

I.

EXTRACT FROM THE THIRTY-SECOND ANNUAL REPORT OF THE
MINISTER OF EDUCATION.

PRIMARY EDUCATION.

Number of Schools.

The number of public schools open at the end of 1908 was 1,998, or 35 more than at the end of 1907.

In Table A the schools are classified, as for 1907, according to the yearly average attendance. The classification is in accordance with the grades in Part I of the Fourth Schedule to "The Education Act, 1908."

The number of small schools with an average not exceeding fifteen, which in 1907 rose from 440 to 477, shows a further increase for 1908, the number of such schools in operation last year being 504, or more than a quarter of the number of public schools in the Dominion.

The increase in the number of schools with an average attendance of sixteen to twenty was 12 (1907—238 schools; 1908—250 schools).

Although the number of schools in the next grade—that is, with an average twenty-one to twenty-five—shows a slight decrease (from 218 to 216), the increase in the total number of schools with an average attendance not over twenty-five was 37.

The number of pupils attending these schools has increased by 767—namely, from 13,633 to 14,400.

The total number of schools under the charge of one teacher was 1,269 in 1907 and 1,299 in 1908; in other words, sole-teacher schools constitute 65 per cent. of all the schools. The aggregate average attendance at such schools in 1908 was 24,812, or 19·4 per cent. of the total average attendance for the Dominion. In 1907 the number of schools with two or more teachers was 694, in 1908 it was 699. Of these schools there were in the former year 23 schools with an average attendance exceeding 600; last year there were 24 schools with such an attendance. These facts seem to show (1) a tendency for the population to spread into new districts; (2) a tendency against excessively large schools—both tendencies being such as should probably be regarded as healthy signs.

During the year 1908, 60 schools were closed in the districts named below:—

Schools closed—

Auckland	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	5
Taranaki	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1
Wanganui	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	8
Wellington	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	4
Hawke's Bay	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	6
Marlborough	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	11
Nelson	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	9
Grey	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	2
Westland	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1
North Canterbury	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	2
South Canterbury	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	0
Otago	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	4
Southland	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	7
Total	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	60

As in previous years, several of these schools, although reckoned as closed in their original form, were reopened in another; some were amalgamated, some half-time schools became full-time schools; and so on. Including such reopened schools,