

APPENDIX A.

REPORTS OF EDUCATION BOARDS.

AUCKLAND.

SIR,—

Education Office, Auckland, 31st March, 1916.

In accordance with the provisions of the Education Act, 1914, the Education Board of the District of Auckland has the honour to submit the following report for last year :—

Board.—The members in office are : North Ward—Mr. A. R. Harris, Mr. J. D. McKenzie, and Mr. R. C. Smith ; East Ward—Mr. W. Auld, Mr. E. C. Banks, and Mr. A. Burns ; West Ward—Mr. C. T. Barriball, Mr. G. J. Garland, and Mr. G. W. Murray. At the election held in August last the three retiring members were re-elected. Mr. R. C. Smith, of Matakohē, was elected in place of Mr. Purdie, who retired. Mr. G. J. Garland was re-elected for the sixth time Chairman of the Board. During the year 1915 twenty-three meetings of the Board were held, with an average attendance of eight members. The Finance and Teachers' Selection Committees held twenty-three meetings during the year, with an average attendance of eight members.

Schools.—At the end of last year the number of schools in operation was 642, being an increase of thirteen. During the year the following schools were closed : Brooklynn, Hoteo Valley, Maungatautari No. 2, Tapairu, Bickerstaffe No. 2, Haylock's, Whangamarino, Ness Valley, Driving Creek.

Attendance.—The number of scholars on the roll at the end of last year was 50,900—viz., boys 26,526, girls 24,374. This represents a total increase of 1,991 for the year. The average attendance for the year was 44,877, being an increase of 1,832 over last year's figures. At the end of last year 2,512 Maori and half-caste scholars were enrolled.

Teachers.—The teachers in this district have nobly responded to the call for volunteers. No fewer than 139 teachers are now with the Forces. Many other teachers have volunteered, but have been found unfit for active service. The Board regrets to report that the following teachers have been reported killed in action : Geoffrey M. Brown, Arthur Hannah, Theophilus J. Gemming, Leddra Le Gallais, Thomas H. Kirk (who was drowned on the transport "Marquette"), and William S. Wells. The following teachers have been reported as wounded [names not printed]. Reports from the front speak in glowing terms of the many acts of gallantry performed by our soldier teachers. The Board has accepted the offer of many married female teachers, and teachers who had retired on superannuation, for service during the war. Owing to the withdrawal of so large a number of male teachers, the Board has experienced serious difficulty in staffing the schools. It has also been necessary to employ as relieving teachers many persons with practically no experience. As the war continues the proportion of female assistants will continue to increase. The Board hopes that it will not be necessary to close any schools owing to the lack of teachers.

Finance.—The receipts for the year totalled £340,617 16s. 10d., and the expenditure was £325,421 6s. 11d., that amount being made up as follows : Teachers' salaries and house allowances, £230,628 11s. 4d. ; cost of administration, grants to School Committees, &c., £13,554 ; secondary education, £2,812 16s. 6d. ; manual and technical instruction, £21,459 11s. 2d. ; maintenance of school buildings, £15,048 18s. 7d. ; new school buildings, £18,210 15s. 6d. ; manual and technical buildings, £1,192 2s. 11d. ; unclassified expenditure, £22,514 10s. 11d. The amount on fixed deposit on account of the fund for the rebuilding of worn-out schools is £30,000. In accordance with the wish of the Minister, the Board is restricting expenditure to works of an urgent nature only.

Buildings.—Eighteen new schools were built, twenty-two schools were enlarged, and two residences were erected. The Ohaupo and Eponi Schools were destroyed by fire and the teacher's residence at Arapohue. The necessary repairs, improvements, and renovation of buildings have been undertaken by the foremen under the direction of the architect.

Scholarships.—The scholarships in tenure at the end of 1915 were—Junior National, 32 ; Junior District, 92 ; Senior District, 31 : total, 155. The reports of the diligence and progress of the scholarship-holders continue to be very satisfactory.

Relieving Teachers.—The grant for relieving teachers has again proved to be insufficient. The receipts for last year amounted to £1,121 16s., whereas the payments were £1,237 6s. 3d. The debit balance on account of relieving teachers at the end of the year was £2,226 9s. The Board grants leave of absence to teachers on account of illness, with salary as follows : Up to five years' service, maximum two weeks ; over five and up to ten years' service, maximum one month ; over ten and up to fifteen years' service, maximum two months ; over fifteen and up to twenty-five years' service, maximum three months ; over twenty-five years' service, maximum four months. Provision is made that, under exceptional circumstances, an extension of that scale may be granted by the unanimous vote of the members present. It is also provided that, should leave of absence for one month or more have been granted to any teacher at any time, that fact shall be taken into consideration in any application for future leave.

Grading of Teachers.—The teachers were regraded by the Board of Inspectors in the middle of last year. The marks for grading were the same as were awarded in the previous year—viz., efficiency, 155 ; service, 25 ; scholastic attainments, 20 : total, 200. For each year of service in the State schools