

SCHOOLS.—The Tongaporutu School was reopened, and a new school opened at Raupuha; and, owing to the formation of the Egmont County, the Awatuna, Pihama, and Te Kiri schools came under this Board from the Wanganui Board.

There were seventy-three schools open at the end of the year, including two side-schools and two half-time schools; and the number of teachers employed in these schools was 130, who were graded as follows: Sole teachers, 22 female and 22 male; head teachers, 4 female and 22 male; assistants, 32 female and 6 male; pupil-teachers, 20 female and 2 male.

PUPIL-TEACHERS.—At the annual examination 26 pupil-teachers entered, 18 of whom passed, 7 failed, and 1 retired through illness. Of the 22 pupil-teachers employed at the end of the year 20 were females and only 2 were males. The falling-off in the number of pupil-teachers and the increase in the number of assistants as compared with the report of 1901, is due to the whole of the schools being staffed according to "The Public-school Teachers' Salaries Act, 1901." Before this Act came into force the first assistance a teacher in this district received on his school attaining an average of forty-one was a pupil-teacher, now it is by the appointment of a mistress.

SCHOLARSHIPS.—For senior scholarships there were 28 candidates, and for junior 23 candidates. Of the senior candidates 14 qualified, and of the junior 11. Senior scholarships were awarded to one pupil at the New Plymouth High School, and two at the Stratford District High School, and junior scholarships to two pupils at the Central School, and one at the Omata School. In addition to the scholarship-holders there are now twelve ex-pupils of the district schools at the New Plymouth High School, and twenty at the Stratford District High School receiving free tuition in secondary subjects.

BUILDINGS.—A new school has been erected at Waitui, and the West Infants', Inglewood, Norfolk Road, and Stanley Road Schools have been enlarged, and owing to the increased attendance the Tariki, Oaonui, and the Huiakama Schools require enlarging. The Board finds the present building grant is only just sufficient to keep the present schools and residences in repair without having to use it in enlarging the schools.

FINANCE.—The income from the Board from all sources, including £1,571 10s. 5d. balance on the 31st December, 1901, was £22,240 8s. 5d., and the expenditure £20,491 15s. 5d., leaving a credit balance of £1,713 13s. Against this balance are liabilities that more than cover the same.

TEACHERS' CLASSES.—During the year teachers' classes—first established in 1901—have been considerably developed, classes being held in New Plymouth for mat-weaving, modelling, paper-folding, brushwork, and first aid; and at Stratford for modelling, paper-folding, and brushwork. It is gratifying to find that teachers very generally avail themselves of these means of improvement. Some effort should, however, be made to assist teachers who cannot avail themselves of the railway to reach the centres in which classes are held.

TECHNICAL SCHOOL.—Efforts have been continued throughout the year to establish a technical school, with branches at New Plymouth and Stratford. The approval of the Minister of Education has been obtained of the plans of the building proposed to be erected at Stratford, and it is hoped the building will soon be erected and classes established there. At New Plymouth the question of site is still under consideration, and it is hoped that any difficulty existing will soon be got over, and classes established at an early date.

"THE PUBLIC-SCHOOL TEACHERS' SALARIES ACT, 1901."—The passing of "The Public-school Teachers' Salaries Act, 1901," which came into force on the 1st January, 1902, with the new scale of staffing, has resulted in a considerable number of changes in the teaching staff of this district. As shown above, the number of pupil-teachers employed has been reduced from 32 to 22, and the number of assistants increased from 19 to 38. Altogether 112 transfers and appointments have been made, mostly to meet the new conditions. The work of the Appointment Committee and their responsibilities have consequently been very much increased. On the whole, the passing of the Act has been beneficial to the teachers and the schools, and so far the numerous changes made in the district have been effected without entailing any loss to the teachers concerned.

SUPERANNUATION FUND.—The passing of a measure providing for the establishment of a superannuation fund is eagerly looked for by teachers, and is but an act of justice to those who have devoted their lives to the work of teaching, which will give very general satisfaction.

OPAKU RESERVE.—It is to be regretted that the Hon. the Minister of Education has not seen his way to introduce legislation to give effect to the wishes of this and the Wanganui Education Board regarding the Opaku reserve, but it is hoped that he will be able to do so during the ensuing session. The accumulated funds from this reserve now amount to £3,693 4s. 10d., and the annual rentals to £441 7s. 6d. The distribution of these moneys in scholarships cannot but be helpful to education in Taranaki.

INSPECTION.—The increase of work in the Inspector's Department has caused the Board to decide upon the appointment of an Assistant Inspector, and Mr. W. A. Ballautyne, B.A., has been appointed since the close of the year, and has entered upon his duties.

I have, &c.,

The Hon. the Minister of Education, Wellington. E. G. ALLSWORTH, Chairman.