

schools, seven assistant male teachers, eighteen assistant female teachers, forty-three female pupil-teachers, and sixteen male pupil-teachers. There are also nineteen cadets in the Board's employ, who are not counted in the staff, and do not receive any salary. These only teach half-time, and receive the same instruction as is given to pupil-teachers. The Board has found it necessary to appoint a relieving teacher, owing to the constant changes which take place in the staff. Probationers are taken on for a term of three months, and, if found competent, are drafted into schools as vacancies occur. During the year a committee was appointed to investigate the condition of "aided" schools, with the result that the scale of payments was increased, and now stands as follows: In schools where the average attendance does not exceed fifteen, a capitation allowance of £5 per head is made; and in schools where the average attendance ranges from sixteen to nineteen, a fixed salary of £75 per annum is allowed. Female teachers receive three-fourths of this scale. An addition upon a graduated scale has also been made to the salaries of pupil-teachers who live away from home. The Board has great pleasure in bearing testimony to the general efficiency of the teachers in its employ—to the satisfactory manner in which they endeavour, as a rule, to perform their duties and to carry out the instructions of the Board. The average roll-number for the whole year was 7,778.25, and the average attendance for the same period was 5,745, giving a percentage of attendance on the roll of 73 per cent. The Board has frequently called the attention of the School Committees to the unsatisfactory average attendance, and regrets that such a state of things should continue, especially in the larger schools. New schools have been opened at Rata, Midland Road, and Waituna, the two latter being "aided" only. In order to guard against loss, when application is made to the Board to erect country schools in districts where the attendance would be doubtful, it now requires the settlers to sign a bond guaranteeing to make up the teacher's salary to £100 a year for three years should the attendance fall short of the average which would entitle the teacher to that sum by the Board's scale of payments.

**SCHOOL COMMITTEES.**—There are now eighty-six School Committees in this district. The new ones formed during the year were: Rata, Kaponga, Mangatoki, Ratanui, Hiwinui, and Spur Road. The Board has much satisfaction in stating that it has worked quite harmoniously with the School Committees, and can bear testimony to the useful work performed by them, as well as to the great interest which they display in the cause of education generally. In many instances they have liberally contributed towards improvements and the purchase of school sites. During the year the capitation to School Committees was increased by the Board 10 per cent.

**BUILDINGS, SITES, AND GENERAL WORKS.**—In new buildings, a great want has been supplied at Palmerston North by the erection of a large and commodious school, upon a more convenient site of 2½ acres, the cost of which has been mainly defrayed out of the proceeds of the sale of the old building and site. Another new school has also been completed at Hiwinui; whilst others are in course of erection at Kaponga, Mangatoki, and Spur Road. Extensive additions were made to Stoney Creek and Kapuni Schools; and improvements in the shape of shelter-sheds, lining, fencing, painting, and general repairs were effected at Ngairi, Waitotara, Manaia, Bunnythorpe, Kairanga, Linton, Eltham, Kakaramea, Marton, Stanway, Sandon, &c. New residences have been erected at Hunterville and Pohangina, and extensive repairs effected to that at Halcombe. Besides the new school site at Palmerston North, one has been acquired at Bird Road, and desirable additions have been made to the Feilding and Ashurst sites. The Board has now in view the erection of new schools at Opunake and Manaia Roads, Bird Road, Apiti and Pemberton Small-farm Settlements, and in other districts from which full information is not yet to hand. Extensive repairs will also be undertaken at Normanby and other schools as circumstances dictate. The majority of the schools require painting, but, as the funds at the Board's disposal for such a purpose will not permit of the whole of the work being performed at one time, it has been decided to undertake a portion each year.

**SCHOLARSHIPS.**—The annual examination for scholarships was held simultaneously at Wanganui, Hawera, and Palmerston North, supervisors being appointed at each of these centres, and the whole of the details being under the control of the Inspector. Three scholarships were awarded to the senior competitors, and five to the junior.

**INSPECTION.**—The work of inspection having increased altogether beyond the powers of one Inspector, the Board has decided to appoint an assistant, and, with that end in view, is inviting applications for the position.

**SCHOOL COMMISSIONER.**—The Hon. John Ballance having ceased to represent this Board on the Board of the Wellington School Commissioners, Mr. John Duthie, M.H.R., kindly consented to act, and now fills the position.

**FINANCE.**—The several returns required by the department were forwarded in due course. The general statement of receipts and expenditure shows a credit balance of £3,181 9s. 1d. The liabilities were: £145 due to teachers, £266 14s. 9d. due to School Committees, £899 8s. 10d. due to Rees bequest, and £10 due to the scholarships grant, leaving a net credit balance of £1,860 5s. 6d. The Building Account was overdrawn to the extent of £345 18s. 2d., with liabilities amounting to £1,089 10s. 4d. The assets in this latter account were £2,300, leaving a net credit balance of £864 11s. 6d.

For further information respecting the progress and state of education in this district, I have the the honour to refer you to the Inspector's report.

The Hon. the Minister of Education.

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G. CARSON, Chairman.