon this second computation, which is termed the "working average." The "strict average" and the "working average" must both be shown in the quarterly returns made to the Boards and to the Department, and both are given for each education district in the foregoing summary (Table A1), and for each school in Table No. 12 of the Appendix, pages 51-64, the difference between them on all the schools being 2,182 for the fourth quarter, and 2,734 for the entire year. Wherever the average attendance is mentioned in other parts of this report it is the "working average" that is meant.

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, frequently owing to causes beyond their control, may be somewhat irregular, especially in the rural districts during winter, and yet they undoubtedly profit by their attendance at school, broken though it may sometimes be. As already stated, the number of children belonging to all the schools during the year may be regarded as 96,840, and this number is made use of in calculating the last line of Table G., which shows the average expenditure by Boards for each child belonging to the schools in 1884.

The following table is interesting as showing the number of Maori and half-caste children, and children of mixed race, who were attending the public schools at the close of last year. These attendances are included in the column in Table A1 headed "Number belonging at end of Year:—"

TABLE A3.—MAORIS AND CHILDREN OF MIXED RACE ATTENDING PUBLIC SCHOOLS AT THE END OF 1884.

EDUCATION DISTRICTS.	Pure Maoris.			Of mixed Race.			Total.			No. of Schools in which were Maoris or mixed Race.
	Boys.	Girls.	Total.	Boys.	Girls.	Total.	Boys.	Girls.	Total.	
Auckland	31	28	59	130	125	255	161	153	314	73
Taranaki	4	..	4	9	3	12	13	3	16	5
Wanganui	17	6	23	23	15	38	40	21	61	20
Wellington	17	6	23	2	..	2	19	6	25	6
Hawke's Bay	14	5	19	46	47	93	60	52	112	13
Marlborough	..	1	1	8	7	15	8	8	16	3
Nelson	3	3	6	2	4	6	5	7	12	6
North Canterbury	6	7	13	8	10	18	14	17	31	9
South Canterbury	8	4	12	..	4	4	8	8	16	4
Westland	..	1	1	5	2	7	5	3	8	3
Otago	2	..	2	40	33	73	42	33	75	17
Southland	..	..	..	11	6	17	11	6	17	4
Totals for 1884	102	61	163	284	256	540	386	317	703	163
Totals for 1883	141	72	213	305	243	548	466	315	761	..

The returns, as compared with those for the previous year, show a decrease from 213 to 163 in the number of pure Maoris attending the public schools, and a decrease in the number of children of mixed race from 548 to 540; making a decrease of 58 in the number of both classes of children. It is to be regretted