

conveniences. There are over 100 residences without bathrooms, and about eighty residences without proper conveniences for washing. The Board regrets to report that the schools at Puketete, Pukekohe West, Greerton, Herekino, and Owata, and the residence at Te Mata, were destroyed by fire during the year. As the fires at Owata and Herekino (both in the same district) were evidently the work of an incendiary, the Board offered a reward of £50 for the conviction of the culprit. The Board feels called upon to draw the attention of the Minister to the serious delay which often occurs in notifying the grants available for the reinstatement of buildings destroyed by fire.

TRAINING COLLEGE.—Forty-six students were in attendance during the year. The Board has passed a resolution requiring all pupil-teachers who have completed one year's service in the rank of a fourth-year pupil-teacher to attend the training college. The Board is pleased to be able to report that the college is now full, there being 100 students in attendance.

SCHOLARSHIPS.—The scholarships in tenure at the end of 1909 were: Junior National, 20; Junior District, 56; Senior District, 36: total, 112. The reports of the diligence and progress of the holders are very satisfactory.

DISTRICT HIGH SCHOOLS.—Eleven district high schools have been in operation during the year. The roll-number of pupils in the secondary classes at the end of the year was 266.

PHYSICAL AND MILITARY DRILL.—Due attention has been given to the requirements of the Act in the matter of instruction in physical and military drill. The Board desires to express its gratification at the continued efficiency of the school cadet corps, which reflects great credit upon the officers. Hand-some shields have been presented by Mr. Henry Brett and Mr. Michael Walsh for competition by public-school cadets.

GRADING OF TEACHERS.—The grading of teachers by the Inspectors was completed in the middle of the year. In determining the relative position of teachers due attention was given to teaching skill, length of service, and academical attainments, marks being awarded as follows: For teaching skill, 70 per cent.; for length of service, 10 per cent.; for academical attainments, 20 per cent.

APPOINTMENT OF TEACHERS.—As far as possible, applications are invited by advertisement for appointments. Where one teacher is pre-eminently the most suitable applicant for the appointment the Board submits that teacher's name only to the School Committee. This course has been objected to by several School Committees, who do not seem to realize that the Amendment Act of 1908 gives the Board full power, at its discretion, to submit the names of one, two, three, or four teachers for appointment.

SUPERANNUATION.—The Board has resolved that all male teachers and other employees shall retire on superannuation on reaching the age of sixty-five years. Female teachers will in future be required to retire on reaching the age of sixty years.

CONFERENCE.—A conference of members of the Board, Inspectors, and representative teachers was held during the midwinter holidays, to consider the practical working of the syllabus of instruction. As a result of the conference a clearer and better understanding between Inspectors and teachers was arrived at regarding the actual requirements of the syllabus.

FREE CLASS-BOOKS.—The Board agreed to accept the conditions of the grant for the supply of free class-books for pupils of the lower classes, and a contract has been let for the supply of those books from the beginning of the present year. The Board is of opinion that there has been no generally expressed desire for the supply of free text-books to pupils attending public schools, and that the money spent could have been better employed for other educational purposes.

MANUAL AND TECHNICAL INSTRUCTION.—A tender has been accepted for the erection of a technical-college building, to be called the "Seddon Memorial Technical College." The building will be constructed of ferro-concrete, and will be fireproof throughout. The cost of the site, building, and equipment will be between £25,000 and £30,000. A manual training school was erected and opened at Otahuhu during the year, and this is being attended by the boys from the public schools of Otahuhu, Drury, Manurewa, Papakura, and Papatoetoe. Elementary agriculture was taught in eighty schools, swimming in fifteen, handwork in 176, and sewing in fifty-nine schools below Grade IV, taught by a male teacher.

OFFICERS.—Mr. R. Crowe, Inspector of Schools, was appointed Acting Secretary and Treasurer during the absence of Mr. Vincent E. Rice, who was granted leave of absence to enable him to visit England. On Mr. Rice's retirement on superannuation in January last, Mr. Crowe was appointed Secretary and Treasurer, and Mr. R. P. J. Ray was appointed Assistant Secretary. Mr. G. H. Plummer, LL.B., has been appointed Inspector of Schools to succeed Mr. Crowe. The Board desires to place on record its appreciation of the very able and efficient services rendered by Mr. Rice during his thirty-three years' service as Secretary and Treasurer.

SCHOOL COMMITTEES.—The Board desires to acknowledge the cordial and efficient co-operation received from School Committees in the administration of educational matters during the past year.

The Hon. the Minister of Education, Wellington.

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C. J. PARR, Chairman.