

instead of bi-monthly meetings, and, in consequence thereof, only fourteen meetings were held during the year. Ninety-two attendances were made by all the members present, or an average attendance at each meeting of 6.6. The following were the attendances made by each member: J. D. Ormond, Esq., M.H.R. (Chairman), 10*; Rev. D. Sidey, 10; Captain Russell, M.H.R., 10*; R. Harding, Esq., 13; Samuel Locke, Esq., 10; G. E. Lee, Esq., 8; Frederick Sutton, Esq., M.H.R., 10*; T. Tanner, Esq., 10; J. N. Williams, Esq., 11.

WORK OF BOARD.—The ordinary work of the Board may be viewed under three aspects—viz.: That relating to the erection, completion, and improvement of school-buildings either in new districts or in districts already formed; that relating to the maintenance, efficient working, and inspection of the primary schools; and that relating to the promotion of higher education by the issue of scholarships, or the establishment of district high schools. These objects have been steadily kept in view by the Board during each of the three years it has been in existence; but the chief aim of the Board has been to place primary schools on a sure basis before dealing with the question of higher education. The time, however, has now arrived when provision for secondary education can no longer be deferred, if this district is to share with the rest of the colony the full advantages of the educational system. The Education District of Hawke's Bay includes the four coast counties north of the river Waimata, on the east coast of the North Island. It is subdivided into twenty-nine school districts, in each of which one or more schools are now situated. The building operations have continued throughout the year, and six schoolhouses and three teachers' residences have been completed. The small building grant of only £1,000, which was made by the Government, greatly retarded the progress of the Board's work. It was totally insufficient for the wants of the district, as it left a large number of children, and in many cases the children of whole districts, without education; and so pressing were the necessities for further accommodation that the Board has been compelled to take £2,000 out of the School Fund Account to provide for the most urgent buildings. The money so diverted had accumulated from the ordinary payments to the School Fund through care and economy on the part of the Board, and those savings were intended to have constituted a fund which the Board hoped to have kept for such purposes as granting aid in exceptional cases, assisting in founding a teachers' fund for the sick and aged on retirement, and many other useful and necessary objects which the Board thought this fund might properly be devoted to. It was, therefore, with feelings of great disappointment the Board, by the refusal of the Government to provide funds for absolutely necessary school-buildings, found itself compelled to sacrifice the plans it had formed, and devote its savings to purposes which, in other districts, have been provided for by direct grants for the purpose. The Board cannot refrain from pointing out that the action of the Government in this case gives no encouragement to a careful and economical administration of the funds placed at the disposal of Education Boards. Although this money has been spent, there are still nine buildings, in which schools are conducted, that do not belong to the Board. There are also fifteen districts where no teacher's residence is provided. At the end of the year the Board was paying at the rate of £300 per annum for rents and allowances, which expenditure it is necessary to continue until each of the school districts has been fully provided with a schoolhouse and a teacher's residence. In a previous report, the Board explained the plan upon which all the schoolhouses were erected; as also the system adopted throughout the district in the teaching of the sexes. No alterations have been made since that report was written, but the Board, after another year's experience, is satisfied that the arrangement of the schoolrooms, and the mixing of the sexes for teaching purposes, are a great saving of teaching power, and highly beneficial to the children. The Architect's report upon the buildings erected, their cost, and other information, will be found in the appendix to this report.

SCHOOL DISTRICTS.—The only alterations made in the school districts during the year were—1st, the division of the Kaikora School District into two districts, called the Patangata School District and the Kaikora District; 2nd, the enlargement of the Meanee District by the addition of the Papakura Road Board District. Before the close of the year several other applications were received from School Committees, asking either for a subdivision of their districts, or for a rearrangement of the boundaries, which questions will be decided at an early date.

INCREASE OF SCHOOLS.—Five schools—viz., Waerangahika in Cook County, Mohaka in Wairoa County, and Makatoko, Blackburn, and Makaretu in the Waipawa County—were opened during the year; and one—viz., Te Auto, in the Hawke's Bay County—was temporarily closed. At the end of December, thirty-six schools, affording accommodation for 3,211 children, were in active operation; but, as pointed out above, nine of the buildings where schools are conducted do not belong to the Board. In the establishment of schools, the Board has been anxious to afford every assistance to the people in outlying districts; and, as the list containing an analysis of the attendance at each school will show, a number of settlers have availed themselves of the opportunities offered by the Board, and have established schools in their districts. Of the thirty-six schools, ten of them had an average attendance during the past year of less than 25 pupils; eleven had an average attendance between 25 and 50 pupils; ten, between 50 and 100 pupils; three, between 100 and 150 pupils; one, between 150 and 300 pupils; and one had an average attendance of above 500 pupils.

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE.—The number attending the schools under the Board continues to show a steady increase. At the beginning of the year, 2,388 names were entered on the roll throughout the district; 2,037 were admitted, making a total of 4,425 pupils who have belonged to the schools during the year. Of this number, 1,340 left before the close of the year, leaving 3,085 children who were supposed to be actually attending the Board schools at the commencement of their midsummer vacation. Compared with last year, the average weekly number of children on the school register shows an increase of 658, or 28.8 per cent., and the average attendance an increase of 443, or 24.5 per cent. The following table gives a comparative view of the average weekly number on the roll, and the average attendance in the schools under the Board, for the three years ending December 31st:—

* Leave of absence on Parliamentary duties.