

At the meeting held on the 22nd August, Mr. Harold Trimble was appointed Chairman, and the Board decided to abolish standing committees.

The Board met during the year on the fourth Wednesday and the preceding Tuesday each month, with the exception of December, when the meetings were held on the third Wednesday and preceding Tuesday.

New schools have been opened at Ackland, Mount Messenger, and Tongaporutu. At the end of the year there were ninety-five schools open, including four half-time schools, and the number of teachers employed was 189, graded as follows: Sole teachers, 40 female and 13 male; head teachers, 15 female and 25 male; assistants, 53 female, 10 male; pupil-teachers, 24 female; probationers, 7 female and 2 male.

The old Tongaporutu School has been renamed Ahititi, and a new school opened in the Tongaporutu Hall, which is now known as the Tongaporutu School.

On the 18th May a fire occurred in the Stratford District High School, which destroyed the whole of the main building with the exception of the west wing, which was considerably damaged by smoke and water. Owing to the prompt and liberal way in which the Department met the Board over the matter the building has been reinstated in brick, and will be ready for occupation about the middle of April, 1912.

At the annual examination of pupil-teachers six pupil-teachers sat, and only three were successful in gaining passes. Four pupil-teachers passed the D examination, and five gained a partial pass, two also gaining a partial pass in the C examination.

Of the senior candidates for the Board's Scholarships eleven qualified, and of the junior thirty-eight. Senior Scholarships were awarded to seven candidates from the New Plymouth High School, and two from the Stratford District High School; and Junior Scholarships to two candidates from the Inglewood School, two from West End School, two from York, one from Ngaere, and one from Tariki.

The two National Scholarships allotted for this district were won by Doris A. Lawn, of the Fitzroy School, and Ellen Warren, of the Korito School.

The Alf. Bayly Scholarship was allotted by the Taranaki Rugby Union to Charles Crone, of the New Plymouth High School.

The Taranaki Scholarship was won by Mary Terry, of the New Plymouth High School.

There have been thirty-eight appointments made during the year, besides those of a temporary nature and appointments of pupil-teachers. Ten teachers from other districts received appointments, and twenty-eight teachers in the service of the Board received promotion.

A new residence was erected at York, and new schools at Ackland, Okau, Piko, and Whangamonona. A number of residences have been supplied with bathrooms and wash-houses.

The receipts of the Board from all sources, including £1,180 13s. 2d. credit balance from 1910, amounted to £36,866 2s. 1d., while the expenditure was as follows: Administration, £3,274 8s. 4d.; teachers' salaries, £24,569 5s. 5d.; secondary education, £1,221 0s. 4d.; manual and technical, £2,274 4s. 11d.; buildings, £4,493 10s. 10d.: leaving a credit balance of £1,033 12s. 3d.

In the majority of our schools physical exercises are taken daily, with a more extended period for instruction once a week. In the larger schools Cadet corps are established, and these are formed into battalions, No. 1 comprising the schools in the northern part of the district, and No. 2 those in the southern.

TEACHERS.—The dearth of certificated teachers at the present time makes it a very difficult matter for the Board to find competent teachers to fill the vacancies as they occur, and this difficulty is likely to be more accentuated in the future. It was hoped that as time went on the training colleges would be able to provide sufficient certificated teachers to supply the demand. This has not been the case, and it is felt that some steps should be taken by the Department to appoint an additional number of pupil-teachers or probationers so that a greater number of our young people may be induced to enter the teaching profession. It should be self-evident that the great majority of our future teachers must be drawn from those who have been pupil-teachers or probationers. Moreover, it is very unusual for pupils who have left school and drifted into other occupations to apply to be appointed as pupil-teachers or probationers, and it is thought that the Department should offer greater inducements and wider opportunities to secure to the teaching profession the most promising of our pupils before they have been drawn to other occupations which at present offer brighter prospects.

TARANAKI SCHOLARSHIPS.—The Board considers that the qualifying examination for the Taranaki Scholarship is altogether too high for so small an area of competition, and is of opinion that means should be devised for widening the basis of competition and thereby making a fuller use of the revenue derived from the endowment. With this end in view it is suggested that clause 79 (b) of the Education Act, 1908, might be modified by the substitution of the Matriculation Examination for the Junior University Scholarship as the preliminary examination, and that clause 79 (d) be amended by adding, "Provided, however, that if it is found that the number of candidates who have qualified under this clause is less than the number of scholarships offered, then the remaining scholarships shall be awarded in order of merit to the other candidates who have qualified in all other respects." In reference to the above it may not be out of place to point out that in the Taranaki Provincial District there are four district high schools and only one secondary school (New Plymouth High School). Moreover, according to the report of the Minister of Education for the year 1909 (E.—1, page 8), the course of instruction followed in the secondary departments of the district high schools does not usually extend beyond the matriculation standard. Assuming this is so, then it follows that the pupils of only one school in the district can be expected to qualify for the Taranaki Scholarship. The urgent need for the revision of the standard of the qualifying examination is obvious.