

APPENDIX B.

ABRIDGED REPORTS AND STATEMENTS OF ACCOUNTS OF
EDUCATION BOARDS.

1. REPORTS.

AUCKLAND.

SIR,—

Auckland, 31st March, 1921.

In accordance with the requirements of the Education Act, the Education Board of the District of Auckland has the honour to submit the following report for the year 1920 :—

Board.—During the year the Devonport Urban Area was extinguished by incorporation with the Auckland Urban Area. The members in office at the end of last year were as follows: Auckland Urban Area—Mrs. R. L. Baume, Dr. J. S. Reekie, Mr. H. S. W. King, and Mr. G. W. Murray; North Ward—Mr. J. D. McKenzie and Mr. R. C. Smith; East Ward—Mr. E. C. Banks and Mr. A. Burns; West Ward—Mr. J. Boddie and Mr. J. S. Bond. Twenty-three meetings of the Board were held during the year, with an average attendance of seven.

Schools.—The number of schools in operation at the end of last year was 683, including 116 part-time schools. During the year the following schools were opened: Awanga, Whangaparapara, Paremoremo, Te Miro, Vauxhall, Waitahanui, Waiteti, Richmond Downs, Avondale South, Karaka North, Otakiri, Ongaroto, Mangapai South, Okarari, Rotongaro, Molesworth, Lyndale, Orewa, Ohuka, Mangahoto, and Poroti. The following schools were closed: Amodeo Bay No. 1, Awaroa, Bream Tail, Kaimai No. 2, Matakohē No. 2, Oturoa, Parenga, Piha, Rangitoto No. 2, Upper Oruaiti, Wai-koukou, and Whatipu.

Attendance.—The number of scholars enrolled at the end of last year was 57,236—viz., boys, 29,882; girls, 27,354—being an increase of 783. The yearly average attendance was 49,659, being an increase of 1,375.

Teachers.—During the course of the year it was found possible to make adjustments rendered necessary by the return of many teachers who had been absent with the Expeditionary Forces, so that the service is now fairly stabilized. The intimation by the Department that from July, 1921, the Dominion grading-list will become operative as the basis for promotion rendered it incumbent upon the Board to relax to some extent its local regulations in respect of tenure of positions by teachers before becoming eligible for promotion. This has resulted in most teachers having had an opportunity of becoming permanently placed before the new system comes into being. The Board is pleased to state that the shortness of reasonably qualified teachers is not now so acute as in former years. During the year the Board notified uncertificated teachers in its employment that they must either improve their academic status or be prepared to face relinquishment of their positions. The Act is quite clear upon the point. The Board may not hold in office an uncertificated teacher if a certificated teacher is available. Uncertificated teachers have begun to realize this, and the Board is pleased to note that an increasingly large number of them are making an earnest effort to improve their own education, and so enter the ranks of certificated teachers. This improvement has been largely due to the introduction of the principle of granting a grading increment in salary to certificated teachers. It is hoped that the enlargement of the Training College and its staff will in a few years' time have the effect of placing at the disposal of the Board a sufficient number of trained certificated teachers to enable assistant teachers to be substituted for pupil-teachers, thus more adequately staffing our schools in general.

Buildings.—During the year eleven new schools were built and twelve schools enlarged. During recent years the question of accommodation for teachers in rural districts has become increasingly acute, and constitutes one of the most difficult problems the Board has to deal with. In some districts it has been found at times impossible to secure accommodation for a teacher, and so a school has had to remain closed. Even under most favourable conditions it will be impossible to provide by any system of buildings residences in all rural areas, and if a school is to be carried on efficiently the residents must take such steps as will result in the provision of suitable accommodation for teachers. The growth in population of the Auckland Education District has been considerable, and has given rise to a building programme of great magnitude. The increasing of floor-space authorized by the Department, from 10 square feet to 12 square feet *per capita*, has operated in the same direction. The high prices of building-materials, the shortage of labour and of timber, have been serious difficulties with which the Board has had to contend. However, the Board has the satisfaction of knowing that the overcrowding problem is gradually being solved, and can now look forward with some confidence to having in a few years adequate accommodation for all children in its district. In urban areas the Board, in accordance with a scheme formulated by its Advisory Inspector, is making provision for future requirements, so that in the future it is unlikely that congested conditions such as have militated against education during past years will exist.

Finance.—The income for the year ended 31st December, 1920, totalled £690,342 2s. 10d., and the expenditure £698,162 14s. 1d. These figures serve to some extent to indicate the increase in the Board's activities.