

			Roll.		Strict Average.		Working Average.
1881	...	...	5,033	...	3,616	...	3,776
1882	...	...	5,488	...	4,174	...	4,284
1883	...	...	5,975	...	4,359	...	4,538
1884	...	...	6,385	...	4,733	...	4,896

The increase of children on the roll for the four years is 1,352, of the strict average 1,117, and of the working average 1,120.

NUMBER AND STATUS OF TEACHERS.—The number of teachers of all classes at the end of 1884 was 133 as against 127 at the end of 1883. Of these 73 were male and 16 female head-teachers; 5 were male and 16 were female assistants; and 7 were male and 29 were female pupil-teachers. In addition to these there were 14 teachers of sewing. As compared with 1883 there was an increase of 5 head-teachers, of 3 pupil-teachers, and of 3 teachers of sewing.

NUMBER AND CLASSIFICATION OF SCHOOLS.—There were 79 schools in operation at the end of the year as against 72 of the previous year. Of these, 16 had an average attendance of less than 25; 37 between 25 and 50; 17 between 50 and 100, and 8 between 100 and 500. The Central School, Invercargill, is the only one in the district which had an average attendance of over 600. The large proportion of small schools forms the chief difficulty with which the Board has to contend in the administration of the provisions of the Education Act. The scale of salaries must be adjusted in such a way as to provide that the surplus arising from the larger schools shall cover the deficiencies which accrue from the expenditure on the smaller ones.

AGES OF CHILDREN.—Of the number of children attending the schools during the last quarter of the year, 19 per cent. were between five and seven; 39 per cent. between seven and ten; 29 per cent. between ten and thirteen; 11 per cent. between thirteen and fifteen; and 2 per cent. above fifteen years of age.

PUPIL TEACHERS.—The number of pupil-teachers in the employment of the Board for the last quarters of 1883 and 1884 was 33 and 36 respectively, the latter number consisting of 7 males and 29 females. The following table shows the result of the annual examination of pupil-teachers held in December last:—

POSITION.	Examined.		Passed.		Failed.	
	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.
Candidates	1	12	...	7	1	5
Fourth Class (lowest)	1	5	1	3	...	2
Third Class ... ..	...	4	...	2	...	2
Second Class	5	7	3	4	2	3
First Class	1	7	...	4	1	3
	8	35	4	20	4	15

SCHOLARSHIPS.—There were at the end of the year eleven holders of scholarships, all of whom remain on the books till the 31st December, 1885. The Board seeing that after making provision for these for a whole year, the balance of the grant allowed by the Education Department—namely, 1s. 6d. a year for every pupil in average attendance, would be insufficient to maintain even one additional scholarship, resolved not to hold the usual examination at the end of 1884, and to defer it till the end of 1885, when the vacancies which will then take place will be filled up.

SCHOOL BUILDINGS.—During the year new schoolhouses were erected at Nightcaps, South Hill-end, Redan Valley, Halfmoon Bay, and Kennington. The schoolhouse at Waihuri has been removed to a more central position in the adjacent Township of Makarewa. Owing to the insufficiency of the building grant the Board has not been in a position to erect teachers' residences, the want of which is very detrimental to the interests of education, especially in the rural districts of the country, where, without the comforts and inducements of a permanent home, the services of young and inexperienced teachers only can be secured and permanently retained. The following school-districts are still without teachers' residences: Waihopai, South Hillend, Nightcaps, Slopedown, Pine Bush, Redan Valley, Ferndale, Halfmoon Bay, Waikaia, and West Plains. The older school-houses in the district, which at the time of their erection afforded ample accommodation for all the children in the locality, are much too small for the increased population, and extensions to the schoolhouses at Matura, Campbelltown, Dipton, Wyndham, and Waikaia are urgently required.

New school districts have been constituted and the erection of schools applied for at Colac Bay, Pahia, Charlton, Longridge, and which will probably be erected next year should sufficient funds be placed at the Board's disposal. Several applications for the constitution of new school districts are under the consideration of the Board.

APPOINTMENT OF TEACHERS.—Up to the beginning of 1884 it was the practice of the Board in appointing teachers to send down to School Committees all applications for schools along with the testimonials of the candidates, requesting them to select one of the number whom they considered the most eligible, and recommend him or her to the Board for appointment. This mode of procedure did not always secure the services of the best teacher, and, after full and careful consideration, the Board resolved that all applications for appointment to the office of teacher shall in the first instance be considered by the Board, and thereafter the names of the most eligible candidates, with their testimonials, be forwarded to the school requiring the appointment, for their consideration, before the appointment is completed by the Board. This mode of procedure secures the appointment