

attendances made by each member: Mr. J. D. Ormond, M.H.R. (Chairman), 9;* Mr. Duncan Guy, 10; Mr. Rechab Harding, 11; Mr. Samuel Locke, M.H.R., 3;* Captain Russell, M.H.R., 8;* Dr. Spencer, 7;* Rev. D. Sidey, 11; Mr. Frederick Sutton, 11; and Mr. William White, 5.

SCHOOL DISTRICTS.—One new district has been formed during the year, by the division of the Ongaonga School District into two. Several other applications for the establishment of school districts were received; but, as there were no funds available for the erection of school buildings, the applications were deferred for future consideration. There are now thirty-seven school districts, and thirty-nine schools were in operation at the end of the year. The teaching staff engaged in them consisted of thirty-nine male and female head teachers, twenty-nine male and female assistant teachers, and forty-six pupil-teachers: total, 114.

SCHOOL BUILDINGS.—At the beginning of the school year the Board found it absolutely necessary to make further provision for the large influx of children into the district schools, and as the numbers continued to increase and applications from Committees for accommodation became more urgent, the Board was forced to undertake works in those places where the press in the school attendance was greatest. The Board at the beginning of the school year drew the attention of the Minister to the great need of school accommodation in the district, and it had reason to hope that an additional building grant would have been placed at the Board's disposal to enable it to carry out the improvements which were shown to be much needed. In anticipation of a larger building grant, the Board entered into contracts in excess of the amount which the Minister subsequently intimated would be the share due to the district out of the moneys voted by the Government for building purposes, and at the close of the school year the Board found itself burdened with a comparatively large overdraft in the Building Fund Account, and this without providing for a number of works which, though less urgent than those recently completed, the Board believes to be equally necessary in order to place each school district in an efficient condition. The works which have been completed during the year are: (1) New buildings—Patutahi; (2) additions to buildings—Maraetaha, Ormond, Matawhero, Clive, Hastings, Waipawa, Waipukurau, Makaretu, Ormondville, Danevirke, and Woodville. The completion of these works does not yet provide for the school needs of the district—they have only met the most urgent wants; the Napier District School is overflowing, Hastings is again full, and Norsewood is altogether too small for the children in the district. Besides these, applications for school buildings have been received from the settlers at Blackburn, Pinfold Road, and Mangatua, all in the Waipawa County; but nothing could be done, the Board having no funds available, as pointed out above. The Board would further point out that there are still three buildings used for school purposes which are not the property of the Board; and the school building at Waeranga-a-hika, though the property of the Board, stands upon land the lease of which will shortly expire; and unless the Government can make arrangements for a school site from a ten-acre confiscated section in the neighbourhood, the important school in that district must soon be closed, as all the land thereabouts belongs to the Natives. In nine districts no teachers' residences have yet been provided, and several are in a sad need of repair. This the Board thinks is a great drawback to the progress of education generally, as too often untrained and inefficient teachers have to be employed to take charge of schools which would otherwise attract capable men, were suitable residences provided. The Board therefore hopes that the Minister will recognise the need of helping outlying districts by authorising the erection of teachers' residences during the current year. The report of the architect to the Board, which will be found appended, contains full particulars relating to the building operations of the Board. The Board desires to thank the Minister for the special grants which were voted towards the erection of school buildings at Te Arai and Maraetaha. Tenders for the work required in each district have recently been accepted, and the buildings will prove of great convenience to the Maoris and Europeans in those districts.

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE.—The growth in the school attendance, which was so very marked in 1884, has continued during the past year. For the whole year the average roll-number amounted to 4,598·5, which is 12·3 per cent. in excess of the previous year, and the average attendance to 3,621·25, which is 12·6 per cent. in excess. The average attendance compared with the roll-number remains the same as it was a year ago—viz., 78·7 per cent. Should the School Committees enforce the attendance clause under the amended Education Act of last year, it is expected that there will continue to be a large influx of pupils into the Board schools. The following table gives the average weekly roll-number and the average attendance in all schools under the Board for each quarter since March, 1878:—

Year.		AVERAGE WEEKLY NUMBER ON ROLL.						AVERAGE ATTENDANCE.					
		March	June.	Sept.	Dec.	Average for Four Quarters.	Per-centage Increase Previous Year.	March	June.	Sept.	Dec.	Average for Four Quarters.	Per-centage Increase on Previous Year.
1878	...	1,520	1,797	1,854	1,985	1,789	...	1,259	1,612	1,580	1,649	1,525	...
1879	...	2,019	2,082	2,510	2,676	2,322	29·9	1,689	1,650	1,871	2,020	1,807	18·4
1880	...	2,893	2,979	3,003	3,046	2,980	28·8	2,244	2,220	2,204	2,334	2,250·5	24·5
1881	...	3,224	3,172	3,092	3,170	3,164·5	6·1	2,481	2,386	2,326	2,199	2,348	4·3
1882	...	3,351	3,184	3,243	3,320	3,274·9	3·22	2,459	2,239	2,457	2,633	2,447	4·3
1883	...	3,467	3,505	3,609	3,697	3,569·5	9·0	2,649	2,603	2,826	2,940	2,754·5	12·5
1884	...	3,995	4,109	4,102	4,170	4,094	14·7	3,228	3,176	3,180	3,281	3,216·25	16·8
1885	...	4,516	4,669	4,549	4,660	4,598·5	12·3	3,559	3,573	3,620	3,733	3,621·15	12·6

* Leave of absence granted for parliamentary duties.