

Stratford secondary department during the period 1910-17 has risen from 95 to 143, and at Hawera from 34 to 47. As a further indication of the interest taken in education in this district, during the year the Hawera Borough Council offered the Board 5 acres of land, part of the Recreation Reserve No. 36, to be used as a site for the proposed technical high school, the site being one of the best in the borough; and the Stratford Borough Council, through the Board, donated 6 acres of land, part of Block 69, Stratford, to be vested in the Crown for education purposes, thus showing the keen interest taken by the citizens of those towns in secondary education.

*Pupil-teachers and Probationers.*—My Board desires to bring before your notice the urgent necessity of revising the scale of remuneration and allowances paid to pupil-teachers and probationers, in order that capable youths may be attracted to the teaching profession. There is every indication of scarcity of male teachers throughout the Dominion and of the position becoming more acute in the near future. As an illustration of the difficulty in the Taranaki District, it may be pointed out that in the year 1916, out of forty-one applicants for positions as pupil-teachers and probationers, only six were males; in 1917, out of forty-four applicants, four males; in 1918, out of forty-eight, two males, one subsequently resigning his position immediately on appointment. Better salaries are being offered by other Government Departments and commercial houses. If youths are to be induced to take up the teaching profession, consideration must be given to increasing the salaries now offered. Desirable and qualified candidates are undoubtedly being lost to the teaching profession on account of the meagre salary offered.

*Payment to Relieving Teachers.*—The Board, much against its wish, was compelled to reduce the allowance for sick-leave last year, on account of the capitation not being sufficient to meet the expenses attached to the reasonable time off for those unfortunate enough to be absent on account of illness. This has been unduly hard on teachers, who have given long and faithful services, and in many cases have not previously had cause to make a call on the Board. The allowance made is not in keeping with that made by private employers, and in many cases teachers have to return to their schools before they are sufficiently recovered to undertake their work. While the suggested increase in capitation will be appreciated and will enable the Board to make a more liberal scale for sick-leave, it will barely cover the cost incurred if the suggestions of the Department are complied with. Further, the debit standing on the Board's books against this account will still be a charge on the funds unless the Department undertakes to meet the liability, which was undoubtedly created through the grant not having been increased at the same time as the salaries were raised.

*Teachers' Classes.*—Saturday classes were held during the year at New Plymouth and at Stratford (alternate Saturdays) for the instruction of teachers and pupil-teachers in the following subjects: Drawing, hygiene and home science, handwork and agriculture. During the Easter holidays a successful course of instruction in agriculture, dairy-work, and nature-study was held at New Plymouth.

The following is an abstract showing the number of schools, teachers, and pupils attending schools in the district, beginning with the year 1877, to the present time:—

Year.	Schools.	Head and Sole Teachers.	Assistants.	Pupil-teachers and Probationers.	Total.	December Quarter's Return.	
						Roll Number.	Average.
1877 .. ..	23	23	7	2	32	726	496
1887 .. ..	35	35	9	26	70	2,395	1,597
1897 .. ..	60	60	18	29	107	3,845	3,018
1907 .. ..	81	78	45	23	146	5,096	4,246
1916 .. ..	149	147	130	48	325	9,649	8,458
1917 .. ..	153	153	125	46	324	10,019	9,007

I have, &c.,  
The Hon. the Minister of Education, Wellington.

ROBERT MASTERS, Chairman.

WANGANUI.

SIR,— Education Office, Wanganui, 31st March, 1918.  
In accordance with the provisions of the Education Act, I submit herewith a report on the progress of education in this district during the year 1917.  
*Board.*—There has been no change in the personnel of the Board since the election in July, 1916.

*Schools and Attendance.*—New schools were opened at Glenwarlock, Te Awa, Mangatiti Landing (Grade 0), Kawautahi Road, Ore Ore, Mount Richards Road, Pokako, and Upper Retaruke (Grade I). The schools at Rakautangi, Te Rimu, Makirikiri Valley, Naumanui, and Komako were closed. Ruatiti and Whareroa Schools were closed temporarily. The half-time schools at Coal Creek and Ridge Road were closed and a full-time school opened. At the close of the year