

ATTENDANCE.

(Tables B1, B2, and B3.)

The following figures show the average attendance at public schools in the Dominion during the years 1917 and 1918 :—

					Including Secondary Departments of District High Schools.	Excluding Secondary Departments of District High Schools.
Year 1918	..	..	..	..	169,836	167,601
Year 1917	..	..	..	..	168,711	166,510
Increase in 1918					1,125	1,091
Increase per cent.					0.07	0.07

The increase in average attendance was much smaller in 1918 than in the previous year; what would have been a good record being largely spoiled by the sickness that prevailed in the last quarter of the year. The increase in average attendance during the last five years has been: 1914, 3.6 per cent.; 1915, 3.1 per cent.; 1916, 0.04 per cent.; 1917, 3.4 per cent.; 1918, 0.07 per cent. The average attendance taken as a percentage of the average weekly roll was 88.7 in 1918, as compared with 89.8 in the previous year and 90.1 in 1914—the highest record yet reached. Every education district excepting Taranaki shows a slight falling-off in the regularity of attendance, the best results being obtained in Otago and Wellington, with percentage attendances of 91.3 and 90 respectively. As far as comparisons can be made, the regularity of attendance in New Zealand does not appear to be inferior to that in other English-speaking countries, and when the large number of children who have to travel long distances to school is taken into account the result must be considered as highly satisfactory.

The following figures represent the total number of children (of whom the average weekly roll number was given above) in average attendance at registered schools giving primary instruction :—

Public schools (excluding secondary departments of district high schools)	1917.	1918.
Native village and mission schools	4,619	4,492
Registered private primary schools	16,429	17,441
Lower departments of secondary schools	530	573
Special schools	588	248
Totals	188,676	190,355

CLASSIFICATION, AGE, AND EXAMINATION OF PUPILS.

(Tables C1–C7.)

Classification and Age of Pupils.

The importance of correct classification is receiving the attention of all educationists, the necessity of avoiding waste of time and of hindering the progress of bright pupils being fully recognized. In New Zealand the teachers—who should be in the best position to judge—have the work of the classification of scholars almost entirely in their hands, Inspectors of Schools supervising and assisting when necessary. On the whole the reports on the work of classification are satisfactory, more assistance from the Inspectors being naturally required in small country schools. The opinion is expressed that full advantage is often not taken of the opportunity of promoting brighter pupils twice in one year. In order to carry out the system of “double promotion” the London County Council has a regulation to the effect that classification must be made at the end of the year, and must be reviewed at the end of the first half of the year. It is considered in London that about 20 per cent. of the children are fit to take the work of two standards in one year once or, at most, twice in the course of their school lives. Such promotions are more easily made in the lower standards. Classification is recognized as being a difficult problem, and various schemes are resorted to in order to make provision for backward and for especially bright children.