

tion at Bull's, Marton, Carnarvon, Greatford, Taonui, Feilding, Palmerston, Carlyle, Hawera, and Kakarama. New residences have been erected at Bunnythorpe and Okoia, and those at Denlair and Stoney Creek have been completed, whilst additions or repairs have been made to those at Upper Tutaenui, Normanby, Karere, and Turakina Valley. Many other applications for additions and repairs have been made, to which the Board is unable to respond for want of funds. The new offices, also referred to in last report as being in course of construction, have been completed and occupied, and are found to answer the purpose required. The commodious building erected in Wanganui for the Girls' District High School was opened in March last, and, as anticipated, was soon well filled, necessitating the appointment of an additional assistant teacher. This school has proved a great boon both to pupils and teachers, and has given general satisfaction. The Board approved of a plan for the conversion of the school-house lately used as the Girls' School, in Wanganui, into an infant school; but, beyond fitting up a few galleries, they have not been able to carry out their views owing to the lack of funds for the purpose. The Board has passed a resolution that all work estimated to cost over £5 shall be let by public tender.

ARCHITECTS.—In the month of June last the Board appointed Messrs. Ross and Wright, of this town, their architects, upon a graduated scale of payments, ranging from £3 3s. for a job of £50, up to £21 1s. for a contract of £500, with an additional charge of £2 2s. for every £50 over and above that amount, besides travelling expenses. The charge includes plans and supervision; and so far the arrangement has proved quite satisfactory, and the work has been well looked after.

DISTRICT HIGH SCHOOLS.—An examination of the upper department of the District High Schools in Wanganui and at Carlyle was held in the month of May, at which Messrs. S. T. Fitzherbert and F. M. Betts kindly lent their valuable assistance. The Board is of opinion that the result proves the soundness of the work in this branch of the schools. The number of pupils learning extra subjects in Wanganui were—First quarter, 16 boys, 28 girls; second quarter, 16 boys, 33 girls; third quarter, 16 boys, 29 girls; fourth quarter, 17 boys, 28 girls. At the Carlyle School the numbers were—First quarter, 13 boys, 4 girls; second quarter, 12 boys, 4 girls; third quarter, 10 boys, 4 girls; fourth quarter, 11 boys, 4 girls. The reports and results will be found in the Appendix.

SCHOLARSHIPS.—Out of the funds provided by Government for the purpose the Board formed five scholarships, all tenable for one year—namely, Class A, 2 scholarships of the annual value of £30 each; Class B, 2 scholarships of the annual value of £25 each; Class C, 1 scholarship of the annual value of £20. J. Young and F. Walker headed the list of competitors with the number of marks, but, owing to some delay in framing the scholarship regulations, they were unaware of the number of subjects to be taken up until late in the year, and therefore did not comply in this respect with the regulations. There was consequently but one award for the two scholarships in Class A. The Board are indebted to Messrs. H. H. Godwin and W. H. Barnicoat for their valuable assistance in conducting the examination, which they consider very satisfactory, although they very much regret the loss of the A scholarship already referred to. The reports of the examiners and results will be found in the appendix.

PUBLIC LIBRARIES.—The Government grant for public libraries was expended in proportion to the voluntary subscriptions collected.

TEACHERS.—The Board has now 102 teachers in its employ, 47 of whom are male and 55 female, apportioned amongst the schools as shown in Table No. 1. Several of these are uncertificated, but the Board expects that those who have not already done so will present themselves for classification at the first examination, and prove by this test that they are worthy of the trust reposed in them.

TEACHERS' QUARTERLY RETURNS.—These documents have not, in all cases, been sent in as complete and correct as they should have been, but in every instance lately they have been returned for correction, and hence the delay in sending forward the summaries from this office. Some teachers fail to understand the large amount of extra work which constant errors and omissions in these important documents involve. The Board will, however, not only impress upon them the necessity of rendering them perfect, according to the plain regulations issued for their guidance, but will consider this duty one of the principal conditions upon which they be permitted to retain their positions or will receive advancement. The Board, finding, on receipt of the quarterly returns, that several of the schools were not kept open for the full number of half-days, issued a circular, directing the teachers to indorse on the back of their returns the number of half-days (if any) their schools have been closed, together with a full explanation as to the cause of such closing.

SCHOOL FURNITURE, REQUISITES, AND PRINTING.—During the past year the Board invited applications by public tender for the supply of desks and school requisites, and also for job printing, and, having received offers upon very favourable terms, accepted tenders for two years. By its action in this matter a very considerable saving will be effected.

RULES AND REGULATIONS.—The Board has lately revised the whole of its rules and regulations, and they have been reprinted, together with a new scale of teachers' salaries and bonuses, and allowances to Committees.

INSURANCE.—The rates for insurance having been considerably reduced during the year, the Board thought it advisable to cover their property for a reasonable amount. They therefore advertised for tenders, and finally insured the whole of the buildings to the extent of £19,791, at 6s. per cent. premium, in the National Insurance Company of New Zealand.

COMMITTEES.—The Board is pleased to state that it has worked harmoniously with the Committees, many of whom express themselves well pleased with the attention paid to their wants, and with the promptness with which the Board has met their wishes.

TRUANT INSPECTORS.—The Board was pleased to learn that the police have received orders to act as truant inspectors. It considers this step in every respect a desirable one.

HOLIDAYS.—Some of the Committees applied to the Board for an alteration in the dates of the holidays, whilst one or two took upon themselves to change the dates. The Board considers that the whole of the schools should be in vacation at one and the same time, in accordance with its rules, and deprecates any attempt to extend the terms beyond the fixed limits. It is manifest that a general departure from this regulation would create confusion, and cause dissatisfaction.