

WANGANUI.

SIR,—

Education Office, Wanganui, 20th February, 1895.

We have the honour to submit our report on public education in the Wanganui District for the year ending the 31st December, 1894.

WORK OF THE YEAR.—The Conference of Inspectors was held in Wellington early in February. Then followed the preparing of the usual report and the statistical returns required by the Minister of Education. The inspection of the schools, the examination of pupil-teachers, and of candidates for scholarships, and the standard examinations, were conducted in the usual manner. Some of the schools now are so far back towards the interior, so difficult of access, and so far away from each other, that the time spent in getting to them, and inspecting and examining them, is out of all proportion to the numbers on the school-rolls. The majority of the inspections were conducted in the first half, and the majority of the examinations in the last half, of the year. The preparation of questions for the pupil-teachers', scholarships, and standards examinations takes up a great deal of time yearly. During the past year the questions in arithmetic for Standards III. to VI. were for the first time drawn up by the Education Department, but we saved little time through this, as we considered it best for facility both in correcting the pupils' papers and in showing methods, to work out all the questions. Also, as some schools were examined in the earlier part of the year, before the departmental cards were issued, we had ourselves to make out a certain number of sets of arithmetic questions. New regulations for the employment and the examination of pupil-teachers and new regulations for scholarships also entailed a considerable amount of trouble and time.

NUMBER OF SCHOOLS, ROLL-NUMBER ATTENDANCE.—At the close of the school year 105 schools, including two half-time schools, were in active operation, while two other schools, Awahou and Ongo Road, had been closed for over three months. For the last quarter of the year the average weekly roll-numbers were Males, 4,889, females, 4,470 total, 9,359. And the strict average attendances were Males, 3,849; females, 3,517 total, 7,366, the highest ever yet reached. The working average for the same period was 7,454, or eighty-eight higher than the strict average.

For the four quarters of the year the mean average weekly roll-number was 9,264, and the strict average attendance 7,136, showing the satisfactory increases of 455 and 602 respectively. The latter number means a very considerable increase in the amount of the Board's capitation grant. The strict average attendance for the year expressed as a percentage of the weekly roll-number is 77. This is just 3 per cent. higher than it has been in any former year, and we are very pleased to see such a marked improvement. It is possible that, if rolls were more frequently purged of useless names, the percentage might be still higher. The working average for the year is only 133 higher than the strict average.

EXAMINATION OF SCHOOLS.—Of the 105 schools open at the end of the year, ninety-six were examined in standards. Of the remaining nine, Mount View and Glen Nevis had been closed for a considerable time during the year, and seven were new schools, none of which had been open for a sufficient time to warrant their being examined. On the days appointed for the examination there were 8,998 pupils (4,719 boys and 4,279 girls) on the rolls of the ninety-six schools examined, of whom 5,851, or 65 per cent., were presented in Standard I. to Standard VI., 3,091 were in the preparatory classes, and fifty-six had already passed Standard VI. The number on the rolls and the number presented in standards are higher than in 1893 by 1,167 and 714 respectively, every class, Standard VI. excepted (same number in both years), showing a substantial increase. It must, however, be remembered that, as nine old-established schools were not, on account of epidemics, examined in 1893, these figures do not indicate as large increases in the roll-numbers and the attendance numbers as would at first sight appear. Of the 5,851 pupils presented in standards, 5,532, or 94 per cent., attended and were examined, 319 were absent, 1,366 failed, and 4,166 passed the requirements and were promoted. Of the absentees, some had already passed a standard during the year either in this district or in another district. By the new regulations percentages of passes and percentages of failures are not acknowledged, so we have not calculated them. "Exceptions" (pupils who failed to pass their standards, but had not made half the possible attendances during the three quarters prior to the examination quarter), too, have been done away with, so the numbers in the failed column have risen considerably, as they include such pupils as under the old regulations would have been classed as "excepted."

The following table summarises the results for each standard and for all standards in the district:—

Classes.	Presented.	Present.	Failed.	Passed.	Average Age of those that passed.
					Yrs. mos.
Above Standard VI.	56				
Standard VI.	255	239	103	136	14 3
" V	488	469	179	290	13 8
" IV	970	896	310	586	12 9
" III.	1,272	1,194	352	842	11 9
" II.	1,431	1,367	233	1,134	10 6
" I.	1,435	1,367	189	1,178	9 4
Preparatory	3,091				
Totals	8,998	5,532	1,366	4,166	12 0*

\* Mean.

The number of schools examined in one standard or more was ninety-six.