

districts of Etalvale, Te Waewae, Tuatapere, Birchwood, and Morton Mains Siding; while the household school at Little Waikaka was closed, its continued existence being no longer a necessity in consequence of the removal of the Waikaka School to a site more convenient to the settlers in that part of the school district. The total number of schools in the education district on the 31st December was thus 170. In each of the localities where new schools have been opened during the year no permanent school buildings have been erected. The residents of the respective districts provided suitable buildings or class-rooms in which the work of educating their families could be carried on till it was seen whether the attendance of pupils would warrant the Board in making application to the Department for special grants for the erection and equipment of proper buildings. It is quite safe to predict that, in at least three of the districts named, the demand for a regularly equipped school building will become increasingly urgent.

ATTENDANCE OF PUPILS.—As might be expected, the attendance of pupils at the schools of the district has increased with the establishment of four additional schools. The mean average weekly roll-number for the year was 10,229, and the average attendance 8,901. These figures, as compared with those of the year preceding, show an increase of 179 in roll-number and 123 in average attendance, and constitute an easy record for this education district. The percentage of average to weekly roll-number is 87, a slight decrease on that of the year 1909—a fact easily accounted for by the abnormal amount of sickness prevalent in many parts of the district during the year. The amendment of the Act passed during the last session of Parliament whereby it is now made compulsory for all children of school age to attend school on every day when the school is open, unless under an exemption certificate granted for good and sufficient cause, should result in a decided improvement in the regularity of attendance. Parents and guardians should note that there is now no provision whereby a child may absent himself from school on any one day of the week, as the law previously allowed. The increased stringency of the Act in this respect will undoubtedly result in increased efficiency.

TEACHERS, PUPIL-TEACHERS, AND PROBATIONERS.—At the end of the preceding year there were 262 adult teachers in the Board's service. This number increased to 268 during the year 1910. The following table will show the distribution of the entire teaching staff in the schools under the control of the Board:—

	Males.	Females.	Total.
Head of schools...	47	14	61
Sole teachers ...	46	61	107
Assistant teachers ...	15	85	100
	108	160	268
Pupil-teachers ...	13	31	44
Probationers ...	3	12	15
Totals ...	124	203	327

Of the adult teachers, 156 hold departmental certificates of competency, five have licenses to teach, and no less than 107 were uncertificated at the close of the year.

As was predicted in last year's report, the Board has now (March) under consideration the question of a more equitable distribution of positions amongst the certificated and uncertificated teachers in its employ, and it is more than probable that some definite action will be taken during the now current year to adjust the conditions of service so that those who, by energy, perseverance, and close application to study, have obtained the necessary literary qualifications for their profession may be adequately rewarded. The staffing of our schools by competent teachers, more especially in localities far removed from centres of population, is a serious problem. Notwithstanding the fact that our training colleges are now in full operation, and ostensibly contributing in great measure to the supply of fully qualified candidates for ordinary vacancies on the teaching staff, the actual results, so far as this Board is concerned, seems to be that the percentage of uncertificated teachers has not appreciably diminished. This unfortunate condition is doubtless due to the circumstance that so many, year by year, leave the service for other spheres of activity, their places being filled by less highly qualified successors. It must not be understood that the Board is altogether dissatisfied with the work of the uncertificated teachers in its service—on the contrary, many of them are doing very good work—but the fact remains that those who are not taking active measures to acquire the knowledge necessary to pass the prescribed examinations are generally those who secure but indifferent results in their daily school work, as tested by the visits of the Inspectors.

SCHOLARSHIPS.—The usual annual examination of competitors for National and Education Board Junior Scholarships was held under the auspices of the Department in the first week in December last, the competitive examination for Board's Senior Scholarships being held in the last week of the preceding month along with that for the Junior Civil Service. For the Junior competition there were eighty-eight candidates, and for the Senior twenty-nine. Of those in the Junior lists no fewer than forty-seven were disqualified by reason of failure to obtain the required minimum percentage of marks in one or more subjects, while of those who entered for the Senior competition only three came short of the requirements for a pass. The results in the Junior competition point clearly to the fact that many of the candidates who presented themselves were quite unprepared for the ordeal, and should never have been put forward. For this state of affairs the teachers are not wholly to blame. Parents, biased in their estimate of the abilities of their children, often insist that they be given a chance to pass, with the result that, against the better judgment of the teacher, the candidates go forward to almost certain failure. It is interesting to note that this year the Junior National Scholarships were awarded to the candidates who stood absolutely the highest on the list, notwithstanding the fact that these scholarships were