

The Board's teachers as a body show a high sense [of duty, and are earnest and industrious in their professional work, while many display a zeal and enthusiasm that deserve the highest praise. The younger teachers, as a rule, show a readiness to learn that augurs well for the future.

For some months Mr. Mulgan, at my request, undertook the instruction of the class in practical science at the Technical School, which the Director owing to his long and serious illness was unable to continue. For his readiness in undertaking this task, at considerable personal inconvenience, while at the same time devoting more than four days a week to his ordinary duties as an Inspector, he deserves the hearty thanks of the Board.

I have, &c.,

The Secretary, Auckland Education Board.

D. PETRIE, M.A., Chief Inspector.

### TARANAKI.

SIR,—

New Plymouth, 7th April, 1904.

We have the honour to lay before you our annual report for the year ending the 31st December, 1903.

During the year seventy-three schools were open, and, with the exception of the newly-opened school at Waitui, all were examined. In accordance with the arrangement made with the Auckland Board, the Mokau School was examined and inspected, and copies of the reports were forwarded to the Auckland Board.

The following table contains a summary of the examination results:—

Classes.				Number on Roll.	Present at Inspector's Annual Visit.	Passed.	Average Age of Pupils in each Class.	
							Yrs.	mos.
Standard VII.	...	...	...	72	67	...	14	5
" VI.	...	...	...	221	214	154	13	10
" V.	...	...	...	376	367	261	13	4
" IV.	...	...	...	588	571	398	12	7
" III.	...	...	...	610	587	477	11	7
" II.	...	...	...	660	644	543	10	3
" I.	...	...	...	617	588	504	9	2
Preparatory	...	...	...	1,654	1,412	...	7	2
Totals	...	...	...	4,798	4,450	2,337	11	6*

\* Mean of average age.

As compared with the return for 1902, the following increases are shown: Roll, 112; present at the Inspector's annual visit, 79; passed, 191. The number of pupils absent from examination was 348—106 in the standards, and 242 in the preparatory classes. The number of absentees was thirty-one more than in the previous year, and seems large, especially in the preparatory classes; but it must be remembered that, if the examination-day happens to be very wet, little children that have any distance to travel will of course not attend. Sickness is the cause generally assigned for the absence of a pupil in a standard class. The number of pupils in Standard VII. shows an increase of five. Of the sixty-seven pupils in Standard VII., forty-two were receiving free tuition in secondary subjects at the Stratford District High School, and, in addition to these, forty ex-Standard VI. pupils were enjoying a similar privilege at the New Plymouth High School. In last year's report it was anticipated that seventy or eighty ex-Standard-VI. pupils would be receiving free tuition in the district at the end of the year, and we are pleased to see that the estimate was near the mark. On the 31st March of the current year sixty-one pupils were receiving free tuition at the Stratford District High School.

Near the close of the year the Board consented to the examination of the Roman Catholic schools by the Inspectors. During the current year, therefore, we shall make two visits to each of the schools in New Plymouth, Stratford, and Opunake. With two exceptions all schools were inspected, a result unattained during the last few years.

All schools are now working under the conditions imposed by the Public-school Teachers' Salaries Act. At the close of the year all standards were admitted to the West End School, and the salaries of some of the assistants in the larger schools were altered. It is a matter for regret that the salaries of responsible assistants in the larger schools have not been increased, though the inadequacy has been so frequently pointed out.

In not fewer than thirty-eight schools were there changes in the staff. Large and small schools were affected, and, in consequence, continuous and steady work was materially interfered with. Of what may be termed Taranaki teachers, in that they had been in the district for any length of time, none left for other districts. Eight of our female teachers resigned, the majority having transferred their affections and sympathies from infants to adults. Ten teachers from other districts received employment, principally as assistants or as teachers of small schools. Many vacancies occurring during the year were filled by transferring teachers to better positions.