

*Claims on Account of Manual and Technical Instruction.*—I regret to have to say that all these claims must stand over for the preparation of the estimates. Large demands on this account have come in from all parts of the colony, totalling, in fact, more than double the amount of last year's vote, and in such circumstances nothing can be done until the amount of the vote for the current year can be ascertained.

The Chairman, Education Board, Auckland.

I have, &c.,

ALBERT PITT.

SIR,—

Education Board, Auckland, 13th July, 1904.

In continuation of my letter dated the 27th June, I am requested by the Board to lay before you the following statement regarding the applications for special grants at Oturoa, Kawhia, and Wade. The question of accommodation for Epsom School will be dealt with in a separate letter.

*Oturoa and Te Awahou.*—In March, 1902, the Minister of Education submitted to the Board certain correspondence regarding the acquisition of a school-site at Oturoa, and offered to assist the Board in acquiring a site. These papers were referred to the Inspector, together with an application received in June of the same year from Messrs. Robinson, Karl, and others for the establishment of a school at Oturoa; and in August of the same year the Board authorised the survey of the site, part of Section 6A, Block XI., Rotorna. On 15th May, 1903, the Board forwarded to the Minister an application for a grant of £186 for a school building at Oturoa. This application was declined by the Minister in his memorandum dated 3rd September, 1903. The Board had previously received in April, 1900, from Mr. Alfred A. Yates and others, an application for the establishment of a school at Te Awahou, and on the 1st May, 1900, the Department was asked to transfer the old Native-school buildings at that place to the Board. This request was declined by the Department in the same month. Subsequently, in the year 1903, the Board received a second application from Mr. S. M. George for a school at Te Awahou; and on the 27th October, 1903, the Department having then declined the request for the establishment of a school at Oturoa, an application was made to the Minister for a special grant of £485 to build a school at Te Awahou. In December, 1903, and again in March of this year, the Minister called the Board's attention to the fact that the two places were close together. A reply was then sent explaining that the application for Te Awahou was sent because that for Oturoa had been declined; and also that the Inspector would visit the district and report where the school should be placed. It was not until the end of April that the Inspector was able to visit the district and report; and the Board then decided to establish a school at Oturoa, subject to a special grant being made to defray the cost of the building. Excluding the unavoidable delay through the Inspector being engaged in other districts, the Board's responsibility for the delay in this matter is therefore limited to the two months—May and June—of the present year. It is due to the Inspector to state that he did not recommend a school at both places.

*Kawhia.*—Since the last application was forwarded (23rd December, 1903) the Minister has been furnished with all correspondence received from the district on the subject of school-accommodation, including a report from Inspector Mulgan, recommending the amalgamation of the European and Native schools; and on the 31st March, and again on the 14th April, the Board asked for an early intimation of the Minister's decision. The Department's reply (dated the 10th May) stated that the request was "postponed" for the present. The Board has since, at the request of the School Committee, authorised the occupation of the Native-school building as a "side school," as a temporary provision to meet the demands for increased accommodation. The roll number is now seventy, and the average attendance for the June quarter was fifty-eight. Notwithstanding the Minister's assurance to the contrary, the Board deems it unwise to merge the whole school in the Native building. The School Committee's letter, dated the 23rd June, accompanied by a report on the state of the building by the resident medical practitioner of the district, confirms the Board in this opinion. (This letter and report have been forwarded to you.) With reference to the Minister's reminder of previous correspondence regarding the attendance of Maori children at a public school, the only case known to the Board is that of Otumoetai, in 1901, when the Board expressed its concurrence with a resolution passed by the householders, desiring that the Native Minister should call upon the Maoris to attend the school situated in their own pa; and the circumstances of that case did not (seemingly) apply to Kawhia. The Board had no knowledge that the Maoris of Kawhia had protested against the loss of their school, or that they had applied for the establishment of another school.

*Wade and Orewa.*—No mention was made in the letter dated the 31st May of Orewa, because the Board had then definitely decided not to open a school at that place. It is true that, in October, 1902, the Board consulted the Department upon the alternative of building a separate school at Orewa, or enlarging the present school building at Wade; and that the Department in December of the same year suggested the removal and enlargement of the Wade School as the best solution of the difficulty. At that time the Inspector, Mr. Mulgan, did not recommend the building of a school at Orewa. It is also true that the proposal to build a school at Orewa was recommended in 1903 by Inspector Goodwin, and that a grant for that purpose was applied for upon his recommendation. When the Minister's opinion of the 4th December, 1902, was communicated to the residents at the Wade, a strong remonstrance was made by the School Committee and householders against the removal of that building from its present site. After full inquiry, the Board was satisfied, on the recommendation of Inspectors Petrie and Goodwin, that if no school were established at Orewa the enlargement of the Wade School was a necessity, and for that purpose the special grant of £90 applied for in March of this year is asked for. Most of the Orewa children attend the Wade School, and some attend Wainui School. The Wade School is situated in the township at the head of the navigation, and its present site is considered to be the best position for the school. It should be added that the school at Whangaparaoa, referred to in Mr. Mulgan's report, has been closed since the end of last year. The inaccuracy in the letter of the 31st May consisted in saying that "on each occasion" the Inspectors have recommended the enlargement of the Wade School as the best course to adopt. Nevertheless, all three Inspectors agree in the opinion that, if no school is established at Orewa, the enlargement of the Wade School is necessary. A communication dated the 29th June has been received from the District School Committee, urging the immediate enlargement of the Wade School. A letter from the Committee on the subject has been forwarded to you.

I have, &c.,

Hon. A. Pitt, Acting Minister of Education, Wellington.

RICHD. HOBBS, Chairman.

SIR,—

25th July, 1904.

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 13th instant in continuation of your previous letter of the 31st May complaining of delay on the part of the Department in dealing with applications for special grants for school buildings.

*Oturoa and Awahou.*—There were applications from your Board for £186 and £485 respectively for schools at these places, supported in each case by Inspectors' recommendations, though, as it has since turned out, these officers had not visited the localities. It was pointed out to you last December that the two places were close together, and you have only now definitely reported the result of the Inspector's investigation. The delay, therefore, is with the Board and not with the Department, and, moreover, the Government has saved £485, seeing that you now withdraw your application in respect of Te Awahou. As soon as I know what funds are available for the year I hope to make a grant of £186 for Oturoa.

*Kawhia.*—I repeat that since the end of last year the Native schoolhouse and dwelling—both excellent buildings—have been at the Board's disposal, and that it is therefore quite futile to keep sending in reports condemnatory of the building now in use. With regard to your statement that you have authorised the occupation of the Native school as a side-school, I can only say that an officer of the Department was at Kawhia on the 26th June ultimo, and that there was then no sign of such occupation. The Government is quite willing to do what is reasonable in this case, but it seems to me that the Board's action is not reasonable. It has shown no desire whatever to help.

*Wade and Orewa.*—Here, again, is an instance of the Board's applying for a grant for a school, and subsequently abandoning the application after the further inquiry forced upon it by the Department. You now state that you have definitely decided not to build at Orewa, although in September last you applied for a grant for the purpose. The remaining application in respect of Wade is held over for further inquiry. As I remarked before, it is not clear to the Department how mere enlargement of the Wade School is to provide for children who live too far away to attend it.