

Every education district, with the exception of Grey and Westland, shows an improvement in the attendance percentage on the preceding year, sickness and inclement weather being given as the reasons for a falling-off in those districts. Marlborough, with an increase of 1·6 per cent., shows the most marked improvement on the previous year, and North Canterbury comes next with an increase of 1·5 per cent.

The excellent percentage of 92·7 attained in the Otago District constitutes a record for that district and for the Dominion; Marlborough comes second with a percentage of 91·6; and Hawke's Bay, with 91·1 per cent., is third.

As will be seen from the figures below (the latest in the Department's possession), the percentage of regularity in New Zealand is higher than in several of the more closely settled English-speaking countries. This must be regarded as distinctly creditable when New Zealand's widely scattered population and the difficulties of transit in remote districts are taken into consideration.

| | | | | | | Attendance per Cent. of Roll. |
|---------------|----|----|----|----|----|----------------------------------|
| New Zealand | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 90·1 |
| Scotland | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 89·1 |
| England | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 88·8 |
| Wales | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 87·4 |
| United States | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 73·2 |
| Ireland | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 71·3 |

Conditions in some of the Australian States closely resemble those obtaining in New Zealand. For this reason a comparison is of more than ordinary interest :—

| | | | | | | Attendance per Cent. of Roll. |
|-------------------|----|----|----|----|----|----------------------------------|
| New Zealand | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 90·1 |
| Western Australia | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 87·2 |
| New South Wales | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 79·8 |
| Tasmania | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 78·0 |
| Queensland | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 76·1* |
| Victoria | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 74·0* |
| South Australia | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 73·7* |

* Based on average daily attendance as a proportion of net enrolment, or number of distinct children on rolls during year.

The high standard of regularity now attained may no doubt be accounted for to a large extent by the influence of the law, which since 1910 has required every child between the ages of seven and fourteen years (with certain exemptions) to attend a public school whenever it is opened. Other very important factors, however, in bringing about the improvement in the attendance are undoubtedly the awakened and more intelligent interest of parents in the progress of their children, and also the improved and brightened conditions of school life, which make the children unwilling to absent themselves from school.

The average daily attendance in actual numbers and as a percentage of the average weekly roll number, for each quarter of the years 1913 and 1914 was as follows :—

| | | | | Average Attendance. | | Per Cent. of Roll. | |
|----------------|----|----|----|---------------------|---------|--------------------|-------|
| | | | | 1913. | 1914. | 1913. | 1914. |
| First quarter | .. | .. | .. | 151,223 | 156,469 | 90·5 | 90·6 |
| Second quarter | .. | .. | .. | 151,057 | 155,957 | 89·7 | 89·6 |
| Third quarter | .. | .. | .. | 149,218 | 158,217 | 87·9 | 90·0 |
| Fourth quarter | .. | .. | .. | 153,471 | 161,893 | 88·6 | 90·1 |
| Whole year | .. | .. | .. | 151,242 | 158,134 | 89·2 | 90·1 |

The figures given above represent those in attendance at all public schools, including district high schools.

The following figures represent the total number of children in average attendance at schools giving primary instruction subject to inspection :—

| | | | | 1913. | 1914. |
|---|----|----|----|---------|---------|
| Public schools (excluding secondary departments of district high schools) | | | | 149,359 | 156,211 |
| Native-village schools | .. | .. | .. | 4,142 | 4,385 |
| Chatham Island schools | .. | .. | .. | 82 | 85 |
| Private primary schools | .. | .. | .. | 13,513 | 14,809 |
| Lower departments of secondary schools | .. | .. | .. | 307 | 337 |
| Special schools | .. | .. | .. | 780 | 710 |
| Totals | .. | .. | .. | 168,183 | 176,537 |