

direction. In the case of Matamata the junior high school has worked in conjunction with a district-high-school department. Educational authorities who have visited junior high schools in this district are satisfied that in the case of the one that has been in existence now some years the experiment has been a success, and that it will prove a success in the cases of the others just established.

Subsidies.—The Committees of the Auckland Education District still continue to show keen interest in the schools under their charge. During the year several thousand pounds were contributed by residents for the improvement of the school-grounds and surroundings, and for the establishment of libraries and other school requirements. It is evident that parents in general are becoming more fully alive to the importance of education in the future life of the child.

School Fund Allowance.—During the year your Department continued the payment of a special grant in aid of the School Fund allowance to Committees. This has proved a great benefit to School Committees, who without the extra grant would have been unable to cope with the many difficulties they have to contend with.

Religious Instruction in Schools.—During the year the Committees of a few schools applied for and were granted authority to establish the Nelson system of Bible-reading in schools in their districts.

Staffing Conditions.—A steady improvement has taken place year by year in the staffing of schools, and the regulations drawn up towards the end of last year will at last make provisions for adequate staffing. The substitution of probationary assistants in lieu of pupil-teachers will greatly overcome the staffing difficulty. Certificated teachers are gradually replacing uncertificated teachers, and the number of the latter now in the Board's employ has considerably decreased. The teaching profession still continues to prove attractive to young people who have had a secondary education. The number of applicants for positions as probationers increases every year, and their academic qualifications become greater. Junior teachers give evidence of interest in their academic studies, so that the number who fail to qualify for entrance to the Training College is now comparatively small. The number of teachers employed at the end of June, 1925, was as follows :—

	Males.	Females.	Total.
Pupil-teachers and probationers—	842	1,386	2,228
Second grade	36	52	88
First grade	56	152	208
Total	..	..	2,524

Appointment of Teachers.—During the year the Board expressed to your Department its view that all schools of Grade 3B and upwards should have a male head teacher, and ascertained from other Boards that in several cases their views were similar. The Board considers that on account of the number of older boys in such schools it is desirable that they should be in charge of a man. The Board desires that your Department will initiate legislation to make this possible.

Medical and Dental Inspection of Schools.—The Medical and Dental Officers of the Health Department continue to do much good work in the primary schools in this district. Their number should, however, in the opinion of the Board, be materially increased so that they may adequately cope with the needs of a district containing more than sixty-seven thousand children. During the year several dental clinics were established in this district, and these are receiving the hearty support and co-operation of the parents whose children attend them.

Unauthorized Expenditure.—The Board has directed me to express to you its thanks for your action in increasing the maximum of unauthorized expenditure to £100. The Board's experience was that the former authorization was totally inadequate.

Honoraria to Chairmen.—The Board desires me to express to you its thanks for promoting legislation whereby Education Boards are enabled to grant honoraria to Chairmen. The Board felt that the position was anomalous and invidious.

School-sites.—The Board desires me to express its thanks for your action in approaching the Lands Department and bringing about the decision of that Department to consult Education Boards before approving plans of large subdivisions of land. As a result of this action it is hoped that many school-sites will in the future be reserved to the Board from subdivisions.

Organizing Teachers.—The organizing teachers in this district continue to do good work. Their number was supplemented by one this year. With his inclusion it is considered that the staff of organizing teachers is now sufficiently strong to visit all rural schools that are not in a satisfactory state of efficiency. The organizing teachers have during recent years greatly improved the standard and tone of the teaching of rural schools.

Adopted Schools.—During the year, with the approval of the Board, the Senior Inspector inaugurated a scheme of adopted schools which cannot but prove of great benefit to teachers in outlying districts. The underlying principle is that a highly efficient school shall adopt one or more small schools, and by correspondence and interviews direct to some extent the work of the latter. The Board considers that the Senior Inspector's plan is full of promise.

School Libraries.—During the year school libraries were further extended and improved. The Senior Inspector has prepared a list of books suitable for school libraries, and this has been printed and circulated to the different schools in the district. The list acts as a guide to teachers in selecting books. Already the teachers have found the benefit of the list.

Use of Schools as Polling-booths.—During the year the Board emphatically protested against the use of schools as polling-booths in districts where halls or other suitable premises were available. Wherever possible, Returning Officers met the Board in a spirit of compromise, so that schools were not so intensively used as formerly.