

APPENDIX B.

ABRIDGED REPORTS OF INSPECTORS OF SCHOOLS, 1917.

AUCKLAND.

SIR,—

Auckland, 30th March, 1918.

We have the honour to submit our annual report for the year 1917 on the public primary schools of the Auckland Education District, and on those private schools, practically all of which are registered, whose inspection was undertaken by the Department.

At the close of the year the number of public schools in operation was 641, an increase of eleven on the previous year. In addition to the public schools, thirty-one Roman Catholic diocesan schools and twelve other private schools were also inspected.

The following table gives the number on the roll and the number present at the annual examination in the case of each class of the public primary schools:—

					Number on Roll.	Present at Annual Examination.
Standard VII	...	...	...	...	403	377
„ VI	...	...	...	...	3,311	3,188
„ V	...	...	...	...	4,637	4,531
„ IV	...	...	...	...	5,315	5,219
„ III	...	...	...	...	6,132	5,943
„ II	...	...	...	...	6,741	6,516
„ I	...	...	...	...	6,895	6,626
Preparatory	...	...	...	...	19,217	17,879
Totals	...	...	...	...	52,651	50,279

This table shows an increase for the year of 1,641 on the enrolment and 1,993 on the number present at the annual examination.

The total enrolment in the Roman Catholic diocesan schools was 4,248, of whom 4,024 were present at the annual examination. In the case of the other private schools the numbers were respectively 1,009 and 962.

In the course of the year, but chiefly during the months of November and December, 2,440 certificates of proficiency and 479 certificates of competency in the work of S6 were awarded to the pupils from the public schools, as well as 186 certificates of proficiency and 55 certificates of competency in the work of S6 to pupils from private schools. A few of the holders of competency certificates in the work of S6 applied to have their certificates endorsed, in most cases with success.

The great majority of the schools were visited twice during the year. The demands of duties elsewhere, and the absence of teachers when Inspectors happened to be in the neighbourhood of their schools, prevented our paying two visits in every case.

We have repeatedly drawn attention to the difficulty of adequately carrying out the work of inspection in this large district, with its expanding settlement and lack of travelling facilities. We realize the difficulties in the way of providing the additional assistance required in view of present conditions, but we feel that the matter is so important that further and favourable consideration should no longer be deferred. In common with other districts, ours has suffered severely since the outbreak of war, a large number of teachers having enlisted for active service, and we are now obliged to employ many untrained and inexperienced men and women whose efforts need constant supervision and guidance. The relatively large number of schools each Inspector is obliged to include in his special area makes it impossible for him to prolong visits where this becomes necessary, and hence many of the visits which should extend over several days are disposed of in a few hours. In the case of the more efficient schools visits of inspection might well be omitted during one or more years without any risk to the service were it not for the operation of grading regulations and requirements. The former rightly insist on the claims of all teachers being considered annually, and to do this with such justice and thoroughness as the importance of the work demands it is highly desirable, if not absolutely necessary, that each teacher be seen at work between successive gradings. Inspectors cannot, therefore, gain time for assisting those most in need of help by the omission of visits where assistance is not so greatly needed.

Many of the remarks made in former reports on the teaching of and progress in the various subjects of instruction apply with slight modifications to conditions obtaining during the year under review. In view of the very serious difficulty so frequently presented of obtaining a supply of moderately efficient teachers, we have reason to be satisfied with the general progress throughout the district.