

voted for the maintenance of scholarships would be to place at the disposal of the different Education Boards grants of money in proportion to the average daily school attendance within their respective districts, such grants to be subject to certain prescribed regulations.

PUBLIC AND SCHOOL LIBRARIES.

The provisions of "The Public Libraries Subsidies Act, 1877," will tend to bring the public libraries throughout the colony into somewhat close connection with the Education Boards. The sum of £5,000 voted by Parliament last session for public libraries was intrusted to the Education Boards for distribution, under the conditions prescribed by the Act above referred to. Full particulars of the distribution will be given in the next annual report of the department. The Boards were requested to include in their reports information respecting the public libraries within their several districts, but, although such libraries seem to have been established in all the provincial districts, they have not been connected in any way with the Education Boards, except in the case of Otago. The information received respecting these institutions is therefore somewhat meagre.

Seven public libraries in the Provincial District of Taranaki are reported as entitled to a share of the Government grant. Four of these are kept in school buildings and are under the care of the teachers, but they have no other connection with the School Committee or the Board. A list of 22 public libraries in the Provincial District of Nelson shows that the amount of subscriptions received during 1877 was £363 17s. 1d. In Westland Provincial District there are nine public libraries, with 670 subscribers, and subscriptions amounting in 1877 to £546 5s. 1d.

For some years the Provincial Government of Canterbury contributed very liberally towards the establishment and maintenance of public libraries in that district, but the Education Board had no connection with those libraries, and can therefore furnish no information respecting them which could be regarded as having any value for the purposes of this report. In Otago a public library scheme has been in successful operation for a number of years under the management of the Education Board. With a view to assist the libraries in supplying their wants fully and economically, the Board has been accustomed to obtain from time to time large supplies of suitable and strongly-bound books from Britain. Committees were at liberty to purchase books from the Board's stock or otherwise, and for every pound or other sum expended by them in this manner a free grant of books of the same value was made to their library by the Board, the choice of the books from amongst the Board's stock being left to the Committees themselves. Opportunity was also afforded them from time to time to procure from the Home country, through the Board, such particular books as they might desire to have. At the end of 1877 there were 113 libraries in connection with the Board, classified as follows:—23 public circulating libraries, having reading rooms connected with them; 80 district circulating libraries, a number of which are available as school libraries; and 10 purely school libraries. Books to the value of £996 18s. 1d. were distributed by the Board among the public libraries last year. The total value of the books issued to libraries by the Otago Board from the commencement of the scheme to the end of the year 1877 was £10,236 1s. 2d.

INSTRUCTION IN DRAWING.

Special provision for the teaching of drawing in the public schools does not seem to have been made in any of the education districts, excepting that of Otago. For the last seven years the Otago Education Board has employed the services of a very highly-qualified drawing-master to give instruction in his art to the pupils of the public schools in Dunedin and suburbs. In addition to their services in the public schools, the drawing-master and two assistants conduct the School of Art established in Dunedin. In this institution there were carried on with highly satisfactory results during the past year classes for teachers and pupil-teachers, afternoon classes for women, and evening classes for artisans and others. The