

TARANAKI.

SIR,—

Education Office, New Plymouth, 20th April, 1909.

In accordance with the provisions of section 174 of "The Education Act, 1908," the Education Board of the District of Taranaki has the honour to submit the following report of its proceedings for the year 1908:—

At the beginning of the year the Board was comprised of the following members: Mr. James Wade (Chairman), Messrs. G. A. Adlam, Henry Faull, W. L. Kennedy, J. Morison, Arthur Morton, William Monkhouse, Harold Trimble, and Gustave Tisch. Mr. Monkhouse having resigned his seat in January, an extraordinary election was held on the 9th March, 1909, resulting in the election of Mr. William Rogers. In the terms of "The Education Act, 1908," the following members retired, and offered themselves for re-election at the election held on the fourth Monday in July, and were re-elected unopposed: North Ward, Henry Faull; East Ward, W. Rogers; West Ward, James Wade. At the meeting held on the 25th August Mr. James Wade was re-elected Chairman, Messrs. Adlam, Morison, and Trimble, members of the Teachers' Selection Committee; Messrs. Kennedy, Morton, and Tisch members of the Finance Committee; Messrs. Faull and Morison members of the Reserves Committee; Messrs. Tisch and Wade members of the Technical Committee. The Chairman to be *ex officio* member of each committee. The Board held twenty-four meetings, the Finance Committee twelve, and the Teachers' Selection Committee six. The Reserves Committee visited a number of the school-sites, and furnished reports for most meetings.

New schools have been opened at Musker's, Okeke, Piko, Okau, and York, and the Pohokura School was reopened. At the end of the year there were eighty-eight schools opened, including six half-time schools; and the number of teachers employed was 152, who were graded as follows: Sole teachers, 42 female and 14 male; head teachers, 6 female and 23 male; assistants, 39 female and 9 male; pupil-teachers, 16 female and 3 male.

At the annual pupil-teachers' examination eight pupil-teachers entered for the first examination: six passed, and two failed.

Of the senior candidates for the Board's scholarships twenty qualified, and the junior, twenty-eight. Senior Scholarships were awarded to four candidates from the New Plymouth High School, and two from the Stratford District High School; and Junior Scholarships to—Frankley, 1; Waitara, 1; Toko, 1; Omata, 1; and Opunake, 1. The two National Scholarships allotted for the district were won by Alice Cocker, from West End, and Philip H. Goss, from Douglas.

There have been twenty appointments made during the year, besides those of a temporary nature, and appointments of pupil-teachers. Eight teachers from other districts received appointments, and nine teachers in the service of the Board received promotion.

New schools have been erected at Okeke, Purangi, and Pukeho, and the Omata, Rahotu, Stanley, and Lincoln have been enlarged. The old residences at Tariki and Tikorangi have been replaced by new ones; the Hillsborough residence has been enlarged, and new residences erected at Makahu and Uruti.

The receipts of the Board from all sources amounted to £31,690 16s. 1d., while the expenditure was as follows: Administration, £4,343 9s. 8d.; teachers' salaries and allowances, £18,794 12s. 1d.; secondary education, £939 10s. 6d.; manual and technical, £1,597 17s. 6d.; buildings, £4,303 16s. 8d.; sundries, £76 4s. 10d.: leaving a balance of £1,579 7s. 2d., after deducting £125 17s. 8d. debit balance for 1907. No account is taken here of contractors' deposits.

In the majority of our schools physical exercises are taken daily, with a more extended period for instruction once a week. In the larger schools, cadet corps have been established, and these are formed into two battalions—No. 1 comprising the schools in the northern part of the district, and No. 2 those in the southern.

It is very gratifying to be able to state that, so far as this district is concerned, the maintenance grant has proved ample to meet all requirements, as, in the opinion of the Board, the Auditor-General will approve.

Teachers' residences and rent allowances: I must again state that this Board considers these regulations very unsatisfactory. It certainly does not seem fair or reasonable that a teacher should be deprived of rent-allowance because there happens to be a mere hovel or even a whare provided in the past, while a teacher in charge of perhaps a same grade school, but in a more favoured locality, enjoys a comfortable residence, or in lieu thereof full rent allowance.

Elementary hand work was taken at forty-six schools, and sewing under the Manual Regulations at seven. In addition to the above, manual work, as defined by clauses 22 to 27 of the Regulations of Manual and Technical Instruction, was recognised in eighty-four cases; the subjects embracing woodwork, cookery, botany, dairying, advanced needlework, elementary agriculture, swimming and life-saving, physical measurements, chemistry, and elementary physiology. Considerable progress has been made in technical education, especially agriculture.

Owing to lack of sufficient accommodation and a strong-room in which the records could safely be kept, the Board considered the time had come when new offices were absolutely necessary. Substantial offices with every convenience have therefore been erected on the Board's own property at St. Michael's Square.

CONCLUSION.—The relations of the Board with the Education Department, its official and teaching staff, and with the School Committees, have been most cordial and pleasant throughout the year.

I have, &c.,

The Hon. the Minister of Education.

JAMES WADE, Chairman.