

express my thanks to my assistant for the very able and energetic manner in which the school was conducted during my absence.

Thanking the Committee for their consideration of all matters relating to the school,

I have, &c.,

The Secretary, Board of Education.

ARTHUR D. RILEY, Director for Art.

HAWKE'S BAY.

SIR,—

Education Office, Napier, 1st January, 1891.

The Board of the Education District of Hawke's Bay, as constituted by the passing of "The Education Act, 1877," has the honour to present a report of its proceedings for the year ending the 31st December, 1890.

BOARD.—Twelve meetings of the Board have been held, and the attendance at each meeting averaged six. Three of the members obtained special leave of absence to attend to their parliamentary duties. Under section 15 of the Act, the retiring members in March were Messrs. Harding, Sidey, and Swan, who were each nominated for a further term of three years. No other nominations being received, they were declared re-elected. The Board continues to be represented on the governing body of the Napier High Schools by Messrs. Ormond and Carlile.

SCHOOL DISTRICTS.—No new school districts have been constituted during the year, nor have any schools been closed or new ones opened, so that the number of schools and districts remains the same as last year. The forty-seven schools under the Board's management contain forty-nine departments, with 95 separate rooms for instruction. Classed according to attendance, there were on the 31st December eleven schools containing an average of not more than 25 pupils, eleven schools with an average varying from 26 to 50 pupils, ten schools with an average varying from 51 to 100 pupils, six schools with an average varying from 101 to 150 pupils, seven schools with an average varying from 151 to 300 pupils, whilst there were two with an average attendance exceeding 500 pupils.

TEACHERS.—The schools were staffed as follows: (a) Head teachers, thirty-seven males, ten females; (b) assistant teachers, ten males and twenty-eight females; (c) ex-pupil- and pupil-teachers, nine males and fifty-eight females. Sixty-eight of the principal and assistant teachers hold certificates of competency from the Education Department, and several of the ex-pupil-teachers have either passed for their certificates or have matriculated to the University, by which they become entitled to their certificates on certain conditions being satisfied. Seven of those in charge of schools do not yet hold full certificates of competency, whilst there are several assistant lady teachers holding very responsible positions in the schools who are uncertificated. The question as to whether the services of such teachers shall be retained will no doubt receive the attention of the Board during the coming year.

PUPIL-TEACHERS.—The regulations dealing with the appointment, training, and instruction of the pupil-teachers show several slight amendments, but these have already been submitted to the central department for approval. It has been deemed necessary to direct the attention of those teachers having charge of the instruction of pupil-teachers to the regulations dealing with the efficient preparation of the pupil-teachers in what may be termed the elementary subjects of instruction—like reading, writing, and arithmetic. It would appear that these subjects, though by far the most important in their application to the instruction of young children, do not receive that attention from the principal teachers which their importance demands. Four hours' instruction each week is required to be given to the pupil-teachers, but little, if any, of the time appears to be given to their training in elocution or writing. The rule permitting ex-pupil-teachers to continue at the schools after the termination of their ordinary agreement is being availed of by most of the teachers. One encouraging sign among the pupil-teachers is their apparent desire to pass the examination of the Education Department for the Class E certificate at the end of their engagement. The Board is of opinion that the establishment of a few scholarships for open competition among the ex-pupil-teachers of the colony would be an additional incentive to them in their studies, and it would tend to bring about a common basis of instruction for the pupil-teachers in the several education districts.

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE.—During the past year the school attendance shows the barest increase compared with the corresponding attendance for 1889. In the first quarter of the school year the numbers attending school reached their highest point; but since then each succeeding quarter has shown a falling-off in the average weekly roll-number, which for December was 214 below that of March, whilst the average attendance was 186 below the March average. These diminishing results are entirely owing to the unusual amount of sickness that has prevailed in most of the school districts for more than six months of the year. The average number of pupils enrolled was 6,070.75, and the average attendance for the same period was 4,851.1, or an increase of little more than 1 per cent. for the year. This is much below what may be set down as the annual normal increase of the school population for the district. Comparing the regularity of the pupils at school, which is done by balancing the average attendance against the average roll-number, the result gives nearly 80 per cent. of the roll-number as having been in average attendance at school throughout the year. This is slightly less than it was for 1889, but during the June quarter the average attendance fell as low as 76 per cent. of the roll-number; so that what may be termed the normal regularity was better than in previous years. In most of the school districts more activity is shown by the Committees in the matter of school attendance, and in several cases proceedings have been taken against parents under section 92 of "The Education Act, 1877."

INSPECTION.—The examination and inspection of the schools have been duly carried out in conformity with the departmental regulations. The pupils entered on the schedules as belonging to the schools at the date of the examination numbered 5,732, and of these 3,731, or 65.1 per cent., were presented in standards. For the year 1889 the numbers were—(a) Belonging to the schools,