

ENROLMENT AND ATTENDANCE.

The total enrolment in public primary schools (including junior high schools conducted by the Auckland Education Board) at the end of the year 1928 was 218,794, a decrease of 1,151 when compared with the figures for the previous year. This is the first occasion since 1900 that a decrease in the number of pupils enrolled has been recorded.

Regularity of Attendance.—The regularity of attendance has continued at a highly satisfactory figure, the average attendance for the year 1928 being 90·2 per cent. of the average weekly roll number, an increase of 1 per cent. over the figure for the previous year. The Otago Education District, with 92·4 per cent., had the highest degree of regularity, but the figures for all districts are creditable, in no case falling below 88·9 per cent.

The relative responsibilities of the nine Education Boards may be gauged from the following figures, which are exclusive of the secondary departments of district high schools :—

Education District.	Enrolment.			Schools, 1928 (excluding Grade 0).	Adult Teachers, 1928.
	1923.	1928.	Percentage Increase, Five Years.		
Auckland	63,598	67,600*	6	704	1,900
Taranaki	11,341	11,830	4	161	375
Wanganui	16,499	17,129	4	192	506
Hawke's Bay	15,849	16,443	4	157	479
Wellington	26,311	28,152	7	231	779
Nelson	7,072	6,973	—1	115	253
Canterbury	37,131	37,373	1	375	1,053
Otago	21,845	20,957	—4	231	617
Southland	12,314	12,337	†	179	379
Totals	211,960	218,794	3	2,345	6,341

* Includes 1,271 pupils in attendance at junior high schools conducted by the Auckland Education Board. † No significant movement.

The more pronounced increase in the North Island districts is, of course, a natural corollary to the northward trend of the population. It will be observed that the Auckland District accounts for 59 per cent. of the increase for the Dominion.

The percentage increase in the number of primary-school children over five-yearly periods has been steadily diminishing in recent years, as the following figures will show. In these figures due cognizance has been taken of pupils in Forms I and II of junior high schools, since these children would, in the absence of such schools, have enrolled at primary schools.

Period.	Percentage Increase in Roll Number.
1918-23	10
1919-24	10
1920-25	9
1921-26	6
1922-27	5
1923-28	4

This diminution in the percentage increase in the school roll is, in the main, the result of the falling birth-rate which has been recorded in recent years. The ratio of children of school age (5 years to 13 years) to total population has fallen noticeably since the census of 1916, as the following figures will show :—

Census.	Number of Children between 5 Years and 13 Years per 100 of Population.
1916	19·3
1921	18·9
1926	17·9

The latest figures published by the Government Statistician show that the birth-rate is still declining, and the diminution of percentage increase in the primary-school roll number from year to year can, in consequence, be expected to continue.