

APPENDIX B.

REPORTS (ABRIDGED) AND STATEMENTS OF ACCOUNTS OF EDUCATION BOARDS.

1. REPORTS.

AUCKLAND.

SIR,—

In accordance with the requirements of the Education Act, the Education Board of the District of Auckland has the honour to submit the following report for the year 1926 :—

Board.—During the year no changes took place in the personnel of the Board, the members being : Auckland Urban Area—Mrs. N. E. Ferner, Mr. G. Brownlee, Mr. W. J. Campbell, Mr. H. S. W. King, Mr. J. P. McPhail, and Mr. T. U. Wells ; Hamilton Urban Area—Mr. S. B. Sims and Mr. F. A. Snell ; North Ward of the Rural Area—Mr. J. D. McKenzie and Mr. R. Hoe ; East Ward of the Rural Area—Mr. E. C. Banks and Mr. A. Burns ; West Ward of the Rural Area—Mr. J. Boddie and Mr. J. Patterson.

Schools.—During the year the following schools were opened : Maiho, Kawau, Waipa Valley, Waimiha, Koutu Household, Piha, Greenwoods, Orere Point, Brixton Road, Tahaia, Falls Camp, Okaihau Public Works, Te Wairoa, Matai Camp, Forest Lake, Wharekohe, Urungaio, Kaipara Hills, Karaka Point, Pungaere. The following schools were closed : Dome Valley, Karaka North, Monavale, Oponae, Anawhata, Orewa, Haunui, Takiri, Wairata, Kaitangiweka, Waipapa, Kaiatea, Ponga, Wairere, Iwiroa, Moechau. The number of schools open at the end of the year 1926 was 754, an increase of 124 during the last ten years.

Buildings.—During the year seventeen new schools were built and fifteen schools were enlarged. In order to meet the cases of emergency seven temporary buildings were also erected ; three schools were remodelled ; eight teachers' residences were provided during the year and eight were enlarged.

Accommodation.—The Board has again to acknowledge that the grants made by the Department during the year enabled a fairly vigorous policy with reference to the provision of school accommodation in the Auckland Education District to be adopted. Accommodation requirements, however, have not yet been even approximately overtaken. In several schools the accommodation is congested and inadequate, and a large number of halls and other private buildings are still used to provide school accommodation.

The provision of teachers' residences is still a serious question in this district, especially in rural areas. The Board finds considerable difficulty in staffing its rural schools owing to lack of living-accommodation for rural teachers. The number of grants made for this purpose is in the Board's judgment entirely insufficient. The Board therefore asks that a substantial sum be placed upon the estimates in order to cope with urgent requirements and to overtake arrears of former years.

Though an understanding had been arrived at between the Board and the Department that at least one of the old schools should be replaced during each year, no grant was forthcoming for the purpose during 1926. The Board, however, recognizes that the Department did its utmost with the funds available.

Finance.—The income for the year ended 31st December, 1926, totalled £857,281 18s. 4d., and the expenditure £856,447 10s. 10d.

Maintenance Fund.—During the year the Board kept a close scrutiny upon the Maintenance Fund, with the result that the fund about righted itself towards the end of the year. The Board undertook during the year the painting of a large number of schools long overdue. The Board does not now, however, consider that the maintenance grant is sufficient for requirements. Owing to lack of funds, the Board was unable to authorize the installation of septic tanks in districts where they are necessary, or the remodelling of out-offices to conform with modern requirements. In the Board's judgment both these works should be a direct charge against new buildings, and not against Maintenance Fund. They are essentially new work.

Training College.—During the year the students were installed in the new building erected on the Epsom site. The building was found to be quite satisfactory in all respects for its purpose. It is desirable, however, that as soon as possible a grant should be made for the completion of the College.

District High Schools.—During the year the Board urged the introduction of definite commercial subjects into the syllabus of instruction for district high schools. Unless such a course is adopted the pupils will be at a disadvantage compared with those of secondary schools when applying for positions in the Public and other Services.