

TARANAKI.

SIR,—

New Plymouth, 31st March, 1921.

I have the honour, on behalf of the Board, to present the following report of its proceedings for the year 1920 :—

Board Members.—The constitution of the Board is as follows : Urban District of New Plymouth—Messrs. R. J. Deare and S. G. Smith, M.P. ; Central Ward—Messrs. R. Masters, M.P., and H. Trimble ; North Ward—Messrs. F. Hoskin and P. J. H. White (Chairman) ; South Ward—Messrs. H. J. Eaves and A. Lees.

Schools.—The number of schools under the jurisdiction of the Board at the end of the year was 158. The following new schools were opened during the year : Arawhata, Moeroa, Mangatupoto, Mangakara, Tawhiti, Waikaka, and Whareroa ; whilst the Pehu Household School was closed.

Teaching Staff.—The number of teachers, pupil-teachers, and probationers at the end of the year was 346, as under :—

	Male.	Female.	Total.
Head teachers	45	26	71
Sole teachers	15	68	83
Assistants	13	124	137
Pupil-teachers	2	25	27
Probationers	6	22	28
	81	265	346

Finance.—The credit balance brought forward from 1919 was £3,815 Os. 2d., and the receipts from all sources £138,730 9s. 11d. The total expenditure was £138,767 4s. 9d., leaving a credit balance at 31st December of £3,778 5s. 4d.

Buildings.—During the year new schools were erected at Marakopa, Paraketu Valley, Tawhiti, and Mangatupoto. Additions were carried out at Egmont Village, Inglewood, Oeo, Tokaora, Whangamomona, Mimi, Riverlea schools ; and washhouses were erected and coppers installed in the following residences : Lepperton, Bell Block, Huiroa, Midhirst, Omata, Pukearuhe, Toko, Urenui, Waitara, Cardiff, Mahoe, Egmont Village, Kaimiro, Uruti, Inglewood, and Whangamomona. The Opunake School, having been destroyed by fire, was rebuilt. Considerable difficulty was again experienced during the year in obtaining adequate supplies of material and labour. The Board's workshop has proved a great convenience in the matter of turning out the whole of the joinery and furniture, otherwise we should have had considerable delays in obtaining same from outside sources. Notwithstanding the shortage of labour, a considerable amount of painting and general work was carried out.

Manual and Technical Instruction.—During the year technical instruction has been carried out at New Plymouth, Stratford, Hawera, and Eltham. New technical high schools are being built at Hawera and Stratford, the former being partially completed. A technical hostel is also in course of erection in connection with the Hawera Technical High School. Compulsory evening classes are carried on in the above centres, and are doing fairly good work.

Physical Instruction.—Judging by the reports of the physical instructors, the physical work at schools generally is still improving. The value of the work is apparently being realized by teachers, who are taking fuller advantage than ever of the facilities offered them.

Manual.—Manual training in woodwork and cookery has been carried out at New Plymouth, Waitara, Inglewood, Stratford, Eltham, and Hawera.

Agricultural Instruction.—Primary Schools : Again very good work has been done throughout the whole district, and ample evidence of the value of this subject and the soundness of the instruction is shown by the improvements that have been made to many school-grounds. Secondary : Agriculture and dairy science has been carried out in New Plymouth Technical College, Hawera Technical High School, and Stratford District High School. At Stratford the boys carry out observational work in connection with the model dairy farm. Cow-judging has been enthusiastically carried out in New Plymouth and Stratford, and the usual good display of produce from schools was exhibited at the New Plymouth Winter Show.

Stratford District High School.—Despite the changes in the school staff, the work of the Stratford District High School's secondary department retains a satisfactory efficiency. The school now provides, in addition to the ordinary literary studies, full courses of training in domestic and rural science and in commercial work. For these subjects special instructors, in addition to the ordinary staff, are employed. The whole of the work of the school has a bias towards agriculture, and that important subject is taken as a study in every class.

Instruction Classes for Teachers.—Saturday classes were conducted at New Plymouth and Stratford for the instruction of teachers in the following subjects : Geometrical, freehand, and blackboard drawing, home science, hygiene, and agriculture. A very successful winter school was also arranged, when those teachers who are unable to attend Saturday classes were given continuous instruction for a fortnight in the above subjects. Teachers who were unable to attend either of the above classes were catered for by special correspondence classes.

Attendance.—The following is an abstract showing the number of schools, teachers, and pupils attending schools in the district, beginning with the year 1880 and every period of ten years :—

Year ending	Schools.	Head or Sole Teacher.	Assistants.	Pupil-teachers and Probationers.	Total.	December Roll Number.	Average Attendance.
1880 ..	32	31	6	6	44	1,559	1,147
1890 ..	40	40	10	23	114	2,629	1,940
1900 ..	65	65	21	28	181	4,061	3,238
1910 ..	93	91	58	32	346	6,021	5,177
1920 ..	158	154	137	55	73	10,439	8,917