

the sum received from Government. New schools have been opened at Upper Taonui, Terrace End (Palmerston North), Otakeho, Momahaki, Bird Grove, Maramara Totara, and Kimbolton Road.

ALTERATION OF NAMES OF SCHOOLS.—At the suggestion of the Committees, it has been found desirable to alter the names of the following schools, and they will in future be found in the returns accordingly: Bunnythorpe will be called Upper Taonui, Manchester will be called Bunnythorpe, and Upper Taonui will be called Mangaone. The alterations will take effect from January, 1885.

ATTENDANCES.—The increase in the attendance has not been so satisfactory as in former years. In December, 1883, the average weekly roll-number, which represents the actual number of children attending the schools, was 5,504, with a working average of 4,155, or a proportion of 75·5 per cent. of attendances to the roll-number. At the close of 1884 the average weekly roll-number was 5,708, with a working average of 4,278, or nearly 75 per cent. of attendances to the roll-number. The unworkable compulsory clauses of the Act are perhaps responsible for some of the absences.

TEACHERS.—The Board has now 132 teachers, including pupil-teachers, in its employ, as against 126 in 1883. Of these, fifty-three are head male teachers, five are male assistants, eight are male pupil-teachers, twenty-one are female head teachers, seventeen are female assistants, and twenty-eight are female pupil-teachers. In filling vacancies the Board is fully alive to the necessity of complying with the Act and the Government instructions, by appointing certificated teachers. It will, however, be seen by Table No. 1* that, of those who are at present unclassified, eight belong to aided schools, where the emolument is too small to admit of the possibility of enlisting the services of classified teachers.

SCHOOL BUILDINGS AND SITES.—The work undertaken by the Board during the year has been of a very limited nature, owing to the want of funds; whilst applications have been received from all sides for new schools, additions, repairs, and improvements. In consequence of no building grant being forthcoming, the Board was obliged in April last to suspend the whole of its building operations, and to return the deposits upon all contracts which had not been actually accepted. This unavoidable step naturally caused much disappointment and vexation to those interested. A combined school and residence has been completed at Otakeho; a new school at Upper Taonui (to be called Mangaone); the school at Terrace End (Palmerston North), which is held in a temporary building, has been completely furnished; Feilding School has been raised, enlarged, and improved; and other repairs and improvements have been effected as far as the limited means would admit. A necessary addition of two acres has been made to the Bulls playground, at a cost of £70. Some of the school grounds are in very bad order, and are a positive disgrace to the district. It is thought that in many cases, considering the advantages derived from the present liberal system of education, parents might assist, through the Committees, in transforming these wastes into suitable recreation grounds for their children. Owing to the very limited means at its disposal, the Board is quite unable to do anything further in this direction.

DISTRICT HIGH SCHOOLS.—In connection with the working of the district high schools, referred to in last year's report, the Board subsequently disrated them as from the 30th June last, the teachers with fixed salaries having previously received three months' notice that they would in future be paid upon average attendance according to scale. The extra time thus placed at the disposal of the teachers will enable them to devote proper attention to the general supervision of their schools and to the more useful work of teaching the standards.

SCHOLARSHIPS.—New regulations were framed by the Inspector, and subsequently passed by the Board and the department. There were two classes (A and B), and five scholarships in each class, of the annual value of £30 and £20 respectively, with an addition of £10 per annum to any successful competitor who was compelled to live away from home for the purpose of attending a superior school. This was taken advantage of by three boys. The competitive examination took place in Wanganui on the 5th and 6th of August.

TRUANT INSPECTION.—The Board considered it advisable to cancel the appointment of one Truant Inspector for the whole district, and has adopted regulations and a scale of payments by which School Committees are allowed to appoint Truant Inspectors for their several districts. Only two committees have as yet taken advantage of the privilege, and the rest still appear to refrain from enforcing the compulsory clauses of the Act. The Board undertook to defray the cost of a test case for the late Wanganui School Committee, but, although the charge was made and duly paid, the result was *nil*. The following are the regulations for Truant Inspectors referred to: 1. That Committees wishing to employ Truant Inspectors shall apply to the Board for permission to do so. 2. That a monthly return shall be sent to the office of the Board from each school where a Truant Inspector is employed. (3.) That the increase shall be calculated upon the monthly return as from the 1st to the 31st of each month. (4.) That payments to Truant Inspectors shall be made according to scale, and shall be computed upon the increased average attendance as follows—namely: In schools of 150 and over, upon an increase of not less than fifteen monthly, and upon no intermediate number; in schools of seventy-five and under 150, upon an increase of ten, and upon no intermediate number; in schools under seventy-five, upon an increase of five, and upon no intermediate number. (5.) The scale of payments shall be as follows: (a) Upon an increase of the first five, ten, or fifteen pupils, 7d. each; (b) upon an increase of the second five, ten, or fifteen pupils, 10d. each; (c) upon an increase of the third five, ten, or fifteen pupils, 1s. 3d. each; (d) upon an increase of the fourth five, ten, or fifteen pupils, 2s. each; (e) 2s. 6d. each for every additional scholar, with a bonus of £1 per month for schools of 150 and over, and 10s. per month for schools under 150, provided the attendance of the previous month is maintained, in addition to the payment according to scale for any further increase.

NEW REGULATIONS.—During the year the Board has made some additions to its regulations, and has adopted a complete new pupil-teachers' programme, which was framed by the Inspector and passed by the department.

* Not reprinted.