

schools at Hiwinui, Taonui, Hurleyville, Pihama, Matapu, Kapuni, Sanson, Upper Taonui, Wanganui Girls', Wanganui Infants', Wanganui Boys', Ashurst, Otakeo, Waitotara, Beaconsfield, Bunnythorpe, Halcombe, Foxton, Terrace End, West Rangitikei, and Porewa; a new residence has been built at Ratanui; and repairs and additions made to the residences at Taonui, Kaponga, Upper Taonui, Bulls, Kapuni, Eltham, Kakaramea, South Makirikiri, Bunnythorpe, Colyton, Halcombe, and Pohangina. It may be noticed that the outlay for repairs is large in comparison with the amount spent in the erection of new buildings. This is to be accounted for by the fact that the whole of the Board's buildings are of wood, necessitating constant attention and overhaul. Considering the scattered nature of this district, the large number of perishable buildings to look after, and the limited amount of the building grant annually allocated to this Board, it is a matter of considerable difficulty to meet the demands made by the several School Committees, and applications for new schools in outlying districts. It will, however, be seen from the above statement that the Board has endeavoured to distribute the work over the whole district in a fair and equitable manner.

TECHNICAL SCHOOL.—With a view of extending the usefulness of this institution, the Board has considerably enlarged the building and made important additions to the furniture, casts, and scientific apparatus, all of which has been accomplished without encroaching in any way upon the Government grants for primary education. Several new classes have been established, including carpentry, wood-carving, bench-work, modelling in clay, needlework, &c., the details of which will be found in the report of the Art master.

TEACHERS.—The Board has now 271 teachers in its employ, of which 138 are males and 133 females. There are also forty cadets, who do not receive any pay. The above teachers are classed as follows: Fifty-three head male teachers and seven head female teachers, forty-one sole male teachers in charge, twenty-five sole female teachers in charge, twelve assistant males, twenty-six assistant females, thirty-two male pupil-teachers, and seventy-five female pupil-teachers.

SCHOOL COMMITTEES.—New Committees have been elected at Utiku and Taihape. The Marton Committee resigned, and Messrs. R. E. Beckett and E. H. Humphrey kindly undertook the duties of School Commissioners, and were elected to that position by the Board. The majority of the Ratanui Committee resigned, and fresh committeemen were elected in their stead.

SCHOOL DISTRICTS.—New school districts have been formed at Mangamahu, Rewa, Waipuru, Ruahine, Utiku, Poukiore, Taihape, Bluff Road, and Komako; and the school districts of Wanganui, Millburn, Mosston, and Castlecliff have been readjusted, and the whole of them gazetted.

TRUANCY.—In May last the Board appointed a committee of its members to consider the subject of truancy. The committee finally recommended that the several schools should be grouped within easy distance, and each group be placed in charge of a truant officer; that one of the Committees in each group should be asked, for the purpose of complying with section 12 of the School Attendance Act, to be the Committee at whose instance any necessary prosecutions should be instituted; and that the fines recovered should be handed to the Board, to be ultimately paid over to the truant officer as a supplement to his salary. In June a circular embodying these suggestions was sent to all the School Committees, who virtually complied with the arrangement. Ultimately groups of schools were formed, with Wanganui, Palmerston North, Marton, Hawera, Patea, Foxton, and Feilding as centres. The Board will ascertain in due course whether the result has justified the means which they have adopted. Its efforts at present must be looked upon as a tentative attempt to increase the average attendance—although it is already manifest, from the number of persons who have been fined, that some action was necessary.

PUPIL-TEACHERS.—The annual examination of pupil-teachers was held in June. Eighty-one candidates in all classes presented themselves, viz.: Twenty-four for the first class, twenty-six for the second class, and thirty-one for the third class. In the first class, seventeen candidates passed and seven failed; in the second class, fourteen passed and twelve failed; in the third class, twenty passed and eleven failed. In the first or senior class a girl of the Wanganui Girls' School headed the list; in the second class, a boy from the Waverley School was at the head; and in the third class, a girl of the Marton School stood first. Of the candidates in the first class, fourteen were boys and ten were girls; in the second class, six were boys and twenty were girls; in the third class, fifteen were boys and sixteen were girls.

SCHOLARSHIPS.—In the month of December the usual competitive examination for scholarships was held. Twenty-nine candidates presented themselves for the senior examination and thirty-eight for the junior. Of the senior, thirteen were girls and sixteen were boys. In this division a girl headed the list. Four scholarships were awarded, viz., three to girls and one to a boy. Five girls and five boys also qualified. Fifteen competitors failed to make the requisite percentage; of these five were girls and ten were boys. Of the juniors, a boy headed the list; and scholarships were awarded to two boys and two girls. Five girls and eight boys also qualified. All who have qualified for scholarships but do not participate in the awards are entitled to free education either at the Collegiate School or the Girls' High School. In the junior class twenty-five candidates failed to qualify, some of whom were manifestly totally unprepared for such an examination, and were evidently wrongly advised in presenting themselves at all. In connection with the scholarships, the Board has raised the age limitation by six months. The age, therefore, for junior scholarship competitors is thirteen years and six months, and for seniors fifteen years and six months. The examinations are now held simultaneously at Wanganui, Hawera, and Palmerston North, provided that not less than seven candidates present themselves at the two latter places. This has necessitated eliminating reading from the regulations.

FINANCE.—The General Account shows a credit balance of £2,570 9s. 5d., with liabilities amounting to £381 0s. 6d. The Building Account shows a debit of £1,258 13s. 6d. and liabilities of £744 8s. 10d. In the Building Account, however, the Board has received £2,000 in advance of this year's grant, and this, added to the liabilities, places it in a most unsatisfactory financial position. The Board is entirely at a loss to devise any plan for complying with the building