

APPENDIX B.

ABRIDGED REPORTS OF INSPECTORS OF SCHOOLS, 1919.

AUCKLAND.

SIR,—

Auckland, 30th March, 1920.

We have the honour to submit for the year 1919 our annual report on the public primary schools of the Auckland Education District, and on those private schools whose inspection was undertaken by the Department.

At the close of the year the number of public schools in operation was 670, an increase of eighteen on the previous year. Thirty-four Roman Catholic diocesan schools and twenty-two other private schools were also inspected. The following is a summary of the results for the whole district :—

					Number on Roll.	Present at Annual Examination.
Standard VII	..	..	..	..	406	382
„ VI	..	..	..	..	3,337	3,253
„ V	..	..	..	..	4,894	4,782
„ IV	..	..	..	..	5,973	5,823
„ III	..	..	..	..	6,634	6,429
„ II	..	..	..	..	6,670	6,419
„ I	..	..	..	..	6,877	6,583
Preparatory	..	..	..	..	20,402	18,810
Totals	..	..	..	..	55,193	52,481

This table shows an increase for the year of 1,476 on the roll number. The total enrolment in the Roman Catholic schools was 4,657, and, of these, 4,455 were present at the annual examination. In the case of the other private schools the numbers were 1,331 and 1,272 respectively. As a result of the examinations for the award of S6 certificates the following information is appended :—

Number of S6 candidates on the roll at the time of the examination	..	3,337
Number of proficiency certificates awarded	..	2,494
Number of endorsed competency certificates awarded	..	33
Number of competency certificates awarded	..	486
Percentage of candidates who gained proficiency certificates	..	74.7

In addition to these there were awarded to pupils from Roman Catholic and other private schools 219 certificates of proficiency and 61 certificates of competency in the work of S6.

The Epidemic. There is little doubt that the effects of the epidemic of 1918, from which, in common with other parts of the Dominion, this district suffered so severely, remained as disturbing elements during the early part of the year, and in some cases during the whole year. In the case of pupils, the long absence from school, and in that of both teachers and pupils, the very trying experience through which so many passed, interfered very seriously with entry on new work. Pupils began the year imperfectly equipped for the tasks that lay before them, and both teachers and pupils in many cases are still suffering from the effects of illness and overstrain. It was not until the year was well advanced that working-conditions became normal, and it was then too late to completely recover what had already been lost.

General Progress.—In view of the large number of teachers absent on military service, of the disturbing influence such service must have had on those who returned to duty, and of the number of untrained and inexperienced teachers the authorities were obliged to employ, it is not surprising to find that, in many cases, the general level of efficiency has fallen. Indeed, it would be surprising if this were not the case. The most acute sufferers were the country schools, where the matter of maintaining suitable supply became a problem of very real difficulty, many schools being obliged to accept whatever offered and to struggle on under well-nigh hopeless conditions. It has always been difficult in this district to secure efficiency in areas lying remote from the larger centres, so that for years past an appreciable number of our schools have been staffed by more or less incompetent teachers. The number of these has increased during the war, with the result already referred to. The need for regaining lost efficiency is immediate and imperative, and the success of future effort will depend very largely on the attractions offered by the service. The unsuitable and unfit must be eliminated, and their places filled by those more competent and better equipped for the work. These are not easily obtained, for the increased annual output of the training colleges, for some time to come, will be fully absorbed by the demands of more liberal staffing. A good deal has already been done to improve conditions of service; but, with increased remuneration everywhere recognized as necessary, the service will find considerable difficulty in attracting the best type of recruit until the need for more generous treatment is realized, and the teacher feels that his efforts meet with adequate recompense.

Returned-soldier Teachers.—A large number of teachers absent on military service have returned to duty during the last two years, more especially during 1919. The varied and in many cases trying experiences through which these have passed have tended to act as disturbing influences on their outlook on life and work, and make it difficult for them to take up again the duties and responsibilities of office. In view of this it is most gratifying to find, in the great majority of cases, soldier teachers settling down resolutely to work, and energetically and successfully facing the difficulties and complexities inseparable from life in the schools.