

APPENDIX C.

REPORTS OF INSPECTORS OF SCHOOLS, 1908.

SIR,—

Education Office, Auckland, 19th April, 1909.

I have the honour to submit, for the information of the Board and the Minister, a general report on the public schools of the Auckland Education District for the year 1908.

At the end of the year there were in operation 506 schools, of which eighty-six were half or part time schools. In the course of the year the number increased by twenty-two. Nearly all the new schools are very small—Grey Lynn School being the only exception—and several of them are household schools. The number of schools inspected was 457. As heretofore, it was considered sufficient to inspect one of the half or part time schools.

Annual visits were made to 495 schools. Through an oversight on my part no annual visit was made to Huntly School.

In addition to the above, twenty-seven Roman Catholic diocesan schools were inspected and had the annual visit made to them, as well as the Parnell Orphan Home School.

The following table shows in summary the statistics for the year as required by the Education Department:—

Classes.						Number on Roll.	Present at the Annual Examination.	Average Age of Pupils in each Class.
Standard VII	...	...	...	...	...	103	62	Yrs. mos. 14 5
" VI	...	...	...	...	...	2,159	2,065	14 7
" V	...	...	...	...	...	2,872	2,752	13 3
" IV	...	...	...	...	...	3,502	3,380	12 8
" III	...	...	...	...	...	4,030	3,873	11 9
" II	...	...	...	...	...	4,162	4,013	10 9
" I	...	...	...	...	...	4,384	4,185	9 9
Preparatory	...	...	...	...	...	14,375	13,196	7 8
Totals	...	...	...	...	...	35,587	33,526	11 10*

* Mean of average age.

The numbers in this table show for the year the annual increase of 2,330 in the roll-number, and an increase of 4,099 in the number present at the annual examinations held by head teachers in the months of November and December, the figures of this examination being strictly comparable with those of the Inspectors' annual visits for the year 1907.

Certificates of proficiency were awarded to 1,120 pupils, and 359 gained certificates of competency in Standard VI.

Certificates of competency for the lower standards were generally awarded on the recommendation of head teachers, or on the results of their examinations.

At the Roman Catholic diocesan schools there were 2,502 pupils on the rolls, 2,375 were present at the Inspectors' annual visits, and twenty-two certificates of proficiency and thirty-nine certificates of competency in Standard VI were awarded. The small number of proficiency certificates gained was mainly due to weakness in arithmetic. Good marks were gained for reading.

Early in the year Mr. Inspector Purdie retired from his position as Inspector. During his term of office Mr. Purdie rendered valuable service to the cause of education in this district. After some delay Mr. J. T. G. Cox, for many years a highly successful teacher in one of the smaller schools, was appointed an Inspector in succession to Mr. Purdie.

Promotions of pupils from class to class are being generally made by head teachers with satisfactory discretion. This is particularly true of the larger schools, in nearly all of which the headmasters are exercising scrupulous care in dealing with this vital question. The Inspectors, however, feel that promotions from Standard V to Standard VI are being too easily granted in a number of the smaller schools. The desire to gratify the wishes of parents, or the failure to resist their pressure, is mainly responsible for this, and the practice is most prevalent in schools where changes of teachers are frequent. This unfavourable condition, though at present unavoidable, is highly detrimental to the efficiency of quite a number of the smaller schools. In this connection Mr. Stewart points out what a powerful lever teachers are now able to bring to bear on irregular or indolent pupils, by making them and their parents realise that their promotions will in large part depend on regular attendance and a satisfactory quality of work throughout the year. "I should like to place on record," he continues, "my opinion that the greater danger to the efficiency of our schools is not too slow, but too rapid promotion. Many teachers do not seem to have back-