

REPORTS OF EDUCATION BOARDS.

[Details are in some cases omitted.]

AUCKLAND.

SIR,—

Auckland, March, 1906.

The Auckland Education Board presents the following report of its proceedings during the year 1905 :—

BOARD.—The members in office at the beginning of the year were : Messrs. L. J. Bagnall, G. Edgecumbe, H. J. Greenslade, A. R. Harris, R. Hobbs, S. Luke (Chairman), J. D. McKenzie, C. J. Parr, and J. Stallworthy. The annual election of three members resulted in the re-election of Messrs. Harris, Luke, and Stallworthy. Mr. Luke was re-elected Chairman in August. Mr. Hobbs resigned his membership in September, and Mr. G. L. Peacocke was elected in November to fill the vacancy. Twenty-five meetings of the Board were held during the year, with an average attendance of seven members. A committee consisting of all members meets on the day preceding each Board meeting to deal with finance and the selection of teachers. All nine members will retire from office in August, 1906, after the election of their successors, three for each ward.

SCHOOLS.—There were 442 schools in operation at the end of the year, including 72 schools taught half-time. By reckoning every combination of two half-time schools as one school the number is reduced to 406. The number of schools has increased by fifty-two during the past five years, and a still greater increase may be looked for in the future, as the growth of settlement continues to extend. The task of providing the means of education in outlying districts beyond reach of any existing school has been rendered easier by the increase of the statutory capitation grant to £6 a year ; and it is now possible to meet requirements by the temporary establishment of "household" schools. In some cases the employment of an itinerant teacher might be tried as an experiment. Excepting two schools, for which a grant is made by Government to convey scholars by boat, no advantage has yet been taken of the provision for conveyance of children to and from existing schools, the obstacle being the almost impassable state of the roads for vehicular traffic.

TEACHERS.—The total number of teachers is 872—males, 380 ; females, 492. There is still a large proportion of uncertificated teachers in the service. There is a dearth of teachers, especially for schools in country districts, notwithstanding the increased remuneration offered under the revised scale of salaries. For positions in or near town there is a fairly adequate supply. At the yearly examination of candidates held in June last 42 candidates passed the entrance examination. All, or nearly all, of these found early employment. In the selection of pupil-teachers a preference is given to candidates who have passed the University Matriculation Examination. The Board is glad to learn that a scheme for the superannuation of teachers is now in operation.

ATTENDANCES.—The roll-number of scholars at the end of 1905 was 32,497, an increase of 2,290 above the number in December, 1904. The number of Maori and half-caste scholars was 2,084. The average attendance for the year was 27,507, equal to about 80 per cent. of the roll number. The daily absence of more than 1,600 children from school, in spite of the law relating to compulsory attendance, is to be regretted. It cannot be accounted for by illness or bad weather. It is feared that many parents fail to recognise their duty in the matter of promoting regular and punctual attendance at school, and that, in many instances, trivial and inadequate reasons are accepted as grounds for the granting of exemption certificates under the Act.

SCHOLARSHIPS.—The scholarships under tenure at the end of the year were : Junior National, 11 ; Junior District, 61 ; Senior District, 24 ; special for girls, 6 : total, 102. The Board has resolved to retain the age-limit of fourteen years for the Junior District Scholarships.

DISTRICT HIGH SCHOOLS.—Nine district high schools have been maintained during the year, having a total of 368 pupils receiving secondary education.

TRAINING COLLEGE.—After an interval of eighteen years a training college has again been established in Auckland. There being no other building available, the Wellesley Street School has been taken and is being used for the purpose. The Board has every hope that the institution will prove a real and lasting benefit to the teachers of the district.

FINANCE.—The Board began the year with a debit balance of £350 10s. 7d. The income and expenditure during the year are classified as follows :—

| | Income. | | | Expenditure. | | | Balance. | | | |
|------------------------------|-----------------|----------|----------|-----------------|-----------|----------|------------|---------------|----------|-----------|
| | £ | s. | d. | £ | s. | d. | £ | s. | d. | |
| Administration Account | 113,332 | 16 | 0 | 112,735 | 13 | 1 | Cr. | 597 | 2 | 11 |
| Secondary education | 4,134 | 12 | 7 | 4,155 | 7 | 6 | Dr. | 20 | 14 | 11 |
| Manual and technical | 5,039 | 16 | 6 | 6,043 | 15 | 6 | Dr. | 1,003 | 19 | 0 |
| Buildings Account | 26,177 | 4 | 11 | 29,243 | 12 | 8 | Dr. | 3,066 | 7 | 9 |
| Unclassified | 877 | 19 | 6 | 67 | 7 | 7 | Cr. | 810 | 11 | 11 |
| Total | £149,562 | 9 | 6 | £152,245 | 16 | 4 | Dr. | £2,683 | 6 | 10 |

The debit balance on Manual and Technical Account is covered by claims for capitation earned during last year but not receivable until this year. The expenditure on buildings has nearly always exceeded the receipts. During last year the outlay on new buildings was nearly £4,500 in excess of the special grants received from Government, and the ordinary grant for the maintenance of buildings