

HAWKE'S BAY.

SIR,—

Napier, 8th March, 1917.

In accordance with your instructions, we have the honour to present the following report on the schools in the Hawke's Bay Education District during the year 1916 :—

At the close of the year there were 157 public schools in operation, as compared with 148 at the end of the previous year. During the year ten Roman Catholic schools, nine private registered schools, and the primary divisions of five high schools came more or less under review. In addition the Inspectors in Hawke's Bay have now to inspect the Native schools—twenty-nine in number—situated in the district.

The following table shows the number on the roll and the number present at the teachers' annual examination :—

Public Schools.

					Number on Roll.	Present at Examination.
Standard VII	...	...	...	...	195	182
„ VI	...	...	...	...	850	816
„ V	...	...	...	...	1,208	1,172
„ IV	...	...	...	...	1,503	1,463
„ III	...	...	...	...	1,626	1,575
„ II	...	...	...	...	1,617	1,567
„ I	...	...	...	...	1,674	1,629
Preparatory	...	...	...	...	4,374	4,094
Totals	...	...	...	...	13,047	12,498

Roman Catholic Schools.

					Number on Roll.	Present at Examination.
Standard VII	...	...	...	...	32	31
„ VI	...	...	...	...	88	84
„ V	...	...	...	...	99	97
„ IV	...	...	...	...	119	116
„ III	...	...	...	...	134	129
„ II	...	...	...	...	118	108
„ I	...	...	...	...	140	134
Preparatory	...	...	...	...	431	415
Totals	...	...	...	...	1,161	1,114

We are unable to give the corresponding statistics in respect to the private and high schools, numbering fifteen altogether, owing to the fact that some of the returns have not yet come to hand.

New Schools.—New schools have been opened during the year at the following places: Pouawa, Mokairau, Otopo, Waikomoko, Motea, Motuhora, Tahora, Tarewa, Te Hua, Putorino, Sherenden, Waikohu, and Waiwhenua. The following schools were closed: Bushy Knoll, Wahanui, Arlington, and Matapiro.

School Buildings.—The condition of the school buildings in the district is generally satisfactory, and they are kept in good order. Complaints have been made in a few cases that the premises have been left in an untidy state after being used for local entertainments. We think that in such circumstances the authorities should invariably make provision for having the rooms properly cleaned and set in order for the following day's work. The increase in population in the northern part of the district has led to the necessity for the enlargement of some of the schools there. Additional accommodation is still required to meet the needs of various localities. So far no experiments with open-air schools have been made in Hawke's Bay, though the climatic conditions are perhaps more favourable for such purpose than in many other parts of the Dominion. The epidemics which have occurred during the year have led us to think that it is advisable to provide for the early erection of at least one such building, in order that its efficiency may be tested in relation to the health of the children. The Medical Inspector of Schools, in her valuable report on the epidemic of diphtheria, says, "For the Hawke's Bay climate it would be excellent if greater facilities were afforded for open-air teaching. Open-air class-rooms might be used to relieve the congestion of crowded infant departments." The old-fashioned long desks are still in use in many schools, and there are even cases where two of these are placed end to end without a space between. Proper supervision of the pupils cannot be achieved under such conditions. Further, the sloping and gallery floors which are found in a considerable number of schools should be levelled as soon as possible. Modern desks should not be supplied until this has been done.

School-grounds.—The school-grounds continue to receive reasonable attention at the hands of teachers and Committees. The ornamentation of the school-grounds might receive considerable assistance by the raising of suitable shrubs and trees by the pupils taking agriculture in schools situated in localities adapted for such work.

Physical Instruction.—The requirements under this heading have been systematically carried out, except in the more remote schools, where the teachers themselves have had no opportunity of receiving instruction. We hope to take advantage of the presence of the physical instructor during 1917 to arrange central classes for the benefit of these particular teachers. Early in the year we were advised that only schools with an attendance of upwards from 120 were to be included in the itinerary of the physical instructor. We are of opinion that all schools of