

In your Inspectors' report for 1890 it was pointed out that it was by no means the small schools and bush schools that showed low average attendances, but that some of the large schools were very bad offenders in this respect. It is pleasing to find from the following table that a marked improvement has taken place during the past six years :—

School.	Attendance for Year expressed as a Percentage of the Roll-number.		Difference.
	1890.	1896.	
Waverley ... ..	69·7	88·0	18·3 increase.
Wanganui Boys' ... ..	88·1	85·6	2·5 decrease.
Feilding ... ..	65·8	85·1	19·3 increase.
Wanganui Girls' ... ..	80·0	84·2	4·2 "
Terrace End, Palmerston ... ..	69·7	83·1	13·4 "
Marton ... ..	75·0	80·4	5·4 "
Hawera ... ..	79·4	79·6	0·2 "
College Street, Palmerston ... ..	...	79·5	Not open in 1890.
Campbell Street, Palmerston ... ..	...	79·2	
Foxton ... ..	69·6	94·9	5·3 increase.
Central School, Palmerston* ... ..	72·9	...	...

From the foregoing it will be seen that, of the eight schools where it is possible to make a comparison between the attendances for the two years, seven show an improvement; and Feilding, Waverley, and Terrace End do so in a most marked degree. Wanganui Boys' School alone shows a marked decrease, but the attendance there during the last quarter of 1890 was abnormally high, reaching 97 per cent. of the roll-number. Notwithstanding the improvements made, however, five out of the ten schools do not reach 81·4 per cent.—the average for the colony last year; and Waverley is the only one of the ten to reach the percentage of Otago, though in a comparison between a single school on the one hand, and a district with 214 schools and nearly twenty thousand pupils on the other, the result should be in favour of the single school.

For writing at such length under this heading the importance of the subject must be our excuse. Irregularity of attendance is the greatest bane of the enthusiastic, skilful teacher (often a valuable friend to the incompetent one), and even he will find a difficulty in producing good work when hampered by it. He may obtain a fair number of passes of *a certain quality*, but he cannot educate his pupils. Fortunately it is generally a teacher of a different stamp that finds a difficulty in securing regular attendance. With the majority of teachers irregularity of attendance must lead to "cram," superficial treatment, and neglect of some subjects—generally class-subjects. That much of the irregularity is often due to sheer carelessness on the part of parents there is no doubt. But in far too many cases it is the teachers themselves who are responsible for this carelessness; for parents, not to speak of children, are quick to gauge the educational barometer of a school, and the attendance varies according to the height of such barometer. To secure good attendance, therefore, it is of the greatest importance that teachers should carry out their work faithfully and well from day to day; while (to quote from a previous report) "they should make their schools as attractive as possible, by establishing in their pupils' minds happy associations with the duties and employments of every day (a valuable factor in the training for after life), and by fostering among their pupils a feeling of loyalty and pride in everything connected with the schools which they attend."

*Roman Catholic Schools.*—The Roman Catholic schools were duly inspected and examined, including the Marist Brothers' Boys' School and the Girls' School in Wanganui, the school in Palmerston North, and the school in Hawera. The following are the examination results :—

School.	Number on Roll.	Presented in Standards.	Present in Standards.	Failed in Standards.	Passed in Standards.
Marist Brothers', Wanganui	63	63	62	16	46
Wanganui Girls' ... ..	92	45	45	8	37
Palmerston North ... ..	82	49	48	9	39
Hawera... ..	78	46	46	25	21
Totals ... ..	315	203	201	58	143

The schools at Wanganui and Palmerston showed marked improvement since the previous examination. At Hawera all the pupils in Standards V. and VI. failed badly in arithmetic; and spelling, composition, and geography were very poor subjects in Standards IV. to VI.

*Inspection.*—In all, 114 schools were visited and fully reported upon. It is to be regretted that more time cannot be found for inspection visits, especially in the case of those schools where the teachers are inexperienced, but are anxious to learn. We are glad to be able to say that the help we were privileged to give at these visits often bore good fruit at the subsequent examination visits. One thing we should like to refer to that often struck us during our inspections—the amount of time that is lost during the week through pupils not being brought in punctually. Pupils should be assembled sufficiently early to allow of lessons being started at time-table time. Then all teachers should be in their places from ten minutes to fifteen minutes before the time for commencing work,