

adopt the working average as the basis of payments to Boards and of all tables and returns; the working average, in fact, becomes henceforth the only average recognised, and the strict average disappears. In many of the tables of the present report both are given, in order to preserve continuity, and to enable a comparison to be made with the returns of previous years, in which the strict average was for the most part the one that was used.

The working average for 1900 was 111,748, an increase of 1,432 on that of 1899, which was 110,316. In 1898 the average was 111,636, and in 1897, 112,328.

TABLE A.—SCHOOL ATTENDANCE AND YEARLY INCREASE FROM 1877 TO 1900.

Year.	School Attendance.					Yearly Increase on			
	Number belonging at Beginning of Year.	Number belonging at End of Year.	Average Attendance.*		Average Attend- ance expressed as Percentage of Roll-number.	Number belonging at Beginning of Year.	Number belonging at End of Year.	Average Attendance.†	
			Fourth Quarter.	Whole Year.				Fourth Quarter.	Whole Year.
1877	..	55,688	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
1878	50,849	65,040	49,435	45,521	..	..	9,352	..	..
1879	59,707	75,566	57,301	53,067	73.8	8,858	10,526	7,866	7,546
1880	68,124	82,401	62,946	60,625	74.6	8,417	6,835	5,645	7,558
1881	74,359	83,560	63,009	61,822	74.2	6,235	1,159	63	1,197
1882	76,309	87,179	66,426	63,709	73.6	1,950	3,619	3,417	1,887
1883	79,416	92,476	70,077	67,373	74.0	3,107	5,297	3,651	3,664
1884	84,883	97,238	74,650	72,657	75.1	5,467	4,762	4,573	5,284
1885	90,670	102,407	80,183	78,327	76.6	5,787	5,169	5,533	5,670
1886	95,377	106,328	83,361	80,737	76.1	4,707	3,921	3,178	2,410
1887	99,206	110,919	87,386	85,637	77.0	3,829	4,591	4,025	4,900
1888	103,534	112,685	90,849	90,108	79.3	4,328	1,766	3,463	4,471
1889	104,919	115,456	94,308	93,374	80.3	1,385	2,771	3,459	3,266
1890	108,158	117,912	96,670	94,632	79.9	3,239	2,456	2,362	1,258
1891	110,665	119,523	96,264	97,058	80.3	2,507	1,611	[-406]	2,426
1892	112,279	122,620	100,917	99,070	80.6	1,614	3,097	4,653	2,012
1893	114,305	124,686	99,872	98,615	78.5	2,026	2,066	[-1,045]	[-455]
1894	116,819	127,300	107,032	104,996	81.8	2,514	2,614	6,279	4,875
1895	119,900	129,856	108,708	108,394	82.8	3,081	2,556	1,676	3,398
1896	122,425	131,037	110,274	110,517	83.3	2,525	1,181	1,566	2,123
1897	123,533	132,197	111,952	112,328	83.9	1,108	1,160	1,678	1,811
1898	123,892	131,621	109,561	111,636	83.4	359	[-576]	[-2,391]	[-692]
1899	123,207	131,315	109,050	110,316	82.6	[-685]	[-306]	[-511]	[-1,320]
1900	123,416	130,724	111,498	111,747	84.1	209	[-591]	2,448	1,431

* From 1877 to 1893 (inclusive) the "strict" average is given, and for subsequent years the "working" average.

† From 1877 to 1894 (inclusive) the increase on the "strict" average is given, and for subsequent years that on the "working" average.

The average of the weekly roll-numbers throughout the year shows a further falling off from that of 1899, which was less than the year before, the figures being 132,897 for 1900, as against 133,540 for 1899, a decrease of 643. If we attempt to discover the reason for this falling off in the roll-number by an examination of the roll-numbers at the end of the year (see Table C), we find that it is not due to any diminution in the number of young children entering the schools, inasmuch as the number of children under nine years of age was 235 more at the end of 1900 than in December, 1899. On the other hand, the number of children over fourteen years of age was 407 less than in the previous year, a fact that seems to show that a slightly greater number obtained employment as soon as the labour age was reached. It is not so easy to explain the falling off of 419 in the number of children on the roll between the ages of nine and fourteen. It might, for instance, be due to an increase in the number of those who unfortunately escape going to school altogether, or to an increase in the number on the rolls of private schools. In any case, the decrease is not such as in a single year need cause alarm. It is, however, refreshing to note that the average attendance for the whole year is greater than in any previous year except 1897. Expressed as a percentage of the average weekly roll-number, it gives 84.1 per cent. as representing the regularity of attendance during the year. This is higher than the corresponding percentage for any previous year. In 1897 the average attendance reached 83.9 per cent. of the roll, but in 1899 it fell to 82.6 per cent. Table A shows the attendance for the twenty-three years that have elapsed since the passing of the Education Act.