

## WELLINGTON.

SIR,—

Education Board Office, Wellington, 24th April, 1901.

I have the honour to transmit the following report of the proceedings of the Education Board for the year ended the 31st December last.

**THE BOARD.**—At the annual election in March twelve candidates were nominated. Two of the retiring members, Messrs. A. W. Hogg, M.H.R., and Mr. J. Young, were re-elected, Mr. John Kebbell being elected in place of the Rev. J. Paterson, who retired from the Board. Mr. Paterson was first elected a member of the Wellington Education Board in 1878. In consideration of his earnest assistance to the cause of education for twenty-two years the Board placed on record its high appreciation of his close attention to all matters affecting the Board's administration since its constitution, and its regret at his retirement. The Board has held twelve ordinary and one special meeting.

Mr. Blair was unanimously re-elected Chairman, and continues the Board's representative as a School Commissioner under the Education Reserves Act.

**TEACHERS.**—The teaching staff at the close of the year consisted of 65 heads of schools, 82 sole teachers, 98 assistants, 159 pupil-teachers, and 14 sewing teachers: total 432—129 males and 303 females.

**PUPIL-TEACHERS.**—The annual examination of pupil-teachers was held in December, the subjects of examination being reading, writing, English (parsing, analysis, and composition), geography, school management, science (physiology and health), drawing, and one optional subject for the senior pupil-teachers (Euclid, algebra, Latin, or French). Of the fifty-eight examined, two were not classified on account of very unsatisfactory reports—these have since retired; forty-five were recommended for promotion. The examination was conducted on papers set by the Education Department. The classification shows seventy ex-pupil-teachers, twenty-nine fifth year, twenty fourth year, sixteen third year, thirteen second year, and one first year pupil-teacher.

**SCHOOLS.**—During the year new schools have been opened at Ngakonui and Mangarama, and the schools at Te Mai, Woodhurst, Wharau, Wainuioru, and Kaitoke closed. The 147 schools open at the end of the year are arranged on the basis of average attendance as follows: Under 15 pupils, twenty-three; 15 and under 20 pupils, seventeen; 20 and under 25, twelve; 25 and under 50, forty-two; 50 and under 75, sixteen; 75 and under 100, eight; 100 and under 150, ten; 150 and under 300, eight; 300 and under 500, six; 500 and upwards, five.

**ATTENDANCE.**—15,105 children were on the books at the end of the March quarter, with an average attendance of 12,652. In June the numbers had fallen to 14,858 on the books, with an average attendance of 12,286. September quarter showed an improvement to 15,042 on the books and 12,618 in average attendance. December returns showed a serious falling-off, the roll-number decreasing to 14,667, and the average attendance to 12,345. There were therefore 101 fewer children on the books at the end of the year than in December, 1899; but the average attendance had increased by 326. Maori and half-caste children were attending at twenty-nine schools, the totals being: Maoris, 119; half-castes living in Native fashion, 21; half-castes living in European fashion, 61.

**SCHOLARSHIPS.**—The annual examination of candidates for scholarships was held in October by the Board's Inspectors. One hundred and seventy-nine candidates presented themselves for examination, and scholarships were awarded to ten boys and eleven girls.

**BUILDINGS.**—The principal items of expenditure on account of school buildings were: Kaitawa, new residence; Nikau, new school; Horoeke, new school; Manuhara, new school; Rakaunui, new school; Huia Road, new school; Bideford, new school and residence; Mangamaire, new school and site for same; Saunders Road, new school; Hutt, new site; Thorndon, new school; Island Bay, new school; Northlands, new site. The old portion of the Newtown School will shortly have to be rebuilt, and considerable alterations made to other parts of the main building. The cost of rebuilding the Thorndon School, which was destroyed by fire, is being borne by the Government.

The annual vote for buildings, amounting last year to £5,050, is quite inadequate to enable the Board to deal satisfactorily with the requirements of the district. Reconstruction, rebuilding and additions are urgently required at Newtown, Karori, Wadestown, Levin, Carterton, Kilbirnie, Hutt; and the majority of the 145 schools, being constructed of wood, require painting and repairs, and it is very bad economy to allow them to continue in such a neglected state. The question will have to be faced sooner or later, and the longer the delay the greater will be the amount of money required to place them on a reasonably satisfactory footing. The lowest estimate to do this at the present time amounts to between £13,000 and £14,000.

**TRUANCY.**—During the year the Truant Officer has called on 912 parents, representing 1,074 children, and warned them of the irregular attendance of their children. Satisfactory attendances have been made in most instances, but it was found necessary to take proceedings against fifty parents, who could not otherwise be brought to see the necessity of sending their children to school. Judgment was given in forty-seven cases, and fines amounting to £8 7s., with £12 6s. costs, were inflicted by the Court. In forty-seven cases children have been found who were not receiving any education: forty-one of these were sent to public schools and six to private schools. Strict instructions have been given to the Truant Officer to avoid proceedings against parents except as a last resort, his duty being to prevent truancy where possible, and always to point out to parents and pupils the great benefits they were failing to appreciate, and the permanent loss such disregard would cause to the pupils in their after life. The result of this action, taken promptly, has invariably been the means of preventing the necessity for any further steps.

**DRILL.**—Early in the year the drill-instructor resigned his position to accept an office under the Defence Department. The position has not been filled up. Classes for drill instruction to teachers have been instituted and are largely taken advantage of by both sexes, the model rifles being used by the lady teachers. No doubt a great inducement for teachers to attend drill classes in Wellington is the advantage of free railway-tickets provided by the Education Department, who have also arranged for the instruction being given by one of the drill-instructors of the Defence Department. Drill in the city schools is taken by an instructor from the Permanent Artillery.