

It is so far satisfactory to see that the average percentage of attendance for 1902 is larger than that for the colony for 1901, this result being no doubt attributable to the work of the Truant Officer; but it is noticeable that the attendance at some of the country schools is very high, while at some of the larger schools in the townships and boroughs the average attendance is so low as to be far from satisfactory.

**SCHOLARSHIPS.**—At the annual examination in December, the first under the new regulations, held simultaneously at Wanganui and Palmerston North, there were 34 candidates for the senior and 19 for the junior scholarships offered for competition. Six senior and 7 junior scholarships were awarded, of which 7 were of the annual value of £40, and the remaining 6 of the annual value of £15. The senior scholarships are tenable for three and the junior for two years. All candidates who qualified—that is, gained 65 per cent. of the total marks obtainable and not less than 25 per cent. of the possible marks in each subject, but did not receive scholarships—were entitled to, juniors two years and seniors three years free tuition, the girls at the Wanganui Girls' College and the boys at the Collegiate School. Nine candidates for senior and 7 for junior scholarships qualified. Scholarship-holders who board at the Girls' College receive free tuition.

**TECHNICAL SCHOOLS.**—The technical schools at Wanganui, Palmerston North, and Hawera continue to do good work. Pupil-teachers receive free instruction in drawing on Saturdays. Early in the year a sum of £360 was received as a grant for the erection of a science room and an art room as an addition to the Hawera District High School. Some months later the sum of £760 was promised for the erection and furnishing of the technical school at Palmerston North, for which, with the District High School, a suitable building is in course of erection.

At the beginning of the year the classes which had formerly been held in connection with the Wanganui Technical School were resumed under the supervision of Mr. T. B. Strong, M.A., B.Sc., and in addition some new classes were started. The most successful of these was the book-keeping class. In connection with this a class in commercial law was formed for the benefit of those students who wished to present themselves for the examination held by the Institute of Accountants.

**MANUAL AND TECHNICAL INSTRUCTION.**—As yet but little has been done to take advantage of the facilities afforded by the Manual and Technical Instruction Acts for school classes. The only classes held were classes in swimming and first-aid and home nursing (Wanganui Girls'), cookery (College Street District High School, Palmerston North), and brushwork and shading (Hawera District High School). The regulations under these Acts are of such a nature as to preclude the possibility of much being done except in the largest schools of the district.

**DISTRICT HIGH SCHOOL.**—At the beginning of this year the College Street School, Palmerston North, was opened as a district high school, under Mr. W. Gray, M.A., B.Sc., formerly of the Training College, Dunedin. The school has been more successful than was anticipated, the number of qualified pupils at the end of the year being 99. The accommodation at the College Street School was not sufficient to allow the District High School classes to be taught there, and temporary provisions had to be made by hiring a hall. A grant of £800 was made during the year for the erection of a building for the District High School pupils, and it was decided to erect a building for use as a District High School and Technical School. In August, Patea School, and in November, Eltham School, were created district high schools. With the four schools opened in 1901 there were thus, at the end of the year, seven district high schools in operation.\*

**BUILDINGS.**—The maintenance in a state of repair of the various schools and residences throughout the district absorbed the sum of £1,257 18s. 4d., and the erection of new buildings accounted for £3,019 13s. 9d. New schools were erected at Awahou South, Livingstone, Waitohi, Moutoa, Brownlee, and Okoia. The Hawera School was practically rebuilt, at a cost of nearly £2,000, and additions were made to the schools and residences at Turakina, Auroa, Taikorea, Taihape, and Warrengate. Contracts were let for new schools at Lismore, Mataroa, and Mangamahū, and for additions to schools at Oroua Bridge, Makino Road, and Upper Taonui.

The large amount expended at Hawera has been a heavy drain on the grant for buildings. It is a matter for regret that the demands on the Board's funds for additions and new buildings do not admit of the amount of painting being done each year which is absolutely necessary, and also that the Board is not granted a sufficient sum to enable it to build residences in the outlying parts of the district. It is of little use to erect schools in newly settled districts if teachers' residences cannot be provided. This statement is borne out by the fact that two teachers, one with a family of eight children, have had to live in whares and tents. In the opinion of the Board this unsatisfactory state of things should be remedied without further delay. The fact has to be remembered that buildings in this district are of wood, that they therefore cost more for maintenance, and that in a comparatively short time they have to be replaced. Taking all these matters into consideration, the Board is convinced that the amount granted for buildings is altogether inadequate and insufficient to enable it to maintain in proper order the buildings now in existence, and to undertake necessary additions and the erection of buildings, schools, and residences in place of those that are in some places literally decaying.

**TEACHERS' SALARIES.**—Now that a year has passed since the coming into force of the Public-school Teachers' Salaries Act, the Board is in a position to judge of the advantages and disadvantages of the Act. That there are anomalies no one will deny. Only one instance, and that the most notable, need be given. The male assistant in a school, the average attendance of which does not exceed 200, receives £80 per annum, while the male assistant of a school with an average attendance of over 200 and not over 250 receives £155. For a teacher who has served an apprenticeship of three or four years and probably obtained a certificate, £80 per annum is a miserable pittance. It is little wonder that very few boys offer themselves as pupil-teachers when the salary offered is less than that paid to cadets in almost every other branch of the public service. The teachers who have benefited most by the introduction of the colonial scale are those in charge of schools with an average attendance of not less than 30. These teachers were, under the former régime, certainly underpaid. Those teachers in charge of schools with an average attendance between 30 and 70 have benefited, but not to the same extent. On the whole the salaries of the

\* Details of the work, attendance, &c., at these schools are shown in a separate paper.