

above statement that all parts of the district have received a fair share of the grant, and that no part has been favoured more than another. The Board was also obliged to paint a number of buildings at a considerable cost. In addition to the foregoing a tender was accepted for a much-needed addition to the Board's offices. For a long time past this want has been severely felt, and it was with difficulty that the work, which had much increased of late years, could be carried on in the small building. The additions are now complete, and in every way prove to be a great acquisition.

**TEACHERS.**—There are now 241 teachers in the service of the Board. Of these, forty-seven are head male teachers, six are head female teachers, forty-three are sole male teachers in charge of schools, nineteen are sole female teachers, nine are male assistant teachers, twenty-seven are female assistant teachers, twenty-five are male pupil-teachers, sixty-five are female pupil-teachers. Amongst these, however, are three relieving teachers and two probationers occupying temporary positions. There are also thirty-six cadets who do not receive any pay, and are not reckoned upon the staff of the schools. The Board uses every care in the selection of its teachers. Not only does it require certificates of competency and character, but every teacher is obliged to produce a medical certificate of good health before he is allowed to enter the service. The Board believes that it has reason to be satisfied generally with the class of teachers in its employ. In filling vacancies or making new appointments the Board's plan is to select those applications which, from inquiries made, or information at its disposal, it deems most suitable. These are sent to the School Committee interested with a request that it will make a final selection. Whenever it is possible the Board gives the preference to its own teachers. This is essential not only as a matter of justice and encouragement, but in order to move on the passed pupil-teachers and junior assistants, and thus regulate the expenditure on the teaching staff.

**TRAINING OF TEACHERS.**—The Board, finding that a large number of its teachers held only E certificates, has (in the absence of a Normal School) made a tentative attempt at training its teachers for a higher classification by the establishment of instruction classes at Palmerston North and Wanganui. These classes are now to be held during eight months of the year—two terms of four months each; and a small fee—15s. per term—is charged to the teachers. The instructors are paid £1 10s. per term for each student, the Board paying the difference between the fee and that amount. It is believed that this step will benefit the young teachers especially.

**ATTENDANCES.**—For 1894 the average weekly roll-number for this district was 9,264; and for 1895, 9,747. The strict average attendance for 1894 was 7,136; and for 1895, 7,488. The difference between the strict and working average attendance for 1894 was 133, and for 1895 it was 167. The percentage of strict average attendance on the roll-number for 1894 was 77·03; and for 1895 it was 76·82. For the first three quarters of 1895 the average attendance for the whole district varied only four, thus indicating a very steady attendance; but the fourth quarter showed an increase of 193, no doubt partly due to the opening of several small schools.

**TRUANT INSPECTORS.**—Several of the School Committees nominated truant inspectors for appointment by the Board. The Committees make their own arrangements for remunerating these officials. Fines recovered under the Act are retained by the Committees. There is a natural repugnance on the part of the Committees to take action under the School Attendance Act of 1894. Perhaps the best and most successful truant inspectors are the teachers whose schools are specially attractive, and who at once benefit themselves and their pupils by making them so.

**INSPECTION.**—A circular petition from the Roman Catholic Bishops of the colony was forwarded to the Board requesting it to allow the Inspectors to examine their schools. The Board complied with the request, and these schools throughout the district have since been examined and reported upon in the usual way, the results being forwarded in due course to the proper authorities, and also placed before the Board. By request, the Putiki Native School was also examined by one of the Board's Inspectors. In every instance the principals and managers of these schools expressed their satisfaction at the manner in which the examination was performed, and also stated that they had derived much information and benefit therefrom. Owing to the ill-health of its Chief Inspector, Mr. Vereker Bindon, caused by excessive work, the Board granted him a few months' leave of absence. His place has been temporarily filled, with credit, by Mr. James Milne, M.A., the Sub-Inspector, who has been assisted by Mr. H. J. Carter.

**NEEDLEWORK.**—A return made during the year, at the instance of a member of the Board, revealed the fact that only about one-half of the female children in the district are taught sewing. In some instances, where there is but a sole male teacher in the school, this omission appears to be unavoidable. The Board does not appoint sewing teachers, but in the larger schools the duty is performed by the assistant mistress, aided by the female pupil-teachers. The Board attaches much importance to this branch of female education, and hopes that the School Committees will do all in their power to promote it. At the close of the year, out of 4,645 females on the roll, 2,698 were taught needlework.

**TECHNICAL SCHOOL.**—During the year the Art Master applied to the Board for an extension of the school building, and also for the appointment of an assistant master. The desirability of establishing art classes at Palmerston North and Hawera was also mooted. The Board thereupon appointed a committee of its members to report upon the school generally, and the funds at its disposal for technical education. This school is supported by the interest from the invested funds of the Rees bequest, by outside students' fees, by fees granted by the Board for the instruction of teachers, and by a portion of the annual Government grant for technical education; but the Board does not trench directly upon the Government grant for primary education. After a careful investigation by the Board's Committee, it concluded that there were not sufficient funds available to warrant the Board in making an extensive outlay such as a large addition to the building would involve; nor could they recommend the appointment of an assistant master. A cadet was, however, appointed to assist Mr. Blair in Wanganui. An assistant master was also appointed to visit Hawera and teach drawing every Saturday during the term.

Subjoined I beg to hand you the Art Master's report upon the work of the school.\*

**SCHOLARSHIPS.**—At the annual competitive examination held in the month of December, sixteen boys and seven girls competed for the senior and twenty-three boys and ten girls for the

\* The Art Master's report is printed in E.—1c.