

The number of teachers employed in the schools was 262—viz., 93 males and 169 females. Fifty-three of the total number were pupil-teachers; 152 held certificates of competency from the Government, and 57 other than pupil-teachers held either no certificate qualification or only a partial qualification, of whom 33 were in charge of schools.

The number of children belonging to the schools at the date of examination and promotion under the new regulations was 9,832, or 367 more than for the corresponding period of 1907. This is exclusive of 642 children belonging to the Catholic schools. The classification of the pupils according to standards will be seen in the following table, which contains comparative results for the years 1907–8. Similar results are also given for the Catholic schools, as no distinction is now made in the examination of these schools and those of the Board:—

Pupils on Roll.										Pupils present.									
Year.	S7.	S6.	S5.	S4.	S3.	S2.	S1.	Prep.	Totals.	S7.	S6.	S5.	S4.	S3.	S2.	S1.	Prep.	Totals.	
<b>BOARD SCHOOLS.</b>																			
1908 ..	159	586	877	1,054	1,219	1,056	1,249	3,632	9,832	150	575	846	1,012	1,171	1,012	1,198	3,380	9,344	
1907 ..	101	574	831	1,090	1,125	1,253	1,106	3,385	9,465	98	555	787	1,022	1,046	1,171	1,039	2,965	8,683	
<b>CATHOLIC SCHOOLS.</b>																			
1908 ..	1	51	66	80	80	94	81	189	642	1	51	65	77	75	93	76	173	611	
1907 ..	0	47	68	76	87	69	88	162	597	0	47	57	76	86	68	84	149	567	

Although the increase in the school rolls was only 367 for the year, the actual increase of those present on the day of examination was 661. And this increase in the attendance at the examination corresponds with the satisfactory improvement that has taken place in the regularity of children at school. The education district is a very extensive one, and during the winter months some of the country roads are well-nigh impassable. This state of things necessarily hinders the attendance of children at school, but for the whole year the regularity was 86·7 per cent. of the school rolls, or 3 per cent. higher than for the previous year; whilst for the December quarter the regularity bordered on 88 per cent. of the number actually attending school. In quite a number of schools the regularity for the year exceeds 90 per cent., and in schools like Napier North and Gisborne it reached as high as 93·5 per cent. These satisfactory results were obtained without the aid of a Truant Officer, and are mainly the outcome of improving school-conditions and the growth of parental interest and responsibility in the welfare of the children. In this connection a further remark is necessary. The plan of promoting children to a higher class just before the commencement of the midsummer holidays tends to keep up the attendance at school of many children who otherwise would have attended irregularly under the old plan of examination and promotion, so that the December quarterly attendance, which was formerly the lowest, is now the highest for the year.

Work in connection with the erection and enlargement of school buildings has been fairly active during the year. New buildings have been completed at Motu, Rissington, Pakipaki, and Ngamoko, and large additions were carried out at Mangapapa and Gisborne, Mahora, near Hastings, and Tipapakuku, near Dannevirke. In the majority of school districts ample provision has been made, and in several, owing to the rapid movement of population, accommodation is in excess of the requirements. Thus at Kaikora North, where the accommodation is excessive, the master of the school stated that there were eighty-four houses in the township, four of them being untenanted. Sixty of the occupied houses had no children to attend school, from each of nine others one pupil was sent, and from the remaining eleven houses, with the addition of outsiders, the school of 106 pupils was made up.

Gisborne is the only large centre where further accommodation is necessary to ease the present overcrowded rooms. The classes at the school are too large for a single teacher to instruct under the new regulations, and it would be a good thing for all concerned were the attendance limited to 700 pupils. A school building at Milltown, on the western boundary of the borough, should be provided for the present excess of pupils.

The school buildings are mostly in good repair, but more should be done to improve the appearance of schoolrooms. Some of them are in urgent need of paint, and the furniture and appliances are very old and should be renewed. In all the larger schools a single desk with iron standards should be provided for the use of all the older pupils, but where this is not possible at present the old desks might be painted of a colour that will harmonize with the internal surroundings of the schoolrooms.

The schools grounds in many instances are not kept in a satisfactory state. It is difficult to understand why a teacher should not look upon the ground attached to a school as forming a portion of the place where the pupils who attend the school are trained. School Committees encourage the planting of trees and the neat arrangement of grounds, and yet one sees untidiness where a little oversight and encouragement would foster neatness and the growth of good habits. A spade, a rake, and a bit of string can be made to do wonders under the guidance of an intelligent master, and it seems to us that the roadways in every school ground ought to be kept in order by the pupils themselves. In the South Ward some very commendable instruction is given at Umutaoroa, Norsewood, Makotuku, and Ormondville: but elsewhere within the ward there is hardly a school garden worthy of the name, and yet elementary agriculture and gardening are taken as