

Inspectors urge that something should be done to give such teachers a course of training, so that they might the better be fitted to carry out their duties in accordance with the requirements of the regulations. The Board has under consideration a scheme to enable something to be done in this direction.

TRAINING OF TEACHERS.—During the year Saturday classes for teachers have been held at Dannevirke—in physical instruction, drawing, cookery, and woodwork; at Napier—in cookery, woodwork, and dressmaking; and at Gisborne—in cookery, woodwork, and dressmaking. The attendances at the classes and the work done have, on the whole, been satisfactory, the work done at the cookery classes at Napier and Gisborne being good.

ATTENDANCE.—There were enrolled in the district at the end of the year 9,363 pupils, an increase of 214 on last year. The average attendance was 7,878. The regularity represented—viz., 83·7 of the roll-number—does not compare favourably with that of several other education districts where the climatic conditions are less favourable. Some allowance must, however, be made for sickness, which has been rife throughout the district; but still the attendance is deplorably poor. More strenuous efforts will be made during the coming year to enforce attendance.

SCHOLARSHIPS.—In December last the number of scholarship-holders in the district was 44—viz., 7 Junior National, 8 Board's Senior, and 29 Board's Junior.

BUILDINGS AND APPLIANCES.—New buildings have been erected during the year as follow: New schools at Pakipaki, Mangahe, and Wigan; and new residences at Mangahe, Meeanee, and Puketapu. Residences are also in course of construction at Puketitiri and Waipiro Bay. At the end of the year the Board had before the Department applications for seven new schools, and for additions to two existing schools; also for two residences. Some of the buildings asked for are very urgently required, and it is hoped the Department will deal promptly and liberally with these applications. The existing school buildings and residences are maintained in fair order and repair. Painters are permanently engaged by the Board to work under the direction of the Architect, and schools are painted inside and outside in regular order.

The Board has spent much time in considering suitable apparatus and appliances for schools. In a number of the old schools the furniture is becoming past repair, and the Board hopes to be able to replace this with either single or dual desks, the latter for preference; but the cost is the bar to their general adoption at present. All the schools will shortly be equipped with up-to-date apparatus, so that the working-conditions will be much improved.

INSPECTION AND EXAMINATION OF SCHOOLS.—Owing to the rapid increase in the school attendance it was found necessary to appoint an additional Inspector. Mr. J. A. Smith, B.A., has been appointed, and it will now be possible for each school to be visited by an Inspector at least twice a year. The synchronous examination for proficiency certificates took place in December. Thirty centres were selected, and 705 candidates, including forty-seven from the Catholic schools, presented themselves. The results will be found in the Inspectors' report for the year.

MANUAL AND TECHNICAL.—There has been still further extension of school classes during the year, and instruction in cookery, dressmaking, and woodwork was given at Gisborne, Napier, Hastings, Waipawa, and Dannevirke, the children of twenty-two schools receiving the benefit. The question of the appointment of itinerant instructors in agriculture and dairying is being carefully considered by the Board, and it is very probable that next year those important subjects will receive the attention they deserve. The technical schools at Napier, Hastings, and Waipawa are now completed, so the conditions under which classes work are materially improved.

DRILL.—This subject continues to receive special attention from the teachers. In all the larger schools cadets corps are established, and the inspecting officer has expressed himself as more than satisfied with the work being done. Breathing and physical exercises are carried out in most schools.

DISTRICT HIGH SCHOOLS.—The district high schools at Woodville, Hastings, and Gisborne were examined in December by the Board's Inspectors, who report that good work is being done. A number of candidates entered for the matriculation and other examinations, and many successes have been gained. Waipawa has now to be added to the list of district high schools.

FINANCE.—The balance-sheet shows the financial position of the Board to be satisfactory. The claims on the funds for the rebuilding of schools and the renewal of furniture and apparatus are becoming heavier as the schools become older, and it is only by judiciously allotting the money that the amount granted by the Government can be made to cover the cost of the necessary works. The grants for new buildings have, in all cases during the year, been made to cover the cost of the works; but, to enable this to be done, the specifications have had to be amended in many cases at the cost of the quality of the work. In a scattered district like Hawke's Bay the cost of the same class of work in different parts of the district frequently differs very greatly, and the Board would be glad if the Department could make it legally possible for the amounts which might be saved on certain contracts to be expended on those others the cost of which exceeds the amounts granted.

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The Hon. the Minister of Education, Wellington.

W. R. RUSSELL, Chairman.