

APPENDIX A.

REPORTS OF EDUCATION BOARDS.

AUCKLAND.

SIR,—

Education Office, Auckland, March, 1909.

The Auckland Education Board presents the following report of its proceedings during the year 1908:—

BOARD.—The members in office at the beginning of the year were: North Ward—Mr. A. R. Harris, Mr. J. D. McKenzie, and Mr. J. Stallworthy, M.P.; East Ward—Mr. L. J. Bagnall, Mr. H. J. Greenslade, and Mr. C. J. Parr; West Ward—Mr. C. T. Barriball, Mr. G. Edgecumbe, and Mr. G. J. Garland. Messrs. Parr and Edgecumbe retired in August, and were re-elected for the East and West Wards respectively. For the North Ward Mr. E. C. Purdie was elected to succeed Mr. J. Stallworthy. Mr. C. J. Parr was elected Chairman of the Board in August to succeed Mr. Bagnall, who did not seek re-election. Twenty-two meetings of the Board were held during the year, with an average attendance of seven members. During the same period twenty-two meetings of a committee of the whole Board were held to deal with matters of finance and the selection of teachers.

SCHOOLS.—The number of schools in operation at the end of 1908, including eighty-six half-time schools, was 506. Four schools were permanently closed during the year—namely, Awanga, Wairamarama, Tokirima Road, and Karaka No. 1. Arrangements are made for the conveyance of children to seven schools by ferry.

TEACHERS.—The teachers employed in December, 1908, numbered 981—*i.e.*, females, 551; and male, 430. Of these, 816 teachers are above the rank of pupil-teacher. The number of pupil-teachers employed at the end of the year was 165. The difficulty experienced in filling vacancies with certificated teachers has been intensified by the provisions of "The Education Act Amendment Act, 1908," which allow for a more liberal staff of assistant teachers being employed. It is hoped that this difficulty will disappear in the near future through the employment of students who have gone through a course of training at the Training College.

ATTENDANCES.—At the end of the year there were 35,810 scholars on the rolls of the public schools, being an increase of 2,636 during the year. There were 2,319 Maori scholars and half-caste scholars in attendance at 243 schools. The increase in the average attendance was 3,347 for the year. The mean average attendance for the four quarters of 1908 was 30,360, and the total of the yearly average attendances was 30,515. The regular attendance of children is secured as far as possible by the work of the Truant Officer, who deals with the monthly returns of irregular attendance which are required to be sent from all schools. During the year the Truant Officer visited 276 schools, and his work included the examination of 3,721 returns, and the issue of 2,279 notices to parents. There were 229 informations laid against parents, and in 195 cases convictions were recorded, and fines amounting to £87 16s. 2d. were inflicted.

FINANCE.—The balance at the beginning of the year, including £20,000 subsidy and donations received towards the cost of a new building for the Technical College, was £19,939 17s. 4d. The receipts during 1908 amounted to £197,955 14s. 7d., and the expenditure was as follows: Administration and Teachers' Salaries Account, £140,507 6s. 7d.; secondary education, £5,356 15s. 7d.; Manual and Technical Account, £10,424 1s. 10d.; maintenance of buildings, £15,044 6s. 10d.; new school buildings, £9,147 19s. 11d.; manual and technical buildings, £2,420 16s.; Training College building, £6,794 10s. 10d.; unclassified accounts, £56 6s.; leaving a credit balance at the end of the year of £28,143 8s. 4d., including the £20,000 received for the Technical College building, and also the sum of £6,588, grant for maintenance of school buildings, which is not usually paid till after the end of the year. Owing to the increase of population in the suburbs of Auckland it has been necessary to put aside a large sum of money towards the cost of the purchase of new school-sites and school buildings which are urgently required. The attention of the Minister has been called to the very serious effect upon the Board's finances of the new regulation under which the statutory capitation grant of 11s. 3d. is paid on the totals of the yearly average, instead of, as formerly, on the average attendance of the preceding quarter.* It is recognised that an education district in which the attendance is falling will benefit by the change, and the Board has reason to believe that action will be taken by the Department to remedy the injustice which is being done to this and other districts where the attendance is increasing.

BUILDINGS.—Thirteen new schools were built, and fourteen schools were enlarged during the year. Six residences were erected, and four were enlarged. The repairing, painting, and improvement of school buildings, improvements to playgrounds, and the necessary improvements

* The former method of payment—on the average attendance of the preceding quarter—has now been reverted to. July, 1909.