

REPORTS OF EDUCATION BOARDS FOR THE YEAR ENDING DECEMBER 31, 1883.

[NOTE.—Minute details relating to school districts are in some cases omitted. Tables are not all reprinted, the substance of most of them being embodied in the tables in or appended to the report of the Minister. With a view to uniformity of classification the order of details has been in some instances changed in the statements of accounts.]

AUCKLAND.

Auckland, 28th March, 1884.

In conformity to section 102 of the Act, the Board forwards the following report of its proceedings during the year ended 31st December, 1883 :—

BOARD.—Several changes have taken place in the constitution of the Board. At the annual election in March there were four candidates. Mr Goldie and Mr. Luke were re-elected, and Mr. Donald Hugh McKenzie was elected to succeed Mr. Prime, who retired from office. In April Mr. Moat, being about to visit England, resigned his membership, after a service of five years. Mr. Laishley was elected to succeed him as Chairman, and Mr William Francis Buckland was elected, without opposition, to fill the vacant seat on the Board. In June Mr Dargaville resigned his seat, and the vacancy was filled in August by the election of Mr Theophilus Cooper. In November Mr Laishley resigned his office as Chairman and member, in consequence of his projected absence from the colony. Mr Hobbs was appointed Chairman until the next annual election. For the vacant seat three candidates were nominated. Mr James William Carr was elected in January, 1884. Forty-five meetings of the Board were held during the year, with an average attendance of six members. In April the Board decided to hold its meetings weekly, instead of fortnightly as before. The Chairman was appointed to exercise the functions previously exercised by an Executive Committee. Provision was made for the payment of travelling expenses in the case of members residing at a distance from Auckland. Standing orders were framed for the transaction of business, which has very largely increased during the year.

PUBLIC SCHOOLS.—The number of schools in operation during the whole or any part of the year was 219, or reckoning two half-time schools as one school, 192. The number of school districts was increased from 166 to 175. New schools were opened at Te Puke (Tauranga), Ohinowai (Huntly), Ohineroa (Grant and Foster's settlement), Waiorongomai (Te Aroha), Paparata, Hikurangi (half-time with Otonga), West Mauku (half-time with Waitangi), Ararimu New (half-time with Ararimu Old). The schools at Cambridge and Hamilton East were converted into district high schools at 1st July. The schools at Maungatete, Whareora, Kawau, Manukau Heads, and Orongo (half-time) were closed, and the schools previously closed at Omaru (Matakohe), Pollock, and Miranda were reopened. The following half-time schools were placed under separate teachers: Titirangi and Waikomiti, Dome Valley and Kaipara Flats, Katikati Nos. 1 and 3, and Waitekauri.

The Board has endeavoured as far as possible to avoid multiplying small schools. There are however, fifty-three schools having an average attendance of less than 25 scholars, and seventy-six schools whose average is between 25 and 50. The necessity for the maintenance of small schools in this district cannot be denied. The distance between one settlement and another is so great as to oblige the Board to continue these schools. In some cases the assistance is limited to a capitation grant of £4 a year on the average attendance, and, when two schools can be joined together half-time, there is a sufficient income from the grant for the maintenance of a teacher. But it is often necessary to exceed the limit. This is the chief difficulty with which the Board has to contend. It is not possible to supply every want, but the Board cannot willingly withhold the means of education from those who are laying the foundations of settlement in a new country. The following table (compiled from the published report for 1882) shows the relative position of the three largest districts of the colony in regard to the maintenance of small schools :—

	Number of Schools. (1882.)	Percentage of Schools having an Average under 25.	Percentage of Schools having an Average under 50.
Auckland	189	29·1 per cent.	69·3 per cent.
Otago	159	18·9 ,,	57·2 ,,
North Canterbury	134	14·1 ,,	55·2 ,,

Further reference will be made to these figures in connection with the subject of "Finance."