

HAWKE'S BAY.

SIR,—

Education Office, Napier, 1st January, 1892.

I have the honour to submit my summary report upon the progress of education in the schools under the Board for the year ended 31st December, 1891.

As the Board are aware, full reports upon the work of each school in the district have already been submitted by me, together with such details, showing the results gained by each pupil in the standard examination, as are required by the regulations of the Education Department. In addition to the ordinary work of inspection and examination of the schools, examinations have been held—(1) of pupils belonging to the upper department of the Gisborne District High School; (2) of pupils who entered as candidates for the Board scholarships; and (3) of the pupil-teachers who are required to be examined year by year, according to the regulations dealing with their appointment, service, and training. Special reports have also been submitted to the Board on account of each of these examinations, so that any remarks I have to make on the work of the year should be considered in the light of the reports and the statistical information already submitted.

The number of schools in operation at the end of the year was forty-nine. These contained fifty-one separate departments, with accommodation for 5,842 pupils. Forty-seven schools were established at the date of my report last year, the additional schools being a small school-of-ease at Woodville, which is carried on in a temporary building provided by the residents of that district free of charge, and the reopening of the school at Tarawera, which was closed a year ago. Although the increase in the number of new schools makes but small progress, there has, nevertheless, been a commendable increase in the school accommodation in the districts already established. During the year new school-buildings or additions have been completed at Patutahi, Gisborne, Napier, Meanee, Ashley-Clinton, Matamau, and Kumeroa; and in several places needful repairs have been made to teachers' residences. In most cases the schools are fairly supplied with apparatus and appliances, and, as a rule, these are kept in good order and repair. I regret that no provision has yet been made in the majority of the schools for the teaching of elementary science. This can only be done with any hope of success by supplying the schools with cheap and suitable apparatus and diagrams; and I would again urge upon the Board the desirability of carrying out this necessary work as soon as possible.

It is to be regretted, so it appears to me, that provision is not made for the erection of additions in brick in all the larger centres of population. In other educational districts I believe that this plan is now generally followed, and it would certainly be economical in the matter of maintenance were a similar plan adopted here for school districts like Napier, Gisborne, and Hastings. In the country districts, also, where the population is unsettled, a type of building is desirable such as could be erected and taken down at little expense, and removed if need be from one place to another.

For each school established in the district a principal teacher is provided, but in seven instances the teacher in charge has no certificate of competency from the Education Department, whose province it is to grant them; and in two other places the schools are staffed by teachers holding licenses only, or, in other words, by teachers who have not yet succeeded in obtaining the lowest full certificate issued by the State. With a single exception, the schools which are in the hands of uncertificated teachers are subsidised ones, and I doubt whether certificated teachers could be found to supply the places of those now in charge, as the salaries are too small to command the services of competent and skilful persons. A similar remark applies to those schools that are in charge of licensed teachers. Altogether seventy-five certificated teachers are employed by the Board, exclusive of seven licensed teachers, and of nine ex-pupil-teachers, who hold what are known as district licenses. Teachers' licenses are only tenable for a period of two years, but as long as they are current the holders are deemed to be certificated in the district where employed. Thus, it may be said that there are at the present time ninety-one teachers holding certificates of competency engaged in the Board schools. This would give a certificated teacher on the average for every sixty-six pupils attending school. Of those who are certificated, ten are English-trained, and twenty-seven have been trained as pupil-teachers under the Board, and have subsequently passed the requirements at the annual examination for certificates.

Omitting the attendance of pupils at the Woodville Side School and at Tarawera, the number returned as attending school at the date of the examinations was 5,923, or 191 more than for the corresponding period of 1890. In the two schools named, and which were not examined for results, the attendance amounts to about seventy, so that altogether 6,000 pupils were actually attending the Board schools at the time when the examinations were in progress. The classification of the children gives 3,828 as presented for examination in standards, and 2,095 as belonging to the junior or preparatory classes. Of the 3,828 pupils scheduled for examination, 75 were absent, 18 had already passed the Sixth Standard, 142 were excepted under Regulation 6, not having fulfilled the required conditions as to attendance, and 742 failed to reach the standard entitling them to a pass. Deducting these items from the total presentations in standards, there remain 2,851 pupils who have been promoted to a higher standard. For the year 1890 the passes were 2,788, and the presentations in standards 3,732. In the following tabular statement the presentations, failures, &c., in each standard are given, and, for the purpose of comparison, the results for the years 1889 and 1890 are also included;—