

HAWKE'S BAY.

SIR,—

Education Office, Napier, 22nd April, 1909.

In accordance with the requirements of "The Education Act, 1908," I beg to submit the following report of the Education Board of the District of Hawke's Bay for the year 1908:—

MEMBERS.—The ballot held in compliance with the requirements of the Act resulted in the retirement of Messrs. Morgan (North Ward), Whittington (Middle Ward), and Ericksen (South Ward), who were re-elected, the first two unopposed. The membership of the Board at the end of the year, therefore, remained: North Ward—Messrs. W. Morgan, G. E. Darton, and S. McLernon; Middle Ward—Sir William Russell, Messrs. T. Tanner and C. M. Whittington; South Ward—Mr. O. Ericksen, the Rev. A. Grant, and Pastor H. M. Ries. At the September meeting Sir William Russell was unanimously elected Chairman. Pastor Ries and Mr. W. Armstrong represented the Board on the Dannevirke High School Board of Governors, Messrs. S. McLernon and T. Tanner on the Napier High School Board, and Messrs. S. McLernon and C. M. Whittington were appointed to represent the Board as School Commissioners.

NUMBER OF SCHOOLS.—At the beginning of 1908, 102 schools were in operation. During the year there were opened nine schools, of which three were "household" schools; there were closed four, leaving 107 schools in operation at the end of the year.

ATTENDANCE.—The average roll and attendance for the year were 9,721 and 8,438 respectively. The percentage of attendance was 86·7, the highest yet attained in the district. The corresponding figures for the year 1907 were: Roll, 9,409; attendance, 7,878; percentage, 83·7. The roll-number therefore increased 312, and the percentage of attendance 3. Proceedings for irregular attendance were instituted in some fifty cases, in most of which convictions were recorded.

TEACHING STAFF.—At the close of the year there were in the service of the Board 86 male and 123 female teachers, 7 male and 46 female pupil-teachers—a total of 93 males and 169 females, or 262 in all. The corresponding figures for 1907 were 91 males and 164 females—255 in all. Considerable difficulty has been experienced in keeping the schools fully staffed, and there is still too great a proportion of inexperienced and uncertificated teachers in the Board's employ. The passing of "The Education Act Amendment Act, 1908," with its provisions for greater salaries and increased staffs, was hailed with general satisfaction, which was, however, greatly diminished when it became known that the additional teachers provided for in the Act were not yet to be appointed. The Board is of the opinion that where the services of competent teachers can be obtained the additional assistants should be employed. It is hoped that the new scale will be an inducement to suitable persons to take up the teaching profession, so that in a few years there will be no shortage of teachers.

INSTRUCTION OF TEACHERS.—The course of instruction arranged for teachers on Saturdays embraced the following subjects: Drawing and handwork, cookery, and woodwork. Classes were held at Dannevirke, Waipawa, Napier, and Gisborne.

Special training classes were held at Gisborne during the winter vacation, and a fortnight's valuable work was accomplished. Day classes were held in handwork, agriculture, voice culture, and nature-study. In the evenings lectures on kindred subjects were attended. The Wanganui Education Board very kindly lent the services of its instructors, Messrs. Grant and Clark, to whose valuable and untiring efforts the success of the classes was, to a large extent, due. Some sixty-five teachers attended the classes.

PHYSICAL AND MILITARY DRILL.—In their report the Inspectors speak enthusiastically of the work being done in the schools in physical and military drill, and in breathing exercises.

BUILDINGS.—During the year the following buildings, the cost of which was met by Government grant, were erected: New schools—Motu, Ngamoko, Mangatoro, Mangaone, and Ruahine; additions—Mahora, Mangapapa, and Tipapakuku; residences—Motu, Puketitiri, and Waipiro Bay. A building was purchased for temporary school purposes at Tamaki North. A school at Rangitane (Tamaki South) and a residence at Arygll are in course of erection.

FINANCE.—The total receipts were £57,305 11s. 1d., made up as follows: Balance, 31st December, 1907, £3,389 0s. 6d.; teachers' salaries, £30,598 8s. 8d.; administration, £5,890 2s. 9d.; secondary education, £2,275 16s. 8d.; manual and technical, £2,245 8s. 8d.; buildings, £12,906 13s. 10d. The total expenditure was £51,118 15s. 10d., leaving a credit balance of £6,186 15s. 3d. No account is taken here of contractors' deposits.

The Hon. the Minister of Education, Wellington.

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W. R. RUSSELL, Chairman.