

## THAMES HIGH SCHOOL.

## I. BOARD'S REPORT.

SIR,—

Thames, 24th April, 1885.

I have the honour herewith to forward you the annual report of the Board of Governors of the Thames High School, also the statement, duly audited, of their receipts and expenditure for the year ended the 31st December, 1884.

The Governors are pleased to say that the number of pupils attending the school shows a steady increase, the school-roll showing an average of sixty-two pupils this year as against fifty-six for 1883. This, the Governors think, is evidence that the public are beginning to appreciate the advantages offered at the school for obtaining a good, sound, useful education.

Financially, too, the past year has been a most satisfactory one, as will be seen on reference to the balance-sheet. One of the items—£908 8s. 4d., proceeds of sale of township—perhaps calls for special mention. Towards the close of 1883 the prospects of the Te Aroha Goldfield were considered to be of such a kind as to call for an extension of the Waiorongomai Township. This could only be done by taking a portion of one of the already-leased agricultural sections for that purpose, none of the land left in the hands of the Board being suitable. Amicable arrangements were therefore made with the lessee of section No. 13, and the allotments were sold at auction for the balance of the lessee's lease—about nineteen years—the result being that the before-mentioned sum accrued to the revenues of the school. In consequence of this fortunate circumstance the Governors were not only able to dispense with any monetary vote from Parliament, but to enlarge and improve the school-grounds, and to place a sum of £600 at interest in the Bank of New Zealand. The other main source of revenue—that from the Aroha Goldfield—shows a rather serious decrease—viz., from £745 17s. in 1883 to £563 2s. 7d. in 1884—caused, doubtless, by the great depression existent on that field—a depression which, the Governors regret to say, is still existing with, perhaps, even greater severity than before.

During the year the Governors instituted evening classes in connection with the school, which, they are pleased to say, were very successful, the number of pupils attending them being twenty-three, nearly all of whom were teachers, young mechanics, and apprentices. The fee charged was a merely nominal one—viz., 10s. for each subject taught—and the term was six months.

The Governors would again call the attention of the Minister of Education to the matter of school examinations. Although they have spared no expense in having the school examined by the most competent authorities—viz., by Professors of the Auckland University College—they are of opinion that it would be far more satisfactory to have the examinations conducted by one who was also examiner of other secondary schools, in order to know not only the actual status of the school, but also its status compared with that of other secondary schools in New Zealand. The great expense also which these examinations entail, the Governors think, should not have to be borne by the school.

The teaching staff are giving every satisfaction, and a perusal of the examiners' reports will show the success that has attended their efforts.

I have, &amp;c.,

W. FRASER,

Chairman, Board of Governors.

The Hon. the Minister of Education.

## 2. PROFESSOR TUCKER'S REPORT.

GENTLEMEN,—

Auckland, 18th December, 1884.

I have the honour herewith to submit my report upon those subjects which fell to my lot in the recent examination of the Thames High School. Those subjects were Latin, English grammar and composition, English history, arithmetic, and algebra. The two higher classes were examined by set papers; the third class was examined orally at the Thames. I offer my judgment upon the several subjects in detail, so that your Board may be in a position to compare this year's work with that of last. The questions proposed were of about equal difficulty in the two cases.

1. *Latin*.—In Class I. the translation was, as last year, the best feature in the Latin work. It would compare well with such work elsewhere. But in accidence, elementary syntax, and translation into Latin, the class was lamentably weak. If grammar is not taught at this stage, it is vain to expect that it will ever be learned at all; and I am compelled to say that the part which it is most essential for such a school to cultivate is precisely the part most neglected at the Thames. In Class II. many are beginners, and hence it is somewhat difficult to frame a fair report; still, making due allowance for this drawback, I do not feel justified in commending the average work shown up. I would strongly recommend a reformation in the Latin teaching. Either too little interest or too little time is manifestly allotted to the subject. Yet, if Latin is to be taught at all, it must be taught soundly and zealously.

2. *English*.—In the English composition the school did well throughout. Both style and matter show a marked improvement upon last year, and it is evident that the subject is well taught and appreciated. No class was entirely disappointing. The writing was in the main very fair; but I am as dissatisfied as before with the spelling of a large part of the Upper School. In English grammar some members of Class I. did very good work. A fair knowledge of the whole subject was displayed by Division A and some of Division B; but in the latter division the parsing revealed some grave fundamental errors. I asked for corrections of certain faulty passages: in most cases the pupils were quite unable to detect the mistakes. I should recommend occasional practice in this exercise. Class II. did the paper but poorly, showing a great want of thoroughness. Some who could write about adverbial sentences of concession had no idea how to explain an abstract noun, or similar terms. No corrections were attempted; but the analysis and parsing were very well done. The beginners of Class III. were examined in reading and dictation. Their teacher performs a difficult task very satisfactorily. In English history nearly all the papers of Class I.