

Baker, Esq., of Fordell, J. H. Fry, Esq., of Makino, John Notman, Esq. of Wanganui, R. E. Beckett, Esq., of Marton, and G. A. Hurley Esq. of Manaia. The members who retire by rotation this year are Messrs. Carson and Fry and the Rev J. Ross.

SCHOOLS.—Ninety-one schools were in operation in this district at the close of the year and three—viz., Ngaire, Cardiff Road, and Bird Road—had been taken over by the Taranaki Education Board, consequent upon the alteration in the boundaries of the two districts, the whole of the Stratford County being now absorbed in the Taranaki Education District. The ninety-one schools show a roll-number of 8,165 children, and an average attendance of 5,894 for the last quarter of 1891. The Board regrets that the average attendance upon the roll-number still continues very low in this district. For the last quarter of the year it was 72.18, and for the whole year 74.67 per cent. The Board has constantly had this matter under consideration, and would be glad to find a remedy for the stigma which attaches to the district in this particular. In many school districts the attendance was materially affected by the prevalence of the influenza epidemic, and a large number of the schools were closed—not only on account of the non-attendance of children, but in consequence of the teachers having been attacked by this scourge. It may here be mentioned that in schools where the attendance was reduced by reason of this complaint, and teachers thereby lost their certificate bonus, the amount was subsequently restored by the Board. Of the ninety-one schools above referred to, fourteen had an average of under 20 pupils, and are classed as aided schools; fourteen had an average of between 20 and 24, thirty-two had an average of between 25 and 49, nine had an average of between 50 and 74, two had an average of between 75 and 99, eight had an average of between 100 and 149, eleven had an average of between 150 and 299, and one had an average of

TEACHING STAFF.—The schools are staffed by 191 teachers, as follows, viz. thirty-four head male teachers and three head female teachers, forty-three sole male teachers and eleven sole female teachers, nine assistant male teachers and twenty-one assistant female teachers, twenty-two male pupil-teachers and forty-eight female pupil-teachers and junior assistants. Besides these there are twenty-four cadets in the service in training for pupil-teachers.

SCHOOL-BUILDINGS.—During the year contracts for new schools have been accepted at Bird Road, Pukeroa, Pemberton, Apiti, Castlecliff, and Kiwitea, and for new residences at Paraekaretu, Hiwinui, Kaponga, and Pukeroa. Additions to the school sites have been purchased at Warren-gate and Waverley, and repairs have been made or extensive additions erected to the schools, residences, and grounds at Whenuakura, Karere, Warrengate, Waitotara, South Makirikiri, Carnarvon, Pohangina, Linton, Otakeho, Rata, Mount View, Momohaki, Ashurst, Marton, Wanganui, Campbelltown, Normanby, Waverley, Greatford, Feilding, Kimbolton Road, Patea, Ngaire, Kohi, Bunnythorpe, and Awahuri. It will be seen from the above that the Board has expended the funds at its disposal in all parts of the district. Besides the above, a number of the schools have been painted, and this work will be continued from year to year as funds permit. In order to reduce the heavy charge for "house allowance" on the General Account, it is the intention of the Board to build several residences during the current year. Such a step is also rendered necessary in consequence of the difficulty experienced by many teachers in procuring suitable accommodation in outlying districts.

SCHOOL DISTRICTS.—New school districts have been formed at Pemberton and Apiti, and Cheltenham and Kimbolton Road districts have been divided, the latter of which will now be called Kiwitea. Spur Road has been renamed Pukeroa, Mangaone is changed to Colyton, and Midland Road will be called Aratika. At a cost of considerable time and trouble, special meetings of committees of the Board were held from time to time to readjust the boundaries of school districts where necessary, and they are now being published, and will be forwarded to the several School Committees interested in due course.

INSPECTION.—In April last the Board appointed Mr W. E. Spencer, M.A., B.Sc., Assistant Inspector of Schools, the work having grown altogether beyond the powers of one officer, and it is hoped that the heavy work which has hitherto fallen upon the Chief Inspector will now be lessened.

TECHNICAL SCHOOL OF ART AND DESIGN.—For some time past the Board have had under consideration the feasibility of establishing a technical school of art and design for this district, and with this end in view they have petitioned the Supreme Court for power to use the bequest of the late Dr. Rees, of which they are the custodians, for the purpose, and also, if necessary, to assist the Girls' High School. Primary education being already amply provided for in this district, the Board are of opinion that the bequest cannot be better used than in providing technical education and advanced drawing. It is of course contemplated to use the interest on the investments only. Government have already promised a sum towards the building, and, should the Court grant the prayer of the petition, the Board will at once proceed to erect the school. The services of Mr David Blair, a gentleman eminently qualified to fill the position of art master and lecturer, are now available, and the Board hope therefore that the object they have in view will soon be accomplished.

SCHOLARSHIPS.—The usual competitive scholarships examination was held in June last simultaneously at Hawera, Wanganui, and Palmerston North. Eleven boys and six girls sat for the senior scholarships, and five awards were made. For the junior scholarships, eight boys and one girl competed, and three awards were made. Of the juniors, five qualified and five failed to obtain the requisite percentages. Of the seniors, eight qualified and five failed to obtain the requisite percentages. The scholarships are all for two years, and it is now a rule that they must be held either at the Wanganui Collegiate School, the Wanganui Girls' High School, or some other high school approved by the Board.

PUPIL-TEACHERS.—The annual examination for pupil-teachers and candidates was conducted by the Inspector simultaneously with the scholarships examination. For the First Class, 9 were examined, and all passed, for the Second Class, 8 were examined, 7 passed, and 1 failed, for the Third Class, 29 were examined, 17 passed, and 12 failed, making a total of 46 examined, 33 passed, and 13 failed.