

This table was a little surprising in its results, and regretfully so, as it showed that the natural increase had not for many years past been by any means so great as it had been generally supposed to be. It was desirable, then, to ascertain in which districts the child population had increased, and in which it had remained stationary, or nearly so, and for that purpose the figures were put into this form :—

Table B.

SHOWING the estimated NUMBERS of CHILDREN under FIVE YEARS of AGE in the different Provincial Districts of New Zealand as on the 31st December of the Years 1877 to 1887, inclusive.

Provincial Districts.	1877.	1878.	1879.	1880.	1881.	1882.	1883.	1884.	1885.	1886.	1887.	Numeric. Increase since 1877.
Auckland	13,708	14,107	15,029	15,613	15,996	16,549	17,292	18,038	18,567	19,108	19,534	5,826
Taranaki	1,696	1,900	2,192	2,534	2,694	2,800	2,940	3,080	3,183	3,184	3,270	1,574
Wellington	8,974	9,429	10,255	10,872	11,449	11,627	11,932	12,230	12,378	12,473	12,551	3,577
Hawke's Bay	2,614	2,705	2,896	3,024	3,115	3,309	3,545	3,696	3,801	3,980	4,154	1,540
Marlborough	1,201	1,389	1,643	1,798	1,852	1,867	1,902	1,848	1,857	1,857	1,856	655
Nelson	4,169	4,093	4,149	4,087	4,043	4,073	4,150	4,223	4,244	4,246	4,244	75
Westland	2,897	2,705	2,583	2,370	2,188	2,121	1,988	1,936	1,945	1,946	1,856	-1,041*
Canterbury	16,182	16,958	18,395	19,455	20,374	20,114	20,148	20,238	19,981	19,462	19,092	2,910
Otago	19,220	19,809	21,135	21,995	22,480	22,411	22,566	22,701	22,456	22,210	21,835	2,615
Total children under 5 years	70,661	73,095	78,277	81,748	84,191	84,871	86,463	87,990	88,412	88,466	88,392	17,731

* Decrease.

The numerical increase since 1877, the date when the Education Act came into operation, is shown in a separate column, and in some districts the increase appears to be considerable; but it should be borne constantly in mind that the object of the tables is if possible to arrive at an accurate estimate of the present school-building requirements of the colony; and if a period shorter than the whole range of the table be taken, say a five-years period, from 1883 to 1887, or a seven-years period, from 1881 to 1887, it will be observed that only in one or two districts has there been any considerable increase. It becomes clear, then, that the cause of any extensive demand for increased school-accommodation does not take its rise in this direction. The extreme urgency, however, with which the building claims of the Wellington Education District were presented led to an annual test, ranging over seven years, of the number of children of five years and under in that district. The comparison stands thus:—

Table C.

SHOWING the APPROXIMATE DISTRIBUTION of the ESTIMATED POPULATION under FIVE YEARS of AGE of the Wellington Provincial District for the Years 1881 to 1887, inclusive.

—	1881.	1882.	1883.	1884.	1885.	1886.	1887.
Patea County (part) ...	823	796	768	740	712	684	650
Waitotara ...							
Wanganui ...							
Borough of Wanganui ...	824	803	782	761	740	716	690
Rangitikei County ...	589	580	572	565	558	551	542
Borough of Marton ...	124	129	134	139	144	148	152
Oroua County ...	1,579	1,616	1,653	1,715	1,750	1,766	1,780
(Including Borough of Feilding)							
Manawatu County ...							
Horowhenua County...	285	327	369	446	455	495	532
Borough of Palmerston North...							
Hutt County ...							
Borough of Wellington ...	3,660	3,704	3,875	3,923	3,989	4,014	4,040
Wairarapa East County	1,344	1,374	1,404	1,459	1,471	1,491	1,501
Wairarapa West County							
Borough of Masterton ...	517	528	539	550	561	574	587
Borough of Greytown ...	188	184	180	176	172	169	166
Totals ...	11,449	11,627	11,932	12,230	12,378	12,473	12,551

It will thus be seen that in the Wairarapa and in the Borough of Wellington, the school districts to which the representations of the Wellington Education Board specifically referred, the increase in the number of children of five years old and under for the past seven years has been,—