

The scale of salaries under the Act differs from the Board's scale in several particulars. Under the Board's scale a certificated teacher in a certain position was entitled to an increase of salary if he raised his certificate by passing higher examinations, but under the colonial scale the salary is allotted to the position irrespective of the grade of the certificate.

Thus, under the colonial scale, the chance of promotion is the only incentive to a teacher to raise his status, while the Board added the incentive of an immediate increase of salary to the position he occupied.

The head teachers of all schools (about sixty-seven) in grades 3 to 11 inclusive were paid more liberally by the Board than under the colonial scale. Under the colonial scale, however, the salaries of the assistants of the higher-graded schools are increased, and a few head teachers of schools in the highest grades also receive increased salaries. In 1904 all schools come under the Act, but till then teachers who were receiving a higher salary under the Board's scale are allowed to retain that salary if they remain in the same position.

On account of these differences between the two scales, to adjust the salaries and positions at once meant serious injustice to many teachers; but to adjust salaries only as vacancies occurred meant an impossibility under normal conditions, besides preventing all teachers entitled to an increase of salary from receiving that increase immediately. The Board decided to bring the assistants and pupil-teachers under the colonial scale if such a course could be arranged without dismissing any competent teacher. This was not an easy task; but, as many of our ex-pupil-teachers were certificated teachers of some experience, all such were offered positions at increased salaries, and, with the exception of a few third assistants in the city schools receiving a salary of £150, all assistants were placed under the colonial scale.

It was then found that thirteen pupil-teachers were still unprovided for, but the Department generously allowed the Board to allot them to the largest schools as excess teachers, on the understanding that they were to be offered vacancies on the regular staff as these occurred, and thus the adjustment was made without injustice to any assistant or pupil-teacher.

As the head teachers of the sixty-seven schools mentioned above will suffer a decrease of salary in 1904, the Board decided to take their cases into consideration when new appointments were made. Many of these cases have been adjusted, but unless an abnormal number of vacancies occurs during the coming year it will be almost impossible to give every teacher a salary under the colonial scale equal to that which he received under the Board's scale.

The additional accommodation provided at Kilbirnie and Karori has served the immediate wants of those districts. The alterations at Newtown have greatly improved the condition of that school, and as accommodation is now provided for more than the number of children in excess at Rintoul Street, to many of whom Newtown is quite convenient, additions to Rintoul Street are not required as long as there is accommodation at the older school. New schools have been built at Mangatiti, Rongokokako, and Horoeke, and the Kaituna School has been enlarged. The new school on the Terrace is now occupied and in working order. The immediate requirements of Petone, Worser Bay, and Brooklyn are being met by additions, which are in course of erection. A central school at Levin—to replace the Horowhenua and Levin Schools—and a new school at the Hutt will soon be completed. New schools will be built at Epuni, Muritai, and Akatarawa, and the Board is about to consider reports on the remodelling of the Carterton and Shannon Schools.

The attendance at Nireaha and Kereru has increased; but, as petitions for schools from neighbouring districts have to be reported on, these reports should be considered first, for the building of schools in such districts may cause the withdrawal of a number of children from the schools already in operation, and thus render additional rooms for the latter unnecessary. There are now before the Board several petitions for country schools, each of which requires very careful consideration, for, while it is desirable to extend the benefits of education as widely as possible, the unnecessary increase of small schools means an extra charge on the funds of the Board, and tends rather to inefficiency, as, under ordinary circumstances, in a school with two or more teachers the work is done under better conditions than in a school with a sole teacher, while the cost per child for maintenance and equipment is less. Unmetalled roads and unbridged rivers often prevent children from attending an established school no great distance away, and to build a permanent school for their wants often means that when the roads are metalled and the rivers bridged several small schools are in operation where one larger and probably more efficient school would give better education at less expense to the State. The needs of such cases should be met by temporary accommodation at first, as in aided schools, and the question of a permanent school should await the development of the district.

In all new schools and in all additions to schools made during the year the architect has observed such measurements as are, in the opinion of the Health and Education Departments, requisite to secure a proper supply of pure air for each child in an ordinary class-room. These are: "For each child in average attendance a minimum floor-space (exclusive of that occupied by such furniture as cupboards) of 12 square feet and an allowance of cubical space not less than 200 cubic feet, the height of each class-room from floor to wall-plate being at least 14 ft." These two Departments should also publish rules for the planning and fitting-up of schools, as is done in England and elsewhere.

In the annual report of the Health Department, Dr. Valintine, Health Officer for Wellington, writing on the sanitation of schools, says, "It is not unusual to find the privies inadequate in number, ill-ventilated, and situated over foul excreta pits. In all cases where these latter abominations have been found, on recommendation to the local Committee they have been promptly abolished. In some instances the water-supply has proved questionable on analysis. In any case it would be as well to supply a Pasteur-Chamberlain filter to each school, and also to do away with the iron drinking-cup that is generally attached to the well or tank. These cups