

Additions have been made to a number of schools and teachers' residences. A new school was arranged for at Maraetaha, to take the place of one destroyed by fire. Dannevirke side-school was made a full school, with power to teach to Standard V. The overcrowding of this school was so great that the Board arranged for a large addition to it, with the view of meeting the demand. Various other schools were enlarged, and certain residences in very necessitous districts were provided for.

From the reports of the proceedings in Parliament, the Board cherished the hope that a considerable addition would be made to the building grant for 1901. In this it has been sadly disappointed, for only £75 was given in addition to the grant of last year; hence a considerable number of applications for new schools, extensive repairs, and enlargements have had to be refused. In certain districts with increasing population, like Gisborne, and in newly settled districts, of which there are a goodly number, real dissatisfaction has arisen among the people from the want of education for their children. From want of funds it has become practically impossible for the Board to carry out its legitimate functions. It has tried various expedients to meet urgent cases, such as requiring the residents to provide a building where the school shall be conducted on what is called "aided school" arrangement. There is doubtless a great hardship to residents in such districts, but it is unavoidable with the resources at the disposal of the Board. It gives the Board special satisfaction to single out one district where the inhabitants have nobly risen to the occasion. Rakauaroa, in the Motu district, obtained a grant of £150 under the vote for schools in newly settled districts, and, with the addition of their own labour and contributions, have made good progress in rearing a structure which will meet the demands of the district for years to come.

Regarding the other schools for which similar grants were given, the Board can only repeat what it reported last year. The grants made by the Department for schools at Mohaka, Nuhaka, and Waipiro have not yet been expended. The delay in the case of Mohaka arises from the extreme difficulty in securing a title to the 2 acres agreed to be given by the Natives for this school. It is now proposed to acquire the land under the Public Works Act. The Nuhaka vote has not been expended, for the reason that the settlers could not be brought to agree on a site. Pending this, a school has been opened in a hired building in the district. The Waipiro building simply awaits the defining of a site by the Government surveyors who are working on the block.

SCHOOL COMMITTEES.—Apart from frequent expressions of real dissatisfaction with the grants made to meet repairs and provide for necessary works, the Board has again to report that its relations with the School Committees continue perfectly satisfactory. The common reply which the Board has to give of "No funds" becomes irritating, however, to those who long to see their children suitably provided with educational advantages. A few of the Committees continue to subsidise the grants of the Board with private contributions, but these continue steadily to decrease.

PUPIL-TEACHERS.—Through the introduction of the Public-School Teachers' Salaries Act the number of pupil-teachers has been somewhat lessened. The regulations for their instruction will also require to be altered. It will no longer be compulsory on a headmaster to do this work himself; he can divide it with his certificated teachers. No payment will be given, hence certain changes must be made in the Boards' regulations to meet the new circumstances.

TECHNICAL WORK.—A hall immediately adjacent to the Training School was purchased at the beginning of the year to meet the growing needs of that school till other and more suitable premises could be obtained for the conduct of technical work. The half of this hall was set apart for technical classes under a qualified instructor, while the whole school was given up on the Saturdays for the conduct of technical classes for teachers. This arrangement has met a very great need, but cannot in the nature of the case be anything more than a temporary arrangement. Suitable buildings for the conduct of the various aspects of technical work are a real desideratum.

As the year closed it became apparent that the Department of Education would require to make some modification of the syllabus to carry the sympathy of the teachers with this aspect of school training. They complain that the syllabus is already overburdened, and that to introduce fresh subjects into it meant the lessening of efficiency in other branches. Hence, whilst the country teachers eagerly embrace the opportunity of attending the Saturday technical classes, they show no desire to introduce their work into their own schools. Time, it is hoped, will bring the requisite change.

SCHOLARSHIPS.—There are fifty-four scholarship-holders from the public schools attending the Napier High School and the Gisborne District High School. Six of the scholarships were of the annual value of £50 4s. each, nine of £30 4s., four of £16 4s., ten of £12 4s., and twenty-five of £10 4s. each. The larger scholarships are awarded to children who live beyond fifteen miles from the high schools, with the view of providing board as well as fees for them; the medium ones, with the view of providing rail or coach fare to take them from and to their homes, as well as school fees; while the smaller sums simply meet the charge for school fees to those resident in the towns where the high schools exist. In consequence of the new provision for the free admission of pupils to district high schools the arrangements for the granting of scholarships will require to be readjusted.

DISTRICT HIGH SCHOOLS.—The introduction of the new District High School Regulations has brought the question of the establishment of fresh district high schools prominently before the Board. The Gisborne District High School, in unison with the governors of the Gisborne High School, have proposed certain new arrangements to the Board with the view of establishing a free district high school. These have been referred to the Department for its sanction. Dannevirke has also moved with the view of obtaining a district high school, but had not gained any satisfactory solution of the matter up to the close of the year.

The account of the Board's income and expenditure for the year, duly audited by the Government Auditor, is appended hereto. The amount paid for teachers' salaries was £22,057 15s.; the amount paid to School Committees, £2,378 11s. 4d.; and the amount expended on purchase of school-sites, erection of school buildings, repairs, &c., £2,371 4s. 8d.

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The Hon. the Minister of Education, Wellington.

D. SIDEX, Chairman.