

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE.—The increase in the school attendance for the year has again been most marked. For the year ended December, 1886, the average roll number for all the schools was 4,984, and for the corresponding period of 1887 the average roll number was 5,514·25, or an increase of nearly 11 per cent. The average attendance in the schools for 1886 was 3,906·75, and for 1887 it was 4,319·25, or an increase of more than 10·5 per cent. The 45 schools under the Board are classed according to attendance as follows:—

10 schools	contain each an average attendance of less than 25 pupils.
12 schools	contain an average varying from 25 to 50 pupils.
9	" " " 50 to 100 "
6	" " " 100 to 150 "
5	" " " 150 to 300 "
3	" " " 300 to 500 "
1 school	contains an average of 656 pupils.

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Total ... 45

TEACHERS.—In the schools 145 teachers and one sewing mistress were engaged—viz., 45 principal or head teachers, 38 assistant teachers, and 62 pupil-teachers.

REGULARITY AT SCHOOL.—The Board regrets to find that the regularity of children at school shows no improvement for the year. Compared with the average roll number, the average attendance for the year is hardly 78·4 per cent., which means that 21·6 children out of every 100 children were absent from the schools each day they were opened during the year. This is very unsatisfactory, and shows a falling-off compared with the year 1885 of about 4 per cent. The regularity of the children attending school in the different districts varies greatly; but on the average it is better in the country districts than it is in the larger townships and boroughs. In the six schools which are situated within boroughs the difference in the regularity of children is very striking, and calls for the active interference of the Committees in several of the districts. At Woodville, for example, the average attendance for the year was only 68 per cent. of the pupils returned as attending school, or more than 10 per cent. below the average for the whole district. At Hastings the average attendance was 74·1 per cent. of the roll number, or 4·2 per cent. below the average for the district. At the Napier Central School the average attendance was 79·4 per cent. of the roll number, or a little over 1 per cent. above the average for the district; whilst at the Hastings Street School the average attendance was 73·6 per cent. of the roll number during the nine months the school was open, or 4·5 per cent. below the average for the district. At Port Ahuriri the average attendance for the year was slightly in excess of the average for the district; whilst at Gisborne the average attendance was actually 86·3 per cent. of the roll number, or 8 per cent. above the average for the district. Under the Education Act Amendment Act of 1885 all children attending school are required to make at least 60 attendances during each quarter, or 240 attendances in a year; but it is clear that the attendance clause is not enforced by the majority of the School Committees. At Port Ahuriri, Waipawa, and Gisborne the attendance clause has been enforced with gratifying results, the attendance at the first-named school having improved more than 4 per cent. during the year. The Inspector, in his report, deals with the question of school attendance, and offers several suggestions with the view of lessening the cost of dealing with cases of irregular attendance by simplifying the machinery of compulsion. The proposal is to improve the working of the Act by granting powers to the Inspector or Inspectors in each district to deal with cases of irregular attendance at the date of their half-yearly visits of inspection to the different schools.

The following table gives the average weekly roll number and the "working average" attendance in all the schools under the Board for each quarter since March, 1878. [Not reprinted.]

INSPECTION RESULTS.—The results of the standard examinations seem to show that under the new regulations greater demands are made upon the pupils than under the old regulations. It may be that the change has caused only a temporary stoppage in the rate of progress as estimated by standard passes, and that when all the schools are fully alive to the work required from them the results will be greater than they have been since the new regulations came into force. It is to be regretted, however, that all the schools, working as they necessarily do under so many diverse conditions, should be required to produce exactly similar results in order to obtain a "pass" in the examination. The Board ventures to express the opinion that a change is called for in the standard work in this direction. The Inspector in his report to the Board points out the improvement which has taken place in the tone of the schools, and in the manners of the children generally, but he expresses the opinion that a harmony between the mental, physical, and moral training of children should receive greater attention from teachers. Calisthenics, the Inspector recommends, should be taught to the girls in all the schools.

The following table shows the number of pupils who have passed in the standards each year since 1878. [Not reprinted.]

In the examination of Standards V. and VI. a very satisfactory increase is shown in the number of presentations compared with former years, but it is to be regretted that so few children in the district remain sufficiently long at school to enter for the more important tests which are the special features of the examination in the two highest standards in this district. It would appear from the school returns that not twenty-four children in every hundred who attend school ever receive any kind of instruction of a grade higher than the Fourth Standard. In Standard V. 254 pupils, and in Standard VI. 102 pupils, took the papers at the synchronous examination in November. On the results of Standard VI. the Board grants its scholarships, and all pupils therefore in this standard, and who are below fifteen years, really compete for the prizes which the Board gives to those children who pass best in the work which the Government consider as necessary for pupils when completing their final examination in the primary schools.