

**SCHOOL ATTENDANCE.**—The following return shows a comparative statement of the children on the roll and the average attendance in the schools under the Board from 1878 to date :—

Year.	Average Weekly Number on the Roll.						Average Attendance.					
	March.	June.	Sept.	Dec.	Average for Four Quarters.	Per-centage Increase Previous Year.	March.	June.	Sept.	Dec.	Average for Four Quarters.	Per-centage Increase Previous Year.
1878	1,520	1,797	1,854	1,985	1,789	...	1,259	1,612	1,580	1,649	1,525	...
1888	5,902	5,968	5,841	5,758	5,867·25	6·4	4,686	4,733	4,673	4,627	4,679·75	8·3
1893	6,853	6,843	6,762	6,752	6,802·5	3·8	5,532	5,435	5,255	5,349	5,392·75	1·8
1894	7,088	7,128	6,995	7,066	7,069·25	3·9	5,573	5,706	5,454	5,885	5,654·5	4·8
1895	7,370	7,426	7,329	7,373	7,374·5	4·3	6,016	5,873	6,161	5,985	6,008·75	6·5

The percentage of increase of average attendance, as shown by the above table, is higher than any year since 1888, being 6·5 per cent. This result is partly owing to the appointment of truant officers, and to the determination of the School Committees to enforce the attendance clause of the Education Act.

**GISBORNE DISTRICT HIGH SCHOOL.**—The Gisborne District High School, which had ceased to exist owing to no arrangement having been arrived at with the Gisborne High School Board of Governors to carry on the school, has again been reconstructed under a new agreement for ten years. The Board of Governors are about to erect a suitable building for this purpose in connection with the main school buildings. This is a matter of congratulation to the residents in the northern portion of the education district.

**SCHOOL COMMITTEES.**—In reference to School Committees there is very little to record, save that the most amicable and friendly relations exist between them and the Board. On the one hand the Committees help in supervising the respective works, and the Board assist the Committees so far as funds will permit in carrying out the wants and wishes of the Committees.

**SCHOLARSHIPS.**—Twenty-five new scholarships have been granted for the year 1896. This shows an increase of six scholarships over last year. The scholarship regulations have been amended: reading, writing, and geometrical drawing have been omitted, and English history and elementary science have been added.

**PUPIL-TEACHERS.**—It is a matter to be regretted, and one that requires serious consideration, that very few male pupils offer their services as pupil-teachers. The Board offers a salary up to £60 per annum, with permission to remain another year at the same salary, in order to provide funds to support them whilst preparing themselves for the certificate examination. This does not, however, seem to be sufficient to induce young men to enter the service. The Board regrets it does not see its way to increase the amount, which bears a favourable comparison with the salaries granted by other Boards.

**SEWING.**—The report of the lady examiners on the yearly competitive sewing examination is most satisfactory. One thousand nine hundred and fifteen specimens were submitted by the respective schools. The Board desires to express its thanks to the lady examiners for the painstaking manner in which year after year they undertake this very onerous duty.

**BUILDINGS.**—Two new school buildings have been erected and taken over during the past year, and very large additions have been made to twelve others. I would draw the particular attention of the Minister of Education to the fact that, if the building fund allotted to this Board had not been supplemented by £1,000 from the school fund, the absolutely necessary additions above referred to could not have been made, and the work of those schools could not have been properly conducted. Even now, in numerous instances, the space provided is stretched to its utmost limit, and the grant requires to be considerably increased if the requisite accommodation is to be provided. The School Committees in this district are endeavouring to enforce the attendance of all children who should be at school, and this will still further tax the school space available.

Another call upon the building fund which is not met for want of funds is providing teachers' residences for schools in out-districts, where teachers are unable to obtain suitable house accommodation. This is an urgent matter, and I trust sufficient funds to meet this want will be allotted to the Board in the next grant.

The report to the Board from the Inspector of Schools is forwarded herewith, and treats generally upon the progress of education in this district.

The audited sheet of the Board's income and expenditure for the year is appended hereto. The amount paid in teachers' salaries, allowances, bonuses on results, and bonuses for instructing pupil-teachers was £18,115 18s. 10d.; the amount paid to School Committees was £2,058 19s. 8d.; and the amount expended on school buildings was £3,213 9s. 11d.

I have, &c.,

The Hon. the Minister of Education.

J. D. ORMOND, Chairman.