

The total average attendance for the whole colony continues to improve. For the year 1900 the average was 111,747; for 1901 it was 111,797; while last year it reached 113,711, which is the highest that has been attained in any year since the coming into force of the Education Act of 1877. As in 1901, owing to the prevalence of sickness, one quarter shows a considerable falling off when compared with the rest; in 1902 it was the last quarter, in 1901 the third quarter of the year.

TABLE A.—SCHOOL ATTENDANCE AND YEARLY INCREASE FROM 1877 TO 1902.

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	...	...	...	...	...
1879	59,707	75,566	57,301	53,067	73.8	8,858	9,352	...	...
1880	68,124	82,401	62,946	60,625	74.6	8,417	10,526	7,866	7,546
1881	74,359	83,560	63,009	61,822	74.2	6,235	6,835	5,645	7,558
1882	76,309	87,179	66,426	63,709	73.6	1,950	1,159	63	1,197
1883	79,416	92,476	70,077	67,373	74.0	3,107	3,619	3,417	1,887
1884	84,883	97,238	74,650	72,657	75.1	5,467	5,297	3,651	3,664
1885	90,670	102,407	80,183	78,327	76.6	5,787	4,762	4,573	5,284
1886	95,377	106,328	83,361	80,737	76.1	4,707	5,169	5,533	5,670
1887	99,206	110,919	87,386	85,637	77.0	3,829	3,921	3,178	2,410
1888	103,534	112,685	90,849	90,108	79.3	4,328	4,591	4,025	4,900
1889	104,919	115,456	94,308	93,374	80.3	1,385	1,766	3,463	4,471
1890	108,158	117,912	96,670	94,632	79.9	3,239	2,771	3,459	3,266
1891	110,665	119,523	96,264	97,058	80.3	2,507	2,456	2,362	1,258
1892	112,279	122,620	100,917	99,070	80.6	1,614	1,611	[-406]	2,426
1893	114,305	124,686	99,872	98,615	78.5	3,097	3,097	4,653	2,012
1894	116,819	127,300	107,032	104,996	81.8	2,026	2,066	-1,045]	[-455]
1895	119,900	129,856	108,708	108,394	82.8	2,514	2,614	6,279	4,875
1896	122,425	131,037	110,274	110,517	83.3	3,081	2,556	1,676	3,398
1897	123,533	132,197	111,952	112,398	83.9	2,525	1,181	1,566	2,123
1898	123,892	131,621	109,561	111,636	83.4	1,108	1,160	1,678	1,811
1899	123,207	131,315	109,050	110,316	82.6	359	[-576]	[-2,391]	[-692]
1900	123,416	130,724	111,498	111,747	84.1	[-685]	[-306]	[-511]	[-1,320]
1901	122,725	131,351	112,354	111,797	84.1	209	[-591]	2,448	1,431
1902	123,456	132,262	111,556	113,711	84.9	[-691]	627	856	50
						731	911	[-798]	1,914

The average of the weekly roll-numbers for the year shows a marked increase (1083) over that for 1901, but it still falls 9 short of that for the year 1897, which is the highest yet recorded. The figures for 1897 were 133,961; for 1901 they were 132,869; and for 1902 they were 133,952. The number on the roll at the end of the year also shows the substantial increase of 911 over the number on the roll in December, 1901, the actual totals being respectively 132,262 and 131,351, this year's number being in advance of any previous year's.

Partly through the operation of the School Attendance Act of 1901 and partly from other causes, such as the increase in the number of schools in sparsely populated districts, attendance at public schools has improved, and there seems to be good reason to hope that it may still further improve. The standard of regularity of attendance reached in 1900 and 1901—namely, 84.1 of the average weekly roll-number, rose to 84.9 in 1902. This figure is a high one compared with the corresponding figures for the British Isles and for the several States of the Australian Commonwealth. According to the latest returns which are available the average attendance in primary day-schools in England was 83.6 per cent. of the net enrolment, in Scotland 82.9 per cent., and in Ireland 65 per cent. For the Australian States the numbers were: New South Wales, 72.6; Victoria, 66.5; Queensland, 81.3; South Australia, 79.9; Western Australia, 81.6; Tasmania, 74.4. These returns are for 1901 in the case of Scotland, Ireland, and New South Wales, and for 1902 in all other cases.