

*Schools.*—New schools were opened at Tauakira, Waimarino, and Te Pou (Grade 0), Lacy's Landing, and Retaruke, half-time (Grade I), Taoroa Road (Grade II). The schools at Whareroa (Grade 0), Poukiore, and Kaukatea (Grade I) were reopened. The schools at Waimarino, Tapuae, Mangaohutu, and Whareroa were closed. At the close of the year there were open 212 main schools, three side schools, and two half-time schools, graded as follows: Grade 0, 15; Grade I, 67; Grade II, 33; Grade IIIA, 54; Grade IIIB, 16; Grade IVA, 9; Grade IVB, 1; Grade IVc, 2; Grade VA, 4; Grade VB, 1; Grade Vc, 5; Grade VD, 1; Grade VIA, 2; Grade VIB, 2; Grade VIIC, 2.

*Attendance.*—The number of children on the roll at the close of the year was 16,332. Of these 183 were in attendance at the secondary departments of the district high schools. The average attendance for the year was 14,624, the March quarter being the highest with an attendance of 14,702. The average attendance expressed as a percentage of the average weekly roll number was 89·4. For the previous year it was 90 per cent. Compared with the roll number at the end of 1914 and the average attendance for that year, the figures for 1915 show an increase of 260 and 285 respectively. The Truant Officer paid 325 visits to schools during the year. He found it necessary to issue 226 summonses, of which thirty-seven were withdrawn for various reasons; 26 cases were dismissed, four adjourned, and 159 convictions recorded. The fines inflicted and the costs awarded totalled £93 10s. 6d. The following shows the steady increase in the roll number during the last ten years: 1906, 12,983; 1907, 13,046; 1908, 13,512; 1909, 13,849; 1910, 14,269; 1911, 14,795; 1912, 15,103; 1913, 15,614; 1914, 16,072; 1915, 16,332.

*Conveyance and Boarding Allowances.*—Conveyance allowance is paid on account of fifty children, and boarding-allowance on account of fourteen. Since the close of the year these numbers show a considerable increase.

*Teachers.*—At the close of the year the number of teachers in the Board's service was 467, excluding relieving teachers, probationers, and pupil-teachers. 184 were males and 283 females, the number holding certificates being 302. It will thus be seen that 165, or 35·3 per cent., were uncertificated. Of these, twelve were in charge of schools in Grade 0, fifty-five were in charge of schools in Grade I, eleven were in charge of schools in Grade II, one was in charge of a school in Grade IIIA, seventy-five were assistant teachers, and eleven were temporary teachers holding positions during the absence of permanent teachers on active service. Omitting these temporary teachers, the percentage of uncertificated teachers was 33·7, against 34·7 for 1914, and 35·5 for 1913. Each year the Board uses its best endeavours to lower the percentage of uncertificated teachers in the service by holding out facilities for the study of the subjects required for the teachers' D examination. Some teachers are slow to take advantage of these facilities, and in such cases the Board has decided to adopt stern measures. These teachers are well aware that the absence of a certificate is blocking their promotion in the service, but they apparently have neither the ambition to progress in their profession nor the determination and application required for study.

*Pupil-teachers and Probationers.*—There were at the close of the year thirteen male and forty female pupil-teachers, and six male and twenty-nine female probationers in the service. Four pupil-teachers and nine probationers entered the Wellington Training College at the beginning of the current year. The Board has experienced difficulty in securing a sufficient number of candidates for appointment as probationers. This can hardly be wondered at when it is remembered that the remuneration for a first-year probationer living at home is only £30 per annum, and for a second year £35, as against £45 a year for a pupil-teacher with similar qualifications. The result is that the most highly qualified candidates for appointment to the teaching profession prefer appointments as pupil-teachers, and the Board has to be content to accept as probationers candidates who hold the minimum qualification—namely, the intermediate certificate. Numbers of these fail to qualify for admission to the Training College at the end of the second year, and, as they cannot be retained in the service as probationers, they have no option but to seek other employment. In the opinion of the Board it would be better to make the Matriculation, or some equivalent examination, the minimum qualification for the appointment of probationers, and to raise the remuneration to the level of that paid to third-year pupil-teachers. As the regulations are at present, a candidate under sixteen years of age cannot be appointed a probationer even if he has passed the Matriculation or an equivalent examination. He can, however, provided he is not less than fifteen years of age, be appointed a pupil-teacher at a higher salary.

*Training of Teachers.*—Saturday classes for the instruction of uncertificated teachers and pupil-teachers and probationers were held throughout the year at Wanganui, Feilding, Hawera, and Mangaweka. The subjects taken were drawing, agriculture, dairy science, hygiene, vocal music, English, school method, and mathematics. In addition, free tuition by correspondence in English, school method, and mathematics was available for teachers who, by reason of distance from the railway-line, were unable to attend Saturday classes. A winter school was held in Wanganui for two weeks in July, and a special course of instruction in agriculture was held at Hawera at Easter for the benefit of the teachers in the northern portion of the district. The Inspectors have reported fully on this subject, but it is well to point out that they are satisfied there is a material advance in the work done compared with previous years.

*National Scholarships.*—129 candidates presented themselves for the Junior and fifty-four for the Senior Examination. Scholarships were awarded to the pupils of the following schools: Junior—Waverley, 1; Terrace End, 3; Palmerston North High, 2; Eltham District High, 1; Marist Brothers', 1; Feilding District High, 1; West Rangitikei, 1. Senior—Girls' College, 5; Collegiate School, 1; Palmerston North High, 3. There were in force at the end of the year twenty-two Board's Junior, twenty-one Board's Senior, and eleven Junior National Scholarships, of a total annual value of £1,316 10s.