

HAWKE'S BAY.

SIR,—

Education Office, Napier, 1st January, 1893.

In accordance with the requirements of "The Education Act, 1877," I have the honour to forward a report of the Board's proceedings for the year ending the 31st December, 1892.

The Board consists of the following members, viz.: The Hon. J. D. Ormond, M.L.C. (Chairman), J. W. Carlile, Esq., J. G. Gilberd, Esq., R. Harding, Esq., Captain W. R. Russell, M.H.R., Rev. D. Sidey, F. Sutton, Esq., G. H. Swan, Esq., and T. Tanner, Esq.

SCHOOLS.—The number of schools in operation at the close of 1891 was forty-eight. Six additional have been opened during the year—viz., Port Awanui, Waipiro, Tiniroto, Pukahu, Maharahara, and Wimbledon. These schools are subsidised by the Board, and are situated in isolated districts. They will, however, prove of great service in affording the means of education to a number of children who would otherwise grow up without instruction. I might here point out that a considerable number of the children at Port Awanui and Waipiro are Natives who avail themselves of the Board's schools.

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE.—The following return shows a comparative statement of the number of children on the roll and the average attendance in the schools under the Board from 1878 to date [not all printed] :—

Year.	Average Weekly Number on the Roll.						Average Attendance.					
	March.	June.	Sept.	Dec.	Average for Four Quarters.	Per-centage Increase Previous Year.	March.	June.	Sept.	Dec.	Average for Four Quarters.	Per-centage Increase Previous Year.
1878	1,520	1,797	1,854	1,985	1,789	...	1,259	1,612	1,580	1,649	1,525	...
1888	5,902	5,968	5,841	5,758	5,867·25	6·4	4,686	4,733	4,673	4,627	4,679·75	8·3
1891	6,303	6,361	6,251	6,300	6,303·75	3·8	4,922	5,074	5,109	4,864	4,992·25	2·9
1892	6,612	6,626	6,508	6,449	6,548·75	3·8	5,240	5,254	5,291	5,391	5,294	6·0

The average attendance bears a fair but inadequate proportion to the number of children on the books. This is partly owing to epidemics which have been prevalent during the past year, but it is more particularly due to the fact that parents neglect to see that their children attend more regularly at school, and to the unwillingness of School Committees to enforce the compulsory clauses. An attempt has been made by the Government to assist School Committees in enforcing the compulsory clauses, but, I believe, with insufficient results.

SCHOOL COMMITTEES.—These local institutions continue to do good work. In numerous cases the Committees have raised locally funds for desirable improvements which have been subsidised by the Board. This has enabled the Board to extend its assistance in the way of repairs, fencing, painting, and other necessary works, the supervision of which is undertaken by the Committees, and generally with satisfactory results. By this means nearly all the most pressing applications received from School Committees during the past year have been met by the Board. I am glad to say that the relations between the Board and Committees continue to be of the most satisfactory nature.

SCHOOL-BUILDINGS.—Two new schools have been erected, and additions made to three schools, during 1892. To the numerous and repeated applications for schools in new districts and teachers' residences in the old the Board have been obliged to give the stereotyped reply, "No funds." This is both disheartening and unsatisfactory. I must again point out to the Government the inadequacy of the funds furnished to the Board to provide the accommodation requisite to afford fitting school-room for the children of this district, and, were the compulsory-attendance clauses strictly enforced, there would in many cases be insufficient room in which to teach the children. The want of teachers' residences is another pressing necessity. Competent teachers often refuse appointments because there is no provision for living in reasonable comfort, and although house-rent is allowed it does not in very many cases meet the necessities of the situation. As the grant for buildings was quite insufficient to meet the requirements of the district, the Board has provided from the School Fund the sum of £1,000 to aid in erecting school-buildings, and in making additions, &c., and generally to assist in providing for the most pressing requirements.

SCHOLARSHIPS.—Nineteen scholarships have been awarded for 1892, making thirty-nine scholarships in existence. The country schools have again been very successful this year in the competition, seven scholarships having been gained by them. The benefit resulting from the gaining of a scholarship is beginning to be more recognised, the tenure being for two years, with a prospect of two years' further tuition, as a scholarship-holder may obtain a Commissioners' scholarship in the High School. This enables him to prepare for the matriculation or higher examinations.

PUPIL-TEACHERS.—Amended regulations are in course of preparation for pupil-teachers. It is intended to alter the date of examination from December to July. This will enable the Board to avoid having too many examinations at one period of the year, and will give pupil-teachers who have passed their fourth year a few months in which to prepare for the annual certificate examination, which takes place in January. Fifty pupil-teachers presented themselves for examination. Thirty-eight of these passed, and twelve failed to fulfil the requirements under the regulations. The number of males fitting themselves for employment as teachers in comparison with females bears a very unequal proportion, and this is, I believe, found to be the case throughout New Zealand.

SEWING.—This useful branch of education, I am glad to state, has received more attention at the hands of the teachers than heretofore, although there is still room for improvement. The lady examiners in their reports state that their remarks and suggestions are being attended to. They call especial attention to the fact that incomplete samples are being forwarded to them, and wish the teachers' attention to be directed to the duty of sending finished work.

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE.—The income of the Board from all sources amounts to £22,681 12s., to which should be added the balance from last year of £2,963 18s. 6d. The expenditure shows