

REPORTS OF EDUCATION BOARDS FOR YEAR ENDING DECEMBER 31, 1888.

[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 attached to the report of the Minister.]

AUCKLAND.

Auckland, March, 1889.

IN accordance with section 102 of "The Education Act, 1877," the Board presents the following report of its proceedings during the year 1888:—

BOARD.—The members of the Board are—Messrs. James William Carr, Theophilus Cooper, David Goldie, M.H.R., James Marshall Lennox, Samuel Luke, William Pollock Moat, M.H.R., Richard Monk, M.H.R., Richard Udy, and John Henry Upton (Chairman). Forty-seven meetings were held during the year, with an average attendance of seven members.

PUBLIC SCHOOLS.—The number of schools in operation during all or part of the year was 264. At the 31st December, 1888, the number was 254, including fifty half-time schools. The number of school districts has increased from 201 to 210. The following schools have been closed owing either to diminished attendance or to the proximity of other schools: Franklin Road (Auckland), Pokeno Hill, Queen's Redoubt, Mangapiko, Manukau Heads, Mercury Bay (Upper Mill), Papakura Valley (No. 2), Kawhia, Pakiri, and Wahapu. The Franklin Road School (rented) was closed, and the scholars were transferred to a new building in Napier Street. The Pokeno Hill and Queen's Redoubt Schools were closed because it was found that all the children attending them were within easy distance of other public schools containing ample accommodation. The Papakura Valley (No. 2) School was closed, as nearly all the children could without difficulty attend the other school in that district. The remaining six schools were closed in consequence of the removal of population from those districts reducing the school attendance to less than six of an average. All these schools, with one exception, were held in buildings which did not belong to the Board, or which were erected by the residents of the district many years ago. New schools have been opened at Napier Street (Auckland), New Lynn, Swanson, Oxford, Herekino, Taheke, Takahue, Huia and Whatipu (half-time), Waitoa Valley (half-time), Pukekaroro (half-time), Whangamarino, Mareretu, Long Bay, Mata (Mangapai), Upper Waihou, Whakatane, and Te Moari (Kaeo). The two last-named had been previously conducted as Native schools, and the buildings were transferred by the Minister to the Board. New wants are constantly being created by the extension of settlement in outlying districts. The half-time system is adopted wherever practicable, and in granting aid to any school the Board stipulates that a minimum average of ten scholars shall be maintained.

TEACHERS.—A large reduction has been made in the number of teachers. At the end of 1887 the number was 688 for 246 schools; at the end of 1888 it was 637 for 254 schools. The following table shows the distribution of teachers at the end of last year:—

	Male.	Female.	Total.
In charge of schools	184	45	229
Assistants	30	170	200
Pupil-teachers	20	120	140
Sewing teachers	0	67	67
Visiting teachers	1	0	1
Total at 31st December, 1888 ...	235	402	637

The reduction has been accomplished by a gradual absorption of surplus teachers to fill vacancies caused by resignation or otherwise. The present staff corresponds numerically with scale requirements, but in respect of grade it largely exceeds the scale. Instead of 200 assistants and 140 pupil-teachers, there should be a staff of 100 assistants and 240 pupil-teachers. This multiplication of assistants in excess of requirements seemed likely, if unchecked, to present a serious financial difficulty. It is the outcome of a practice which has prevailed in this district for the past ten years, of continuing indefinitely the employment of all pupil-teachers until they succeed in obtaining their certificates. The Board has now put an end to that practice; and in process of time the staff will be brought into closer conformity with the scale. As regards the classification of teachers, a very considerable advance has been made. At the end of 1887 the number of head teachers and assistants who held no classification whatever was sixty-seven; at the end of 1888 it was twenty-seven. By deducting from this number twelve teachers in charge of small "aided" schools for which certificated teachers could not be obtained, and nine assistants who (although not classified for a certificate) had passed matriculation or Civil Service examinations, the number of unclassified teachers is reduced to six. There are, however, several teachers partially classified, who have not yet completed the examination for their certificate. But with these exceptions the employment of uncertificated teachers has virtually ceased; and the Board is glad to be able to report a stricter adherence to the law in this respect.