

pointed out, the roll-numbers were considerably higher than in the previous year; accordingly, it is not surprising to find that the total average attendance in the public schools for last year shows a very marked increase on that for 1907, the actual figures being—1907, 120,026; 1908, 127,160; an increase of 7,134. Here, again, an increase is shown in every education district.

The high standard of regularity of attendance—86·9 per cent.—reached in 1905 and 1906 was again reached in 1908, and even slightly surpassed, being 87·1 in the last-named year. Otago (89·2) stands highest in New Zealand, and the Wellington District (88·1) second in New Zealand and highest in the North Island. As a whole the South Island shows a greater degree of regularity of attendance than the North, the respective rates being 87·6 per cent. and 86·7 per cent. of the average weekly roll. In 1907 the figures were 85·6 and 83·7 respectively. There is no reason, however, why the standard should not be higher still. In this connection it is worthy of note that several Education Boards call attention to a practice that seems to be growing up—some parents, relying on the fact that the law inflicts no penalty unless a child is absent without reasonable excuse at least three half-days out of ten, keep their children from school one day a week. It may be expedient, in the interests of the children and the State, to amend the Act so as to provide that every child must attend school whenever it is open, unless some reasonable ground for exemption can be shown.

The average daily attendance, in actual numbers and as a percentage of the average weekly roll-number, for each quarter of the year 1908 was as follows:—

					Actual Attendance.	Per Cent. of Roll.
First quarter	..	..	..	..	125,288	86·9
Second quarter	..	..	..	..	126,597	87·2
Third quarter	..	..	..	..	126,581	86·7
Fourth quarter	..	..	..	..	130,175	87·7
Whole year	..	..	..	..	127,160	87·1

Age and Sex of Pupils.

Table C shows the age and sex of the pupils on the rolls of the public schools of the Dominion at the end of 1908, and the percentage of the roll for each age.

TABLE C.—AGE AND SEX OF PUPILS, DECEMBER, 1908.

Ages.	Boys.	Girls.	Total.	Percentages for Five Years.				
				1908.	1907.	1906.	1905.	1904.
5 and under 6 years	6,393	5,700	12,093	8·2	8·0	8·3	8·1	7·8
6 " " 7 " " "	8,258	7,397	15,655	10·6	10·5	10·6	10·3	10·3
7 " " 8 " " "	9,014	8,285	17,299	11·7	11·6	11·1	11·4	11·5
8 " " 9 " " "	8,588	8,001	16,589	11·3	11·1	11·5	11·5	11·5
9 " " 10 " " "	8,475	7,765	16,240	11·0	11·4	11·4	11·5	11·4
10 " " 11 " " "	8,581	7,921	16,502	11·2	11·3	11·4	11·3	11·5
11 " " 12 " " "	8,418	7,701	16,119	10·9	11·0	11·1	11·2	11·1
12 " " 13 " " "	7,899	7,407	15,306	10·4	10·5	10·5	10·6	10·7
13 " " 14 " " "	6,636	5,751	12,387	8·4	8·7	8·3	8·3	8·3
14 " " 15 " " "	3,376	2,862	6,238	4·2	4·0	4·0	3·9	4·0
	75,638	68,790	144,428	97·9	98·1	98·2	98·1	98·1
15 and over	1,514	1,486	3,000	2·1	1·9	1·8	1·9	1·9
Totals	77,152	70,276	147,428	100·0	100·0	100·0	100·0	100·0

Age.—Of the children in the public schools, 52·8 per cent. are under ten, and 47·2 are over that age; the corresponding percentages for 1907 were 52·6 and 47·4. The proportion of children under ten continues, as in past years, to show a slight increase. This is probably to be accounted for partly by the increase in the population of the Dominion, partly by the larger number entering the secondary schools especially between the ages of thirteen and fourteen.

Sex.—The proportion of boys to girls remains about the same as for the previous six years, 52·33 per cent. to 47·67 per cent.—that is, for every 100 boys on the roll there are 91 girls. The proportion is the same if we omit those over fifteen years of