

2. 4 millimetres 6 decimetres at £13 10s. a kilometre.
3. Sold $113\frac{1}{2}$ acres at £45 14s. an acre, invested in shares paying $6\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. and selling at 105. Find income.
4. By short method, to 3 places of decimals only, 0.037125×1800.75 .
5. The diameter of a circle is 8 chains, find its area in acres. How much more water runs through a pipe $\frac{1}{2}$ inch in diameter than goes through a $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch pipe under the same pressure and in the same time?

HAWKE'S BAY.

SIR,—

Education Office, Napier, 11th March, 1896.

I have the honour to submit a general report on the condition of education in the public schools of Hawke's Bay for the year ending 31st December, 1895.

The number of schools in operation at the close of the year was fifty-eight. This is the same number as at the date of my report last year. In January a new school was opened at Papakurau, and for the greater part of the school year fifty-nine schools were in operation, but in November the small subsidised school at Waerenga-o-kuri was closed, and I doubt whether any attempt will be made to reopen it for some time to come. Although no increase has taken place in the number of schools, the children returned as belonging to the schools at the date of my annual examination shows an increase of 351 compared with the corresponding period of last year. Most of the available accommodation in the larger schools is now taken up, and, should the same rate of increase continue during the present year, further school places will be wanted in the larger centres of population.

With few exceptions the school buildings throughout the district are in good repair, and some of them are models of neatness and good arrangement. Among the better class of school buildings may be mentioned Patutahi, Gisborne, Port Ahuriri, Napier (side), Hastings, Waipawa, Waipukurau, Norsewood, Danevirke, and Woodville. All these are in excellent order and repair, and several of them are ideally perfect in their external arrangements. I wish the same remark could be made of all the schools in the district. In many the school grounds are not kept as neatly as they might be. The growth of grass on the school walks and about the buildings often gives an untidy appearance to the surroundings, and too often supplies evidence, if not of indifference, certainly of defective supervision on the part of teachers.

The number returned on the examination schedules as belonging to the schools is 7,086. This gives an attendance for each school over the whole district of 122.2, supposing the children to be equally distributed. In the arrangement of the schools according to size, six of them contain an attendance of over 300 pupils; twelve have an attendance of more than 100 and less than 300; fifteen have each an attendance of between 50 and 100 pupils; whilst the remaining twenty-five vary in attendance from 12 to 50. The number of teachers engaged in the schools is 176—viz., 59 males and 117 females. Most of the principal and assistant teachers possess certificates of competency from the Government. The new regulation which requires pupil-teachers to obtain the Class E certificate at the close of their four years' service is likely to have a very beneficial effect upon the work of the younger teachers, and the time will soon arrive when none but teachers holding certificates of competency will be employed in the schools. At present a few remain who have no certificate, but it arises either from the fact that they are in charge of schools for which certificated teachers cannot be obtained, or because old and experienced teachers are in charge but who are unable to pass the ordeal of a certificate examination such as is required by the Central Department. To the small remnant of faithful workers that now remain I should be glad to see certificates of competency issued by the Government, especially as they have proved by practical skill, extending over a long period of service, that they are well qualified to discharge their duties as teachers in the smaller country schools.

The regularity in the attendance at school shows an improvement of exactly 3 per cent. for the year. In 1894 the average regularity of pupils at school was represented by 80.3 per cent. of the roll-number, and last year it reached 83.3 per cent. Considering that four of the large schools in the Poverty Bay district were compulsorily closed owing to the appearance of diphtheritic sore-throat among the children, the improvement in the regularity at school may be deemed satisfactory. The results, however, would have been much better had there existed no sickness in schools like Gisborne, Waerenga-a-hika, and Matawhero, where the school attendance has always been very good. During the year the regularity at Gisborne fell 7.4 per cent.; at Napier it improved 4.2 per cent., Woodville 4.4 per cent., whilst Wairoa and Taradale improved their regularity 6.5 and 2.2 per cent. respectively.

I believe that truant officers have been appointed by the Board in each of the districts named, but I am uncertain whether the improvement in four of the districts is the result of such appointments having been made. As already explained, the gross increase in the attendance for the year is 351, or one less than for the previous year, and it no more than represents what may be expected in the ordinary annual increase of the district. After another year's experience of the work of truant officers it may be possible to estimate in some measure the effect of such appointments upon the school attendance, and I shall rejoice should it be found that their efforts result in improving the attendance at schools like Taradale, Wairoa, Woodville, and Danevirke. There is plenty of room for improvement in each of these places, but especially at Taradale and Wairoa, where the attendance is represented for the year by 70.7 per cent. at the former and 77 at the latter, although the compulsory clause is supposed to be operative in each district. Attendances such as these can never make a school successful, and it is useless to expect anything more than mediocrity and disappointment in schools which are carried on under such conditions.