

REPORTS OF EDUCATION BOARDS.

AUCKLAND.

IN compliance with section 102 of "The Education Act, 1877," the Board presents the following report of its proceedings during the year 1897:—

BOARD.—At the beginning of 1897 the Board consisted of the following members: The Rev. Canon Bates, Messrs. T. Cooper, A. R. Harris, W. Lambe, S. Luke, J. Muir, R. Udy, W. Woodward, and J. H. Wright. Canon Bates and Mr. Lambe retired from office in March, and were succeeded by Mr. R. Hobbs and Mr. J. R. Reed. Mr. Woodward died in June, and Mr. L. J. Bagnall was elected to fill the vacancy. At the annual election, held this month, Mr. Bagnall and Mr. Luke were re-elected. Mr. Harris (who did not seek re-election) will be succeeded by Mr. R. Farrell. Mr. Muir was Chairman of the Board until April, 1897; Mr. Luke has been Chairman since that month. Twenty-six meetings of the Board were held during the year, with an average attendance of seven members. Thirty-eight committee meetings were also held during the year.

SCHOOLS.—Three hundred and sixty-three schools were in operation during the year. The number of schools open at the end of the year was 359, of which number forty-two were half-time. New schools were opened at Waiheke (itinerant), Bream-tail, Omaru, Te Arai, Opanake, Opouriao South, Opouriao North, Awatuna, Katui, Hukatere, Kowhai, Pepepe, Tairua Block, Kimihia, Te Rau-a-moa, Tangaihi; and schools were reopened at Woodside (Kaeo) and at Hunua (No. 2). The following schools were closed during the year: Ruth's Island, Pukekaroro, Riverhead, Bothwell, Kaurihohore, Long Bay, Taotaoroa. The buildings at Kaurihohore, Long Bay, and Taotaoroa are the property of the Board. The last-named building is about to be removed to another site. The teacher's residence at Kaurihohore is to be removed to Hikurangi for use there.

The number of small schools is steadily increasing. No fewer than eighty-six full-time schools have an average attendance of less than twenty scholars. The Board grants a capitation of £5 a year to certificated teachers in charge of schools where the average is under fifteen, and a further grant is made to cover the cost of school stationery and other incidental expenses. It is estimated that four-fifths of the total number of the schools in this district fail to earn sufficient capitation-grant to cover the cost of their maintenance.

TEACHERS.—The number of teachers employed at the end of the year was 856, classified as follows: Head teachers, 338; assistant teachers, 191; pupil-teachers, 263; sewing-teachers, 64; the total comprising 320 males and 536 females. All teachers above the rank of pupil-teacher are certificated except thirteen, of whom eight have obtained partial classification in Class E or D. The scale of salaries for assistant teachers was revised and increased during the year. The pupil-teachers are classified as follows: First year, 86; second year, 41; third year, 45; ex-pupil-teachers, 91: total, 263. Classes for the instruction of pupil-teachers are held at Auckland every Saturday by specially appointed teachers of Latin, French, mathematics, and science. The first examination of pupil-teachers and candidates under the new regulations will be held in June next. Nearly all the candidates who qualified at the examination in June, 1897, have received employment, after a term of probation spent by them at some school under the direction of a head teacher.

ATTENDANCE.—The roll-number of scholars has increased from 26,607 to 27,683, with an increase of 627 in the (strict) average attendance. The work of the Truant Officer has had a distinctly beneficial effect in and around Auckland. Greater stringency in administering the provisions of the School Attendance Act seems to be required in many country districts, where there is evidence of a growing tendency to disregard the law in this matter. There still seems to be an impression that the enforcement of "compulsory attendance" at school rests at the option of the School Committee of the district.

SCHOLARSHIPS.—The number of district scholarships held at the end of the year was seventy-seven—viz., twenty-six senior and fifty-one junior. Good reports continue to be received of the diligence and progress of the scholars. The programme of examination has been revised, and the conditions of award of the scholarships are now under revision.

TECHNICAL.—The Board is prepared to take control of technical and manual instruction if sufficient funds shall be provided by the State for the purpose. Until that condition shall be fulfilled it is not likely that the scheme of technical and manual education set forth in the Act of 1895 can be extended beyond present limits. Classes in manual instruction are held at the Devonport and Remuera Schools; and an offer of instruction in agricultural chemistry at the Otahuhu School has lately been made and accepted. A recommendation for the establishment of evening continuation schools has been forwarded to the Minister by the Board. A proposal to build a training college and technical school is under consideration, but some difficulty is experienced in procuring a suitable site.

FINANCE.—The income from all sources during the year was £100,753 19s. 2d., and the expenditure was £100,275 3s. 5d. The statutory capitation grant of £3 15s. per head was applied (approximately) as follows: Teachers' salaries, £3 2s. 4d. per head; grants to School Committees (including the painting and repair of school buildings), 7s. 11d. per head; inspection and examination, 1s. 10d. per head; cost of Board's management, 1s. 9d. per head; unexpended, 1s. 2d. per head: total, £3 15s. A net saving of £1,178 1s. 6d. accrued on Maintenance Account during the