

support given me in all matters relating to the progress of education, and also to recognise their earnestness and fidelity in the discharge of duties which are frequently attended by difficulties greater than those existing in other districts. I have, &c.,

The Chairman, Board of Education, Taranaki.

WILLIAM MURRAY, Inspector.

SUMMARY OF RESULTS FOR THE WHOLE DISTRICT.

| Standard Classes. | | | Presented. | Absent. | Excepted. | Failed. | Passed. | Average Age of those that passed. |
|--------------------|-----|-----|------------|---------|-----------|---------|---------|-----------------------------------|
| | | | | | | | | Yrs. mos. |
| Above Standard VI. | ... | ... | 2 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| Standard VI. | ... | ... | 53 | 4 | 1 | 16 | 32 | 14 11 |
| " V. | ... | ... | 146 | 9 | 9 | 59 | 69 | 13 7 |
| " IV. | ... | ... | 345 | 30 | 19 | 88 | 208 | 12 8 |
| " III. | ... | ... | 482 | 49 | 30 | 145 | 258 | 12 0 |
| " II. | ... | ... | 427 | 23 | 35 | 31 | 338 | 10 8 |
| " I. | ... | ... | 391 | 16 | 18 | 44 | 313 | 9 7 |
| Preparatory | .. | ... | 1159 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| Totals | ... | ... | 3,005 | 131 | 112 | 383 | 1,218 | 12 2* |

* Mean of average age.

WANGANUI.

SIR,—

Education Office, Wanganui, February, 1892.

We have the honour to submit our report on public education in the Wanganui District for the year ended the 31st December, 1891.

PUPIL-TEACHERS.—The examination of pupil-teachers was held during the midwinter recess. In the First Class, 9 were examined, and all passed; in the Second Class, 8 were examined, and 7 passed; in the Third or lowest Class, 29 were examined, and 17 passed: totals—examined, 46; passed, 33; failed, 13. In addition to the foregoing, two pupils desirous of appointment as Fourth Class pupil-teachers were examined, but the work of both was very weak in nearly every subject. The work of the Third Class candidates was the least satisfactory. Of 29 candidates, 12 failed; and, had it not been for the high marks in needlework, there would have been five more failures among the female candidates.

The Inspector's report of the 5th August, 1891, dealt exhaustively with the work presented, but a word or two in addition may now well be said with regard to the training of pupil-teachers in the art of teaching. The necessity for personal supervision of the actual teaching done by cadets and pupil-teachers cannot be too strongly impressed on headmasters. In too many cases it is evident that these young teachers are allowed merely to "take" the lessons, and are not shown how to teach them to the best advantage—adopting the best methods and getting the maximum of intellectual effort and activity from the pupils with the minimum expenditure of energy on the part of the teacher. Of the cadets examined in the Third Class, some stated that they had never given a lesson of any kind to a standard, and others that they had never been shown any particular method of giving a writing-lesson or a reading-lesson. Such slipshod and unsystematic training, or rather want of training, indicates, on the part of the masters, a wilful neglect of the best interests of the apprentices under their charge, and it cannot be too strongly condemned.

NUMBER OF SCHOOLS; ROLL-NUMBER; ATTENDANCE.—At the close of the school-year ninety-one schools were in active operation, with an average weekly roll-number of—males, 4,201; females, 3,964: total, 8,165; and an average attendance of—males, 3,078; females, 2,816: total, 5,894. The roll-number is 276 higher than the roll-number for the corresponding quarter of 1890. The highest number of schools open at any one time during the year was ninety-four. The decrease is accounted for by the fact that the three schools in the newly-formed Stratford County—viz., Ngaire, Bird Road, and Cardiff Road—were gazetted as belonging to the Taranaki District after the 30th of last September. For the four quarters of the year the mean average weekly roll-number was 8,224, and the mean average attendance 6,141, the former showing an increase of 446, and the latter an increase of 396, for the twelve months. This average attendance expressed as a percentage of the roll-number shows only 74·7, which is over 5 per cent. lower than the average for the thirteen districts in 1890, and nearly 10 per cent. lower than the average for Otago. At the same time, we note with pleasure that there is an improvement for the year of 0·9 per cent., notwithstanding the prevalence of the influenza epidemic. Still, making every allowance, it is not creditable that 25 per cent. of the children in the district make a practice of absenting themselves from school. In the report for 1890 this matter of irregular attendance was very fully treated.

STAFF.—We desire to say that we consider the average attendance—50—now required at a small school before the first pupil-teacher is appointed is too high, at all events if the six standards are represented at the school. In the Auckland District the limit for a sole teacher and one pupil-teacher is as low as 40. In deciding this matter, it appears to us that not only the average attendance should be taken into consideration but also the number of classes. Thus, one teacher with an average of, say, 47, from three standards and two preparatory classes, might well do justice to his pupils, but if the same attendance arose from six standards and two preparatory classes, it would not be easy for him to do so.