

HAWKE'S BAY.

SIR,—

Education Office, Napier, 14th February, 1914.

We have the honour to present our annual report on the schools of the district. Last April Mr. J. A. Smith, B.A., having qualified for superannuation, retired from the Inspectorate, and Mr. D. A. Strachan, M.A., who for eleven years had held office as Inspector of Schools in Nelson and Marlborough, was appointed in his place.

Buildings, Ground, Fences, &c.—Insistent claims for new buildings or additions come from all parts of the district. Ngatapa was opened during the year, and Marumaru is ready for occupation; at Patoka a new building has been erected at private cost. Additions have been made at Matawai, Waipiro Bay, Mangapapa, Mahora North, Havelock North. Two fine new brick schools are almost completed at Napier West and Mahora South; a new building has also been commenced at Woodlands Roads, where for many years a school has been conducted under very trying conditions; at Mangapapa and Te Hapara two-room extensions are in hand. A grant has been made for a residence at Maraetotara. Up-to-date sanitary arrangements have been installed at a number of schools. Finally, the Board has built in Napier new and commodious offices of handsome design that supply a long-felt need and conduce to economy of administration.

Many of the school and residence grounds have been made interesting and beautiful by charmingly disposed shrubs and flowering-plants, neat walks, and asphalted spaces. There are, however, still teachers who do not realize the educative value of a fine environment, and whose conception of duty runs on very narrow intellectual lines. Some school interiors by their attractive aspect at once arrest the attention; others look stern and forbidding in their austere nakedness. We could wish a small grant was available so that in suitable cases we might direct teachers to visit schools whose head teachers have enthusiasm and imagination. We have a number of schools eminently well worth seeing; in these places Committees and people are proud of their institutions, and their sympathy and co-operation count for much in promoting the welfare of the school and the rapid progress of its pupils. There is still scope for donations and bequests so as to advance the schools in attractiveness, apparatus, &c., in order to give the local children the best possible education at the stage which is the highest that fourteen-fifteenths of the population will ever reach.

Native schools—*e.g.*, Te Reinga—continue to be built within this district, although the enrolment is in no wise different in character from that of a number of public schools. There was even a proposal to erect a Native school at Opoutama, within six miles of a centre where a Board school and residence had lately been provided, which proposal, if proceeded with, will practically empty our school. There seems to be a good deal of unnecessary overlapping in the preliminary training of Native and European children.

Number of Schools and Roll.—Including one side school, there were 135 schools in operation at the close of 1913, with a total enrolment of 11,782. Roman Catholic schools subject to inspection numbered ten—roll, 1,055. There were six other private schools visited by us—roll, 138. Of the above-mentioned 12,975 pupils, only seventy-two pupils were registered at schools not visited by the Inspectors during the latter half of the year. The district continues to make astonishing and gratifying progress. The total enrolment at the end of 1912 was 12,125; the increase is therefore 750, of whom 639 are on the rolls of public schools. At the close of the year there was a vitality manifest in educational work that augured well for the future. The 135 schools mentioned above include sixteen household schools; grants are made to them, subject to observance of certain regulations as to registration and examination. All the Catholic schools are now examined by us. A similar remark applies to six other schools—two in Tolaga Bay, two in Gisborne, and two in Napier—where the Principals have applied for inspection and examination. Attention is again called to the existence of certain private-adventure schools that are conducted in Gisborne, Hastings, and Dannevirke without conforming to the requirements of the Education Act. The Mormon Native school at Bridge Pa is another illustration where many boys are being taught by teachers alien to this country in religion and nationality, and nothing whatever is known of their educational status. Under the Act it is incumbent on the authorities of these institutions to prove that their pupils are receiving efficient instruction.

Public Schools.

	Roll.	Present.	Average Age.	Per Cent. of Roll, 1913.	Per Cent. of Roll, 1912.	Per Cent. of Roll for Dominion, 1912.
			Yrs. mos.			
Standard VII	132	125	14 11	1·12	1·09	1·40
„ VI	712	697	14 0	6·04	5·60	5·97
„ V	1,042	1,028	13 2	8·85	8·55	8·85
„ IV	1,309	1,266	12 0	11·11	11·03	10·73
„ III	1,395	1,349	11 3	11·84	12·21	11·70
„ II	1,553	1,493	10 1	13·18	12·61	12·25
„ I	1,520	1,474	9 0	12·90	13·07	12·40
Preparatory	4,119	3,776	7 0	34·96	35·84	36·70
Totals	11,782	11,208	9 10	..	..	..