

three grades—first, second, and third: resembling the first, second, and third years of a pupil-teacher. The result of the latest examination (held in January, 1881) was as follows:—Candidates employed by Board: Qualified, 53; failed for step, 18: total presented, 71. Candidates unemployed: Qualified, 34; not quite qualified, 3; failed, 14: total presented, 51.

ATTENDANCES.—The attendance returns show a small increase in the number of scholars during the year:—

Period.	No. of Schools.	No. on Roll.			Working Average.		
		Males.	Females.	Total.	Males.	Females.	Total.
December Quarter, 1880...	208	7,737	7,152	14,939	6,245	5,594	11,839
December Quarter, 1879...	202	7,334	6,625	13,959	5,711	4,977	10,688
Increase	6	453	527	980	534	617	1,151

The attendance in the town schools has become more regular. In several of the country schools the attendance continues to be irregular, being largely affected by wet weather, bad roads, and other incidental causes. Some country Committees have introduced the compulsory clauses in order to obtain greater regularity of attendance. The Auckland City School Committee, having decided to enforce the compulsory clauses, applied to the Board for an annual grant of £80 to pay a Default Officer. The financial position of the Board did not admit of a grant being made for this purpose; but it appeared to the Board that, without interfering with the provisions of the Act, the duty might not improperly be undertaken by the police, under the direction of the Committee. Application was accordingly made to the Government, and after considerable correspondence the arrangement suggested by the Board was sanctioned. The Board is not in a position to report results; but there is no doubt that the announcement of the arrangements proposed had the effect of increasing the attendance at the town schools. In order to provide temporary accommodation for the extra number of scholars, the Board agreed to reduce the minimum floor-space allowance from ten to nine square feet per scholar in the city schools. It is believed that the granting of good-attendance certificates is calculated to encourage regularity of attendance. Committees are urged to take advantage of the provision of the Act for that purpose.

A return of Maori and half-caste scholars belonging to the schools at the end of the year is appended to this report; the numbers are as follows:—Pure Maoris: 69 males, 48 females: total, 117. Half-castes: 58 males, 57 females: total, 115.

AGES.—There were 274 scholars above the age of fifteen in attendance during the last quarter of the year. The Board adhered strictly to the rule of not allowing children under the minimum school age of five years to be included in the attendance returns; and by this means a considerable expense was saved to the colony. The Board took occasion to represent to the department that in the year 1879 there were 2,780 children under school age attending schools in the colony, at a cost of nearly £12,000 per annum; and it was suggested that a large retrenchment might be effected in that respect without infringing the provisions of the Act.

STANDARDS.—The examinations for standards have been regularly carried on during the year. The results are given in the Inspector's report.

SUBJECTS OF INSTRUCTION.—In addition to the ordinary staff of teachers, seven visiting teachers were employed during the year. Singing is taught on the Tonic Sol-fa (Curwen's) method. There are three visiting teachers, one for Auckland and suburbs, one at the Thames, and one for the District of Waikato. Two teachers of drill and gymnastics are employed, one at Auckland and one at the Thames. Gymnastic apparatus of a simple kind has been supplied to many of the country schools; and arrangements are being made for the teacher to visit these schools. Drawing is taught in the Auckland and suburban schools by a master, who will also visit some of the country schools as soon as arrangements can be made for his doing so. The Board also employed, as a temporary experiment, a special teacher of reading in some of the larger schools, mainly to impress upon teachers and pupils the importance attached by the Board to this subject of instruction.

FINANCE AND ACCOUNTS.—The statements of accounts required by the department are appended. The details of expenditure contain full information on the subject. It should be explained that the amount of expenditure on office staff and departmental expenses is swelled by means of certain exceptional charges. The permanent charges under these heads have been considerably reduced during the year, as will be seen from the return of officers employed at 31st December, 1880. The cost of inspection has slightly increased through the appointment of a second Assistant-Inspector, whose services were absolutely necessary in order to give effect to the regulations as to standards and inspection of schools. The increase in the amount of teachers' salaries is mainly due to the new scale adopted by the Board at the beginning of the year, to which reference was made in the last annual report. The amount paid to Committees largely exceeds the amount received by the Board from the capitation allowance of 10s. This excess is partly due to the fact that the Board paid to Committees nine months' allowance at the old scale, but only received from Government seven months' allowance, the grant being suddenly stopped at the 31st July. The expenditure on scholarships has been reduced so as not in future to exceed the income from capitation allowance. The item "Training of Teachers, £2,295 6s. 7d.," includes allowances paid to probationers in the Auckland and Thames schools. As already stated, the Board received notice at the end of July that Parliament had reduced the Education Vote by a sum equivalent to that set down for capitation allowance at 10s. to Committees, and the Board was invited to co-operate with the Government in giving effect to the decision of Parliament that 10 per cent. reduction should be made on all salaries throughout every branch of