

the provisions of the Education Act. Mr. T. Kelly was re-elected Chairman of the Board. The Board then consisted of the following members: Mr. T. Kelly (Chairman), Mrs. Richmond, Miss Heywood, Mr. G. A. Adlam, Mr. J. Andrews, Mr. R. G. Bauchope, Mr. H. Faull, Mr. E. Olson, and Mr. W. N. Syme. The Board held twenty-four meetings during the year. The following are the attendances of each member: Mr. Kelly, 24; Mrs. Richmond, 24; Miss Heywood, 24; Mr. Andrews, 24; Mr. Adlam, 24; Mr. Bauchope, 24; Mr. Faull, 24; Mr. Olson, 22; and Mr. Syme, 23.

SCHOOLS.—The number of schools in operation at the beginning of the year was thirty-seven, and two new schools have been opened during the year, making a total of thirty-nine.

TEACHERS.—There were sixty-nine teachers and thirty-one sewing teachers in the employ of the Board at the end of the year, classified as follows:—

	Males.	Females.	Total.
Head teachers	27	12	39
Assistant teachers	2	10	12
Pupil-teachers	5	13	18
Sewing teachers... ..	0	21	21

With respect to the standard of the teaching, the tendency is in the direction of steady progress. The average capacity of the teachers is greater than in the past, and the increased capacity in the staff has resulted in the bulk of the children acquiring a better knowledge of the subjects taught. When it is understood that the average school age is low in this district, and that a large proportion of the children on the school roll, and those the more advanced, pass out of the schools each year and are replaced by young ignorant children, it is manifest that a high standard of work is not easily obtained, and must necessarily be a question of time. In the face, however, of these difficulties and the low average attendance caused by bad roads and long distances to travel, the work of the year has been as good as under the circumstances could be reasonably expected.

ATTENDANCE.—The attendance roll shows an increase of 150 for the year, as against twenty for the previous year, the roll number being 2,565 on the 31st December, as against 2,415 for the previous year. During the year ending 1888 the average attendance, based on the school roll, was 76 per cent., being a considerable increase on the previous year. The result was no doubt due to the stimulus given by basing the payments on the strict average, instead of on the working average as formerly. This year the percentage has fallen to 74, indicating a relaxation of effort on the part of School Committees and teachers in urging on parents the necessity of the regular attendance of their children at school.

SEWING.—The Board, so far as funds will admit, provide for the teaching of sewing in the schools. The progress is not so satisfactory as the Board desire. The time given to teaching is probably too short, especially when there is no home training to assist the teacher's efforts in this essential branch of female education. Difficulty is also experienced in consequence of the indifference shown by some parents in failing to provide material for sewing, thus negating to some extent the efforts of the Board and the teacher. It is probable that the Board will have to provide suitable material of a uniform standard quality, and endeavour to recover the cost from the parents. If some such scheme could be put in practical operation, it would tend to improve the standard of sewing and lighten the labour of the Ladies' Sewing Committee during the annual examination. In schools where the knowledge of geometrical drawing is sufficiently advanced, the teaching of cutting-out might with advantage be taught to the girls, as suggested in the Inspector's report. The Ladies' Sewing Committee continue to give valuable service to the Board by supervising the sewing in the schools, making the annual examination of the work of the children, and awarding standard marks according to merit. The report of the committee is attached to this report.

SCHOLARSHIPS.—The Board has revised its scholarship regulations, which have recently received the sanction of the Minister. Consequently no action was possible under the new system during the past year. Formerly only candidates under thirteen years could compete, and the examination was made on a Fourth Standard basis. The results were not satisfactory. In considering the new regulations, the Board was advised that it could not restrict the age, as the Education Act permitted all children of school age to compete. No doubt a higher standard of papers will be the result of the new regulations; but it is an inconvenience that the Act does not permit the Board to fix an age limit for junior examinations. Supplementary scholarships were offered by the Board during the year under the old regulations, but only one candidate made the required number of pass marks. Six scholarships are now advertised for competition under the new regulations, and, as a more liberal allowance is made for travelling to school, it is hoped that country candidates will compete.

NEW SCHOOLS.—Two new schools have been built and opened during the year—one in the Township of Tarata, east of the Waitara River, in the Ngatimaru District, where a new settlement has been formed in a beautiful forest district; also a school on the West Coast confiscated Native lands, situated on the Main South Road, near the banks of the Oaonui River, between Cape Egmont District and Opunake Township.

SCHOOL BUILDINGS REQUIRED.—Application has been made for special consideration for a school for the Kaimata Road District, where the land has been sufficiently settled with families to warrant the building of a small school. This district is dense forest, but clearings are being rapidly made, and the forest converted into pasture lands. The nearest school is five miles and a third from the proposed site. The roads are merely bush tracks, almost impassable for children in winter except for a short distance from the school. The school is urgently required, and it is hoped the Board, with the assistance applied for, will be in a position to build it before winter. The Waiongona School requires enlarging, in order to enable the teacher to do justice to the children, who attend in larger numbers than was anticipated when the school was built. The Okato School also requires enlargement. This is a small school of the old type, and quite unfitted