

Whatawhata School, the cost of maintenance exceeded the income for the year by nearly £50. The income of Boards being thus derived from a capitation grant based on the average attendance, it follows that a district having a large number of small schools and a small aggregate attendance is placed at a great disadvantage compared with a district reversely situated. For example, in the year 1882 Auckland had 189 schools, Otago 159, but the aggregate average attendance in the Otago District was very nearly four thousand more than that in Auckland. *In other words Auckland had to maintain thirty more schools than Otago out of an income less by £15,000 than that of Otago.* It appears to the Board that some remedy should be applied to remove this inequality, and that for every small school which the Board can show to be a necessary one there should be a *minimum* grant sufficient to pay the cost of maintenance. Every school adds to the general expense of administration and inspection, no matter whether it has twenty scholars or a hundred.

The expenditure on school buildings during the year amounted to £17,988 6s. 6d. At the end of 1882 the Board had incurred liabilities to the extent of £5,000, in anticipation of the grant of £15,000 odd subsequently allotted. This grant, paid over in March, 1883, was expended in the erection of buildings long ago promised and urgently required. In consequence of the delay in the allocation of the grant for the financial year ending March, 1884, an overdraft, not exceeding £6,000, was obtained from the bank to enable the Board to proceed with the erection of other necessary buildings during the summer months. At the 31st December, 1883, the overdraft was £3,535 6s. 2d., and the Board had incurred further liabilities under contract to the amount of nearly £9,000, in anticipation of the grant for the current financial year ending in March, 1884. On the 17th January following, the Board received notice that the grant would be only £9,682, being nearly £6,000 less than the previous year's grant. It thereupon became necessary to delay all new buildings for which contracts had not been let, and to place before the Government a statement of the Board's financial position in regard to buildings, and of the many urgent requirements still unfulfilled. A new overdraft will also be necessary to enable the Board to carry on until the next annual grant is received.

BUILDINGS.—Twenty-four schools and twelve teachers' dwellings were erected or contracted for during the year. Eight schools and four dwellings were enlarged and improved. Grants were also voted for a large number of minor improvements to buildings. The buildings are constructed of the best timber, but are otherwise plainly and cheaply designed. School doors are made to open outwards, so as to facilitate egress in case of panic. In building dwellings it is sometimes found necessary to provide an additional room for the accommodation of an assistant teacher. The dwellings are mostly five-roomed, some six-roomed. Caretakers' houses are a luxury unknown to Auckland.

There is the greatest difficulty in providing residences for teachers. The Board cannot cease to urge this matter upon the Government. Every school should have its teacher's dwelling attached. At present only half the number of schools are provided with dwellings, and, as the Board cannot afford to pay rent allowances, many teachers suffer a pecuniary disadvantage. The school also suffers. Changes of teachers are the more frequent in country districts, because of the want of such inducement to remain, and it is hardly possible to employ married teachers where there is no dwelling.

From the last yearly published report, it appears that Auckland was most unfavourably placed in regard to dwellings, having ninety schools as yet unprovided, while Otago and North Canterbury had dwellings for all their schools except (in each case) twelve. Again, as regards the schools for which there were no proper buildings, Auckland had thirty-six, Otago ten, North Canterbury three. A special grant alone will remove this inequality. The Board regrets that, in spite of the protests renewed from year to year, and corroborated by official statistics, the Government still continue to treat all the districts alike in distributing the Building Fund upon the basis of population, and giving large grants to districts already liberally supplied with buildings. Owing to the reduction in the vote for last year, the Board has had to postpone all new buildings. The most pressing and immediate requirements comprise twenty-one schools and twenty-eight teachers' dwellings, and the cost of these buildings is estimated at £21,041. There is, therefore, an absolute need of more liberal provision for buildings during the coming year.

PLAYGROUNDS.—Grants were received during the year for the purchase of playgrounds at Mount Eden, Newton West, and Otahuhu, and for the improvement of playgrounds at the Wellesley Street and Beresford Street Schools, in the City of Auckland, amounting in all to £2,310. The grant (£500) appropriated to Wellesley Street has not been expended, as the City Council is not yet ready to begin the work of filling in the ground set apart for the purpose. The purchase of playground at the Ponsonby School, for which a sum of £1,000 was granted two years ago, has not yet been completed.

TRAINING COLLEGE.—The operations of the Training College are fully described in the report of the Principal. The number of students increased from twenty to thirty. An allowance for maintenance was made to each student. Some of the male students were sent for a time as substitutes to country schools. The work of training is not limited to the students of the College. Classes are regularly held for the instruction of uncertificated head-teachers, assistants, probationers, and pupil-teachers. These classes are conducted by the Principal, and by the visiting teachers of singing, drawing, and gymnastics. The attendance at these classes is compulsory, under penalty of a fine, but exemption is granted in case of ill-health, or upon production of a certificate that the teacher is fully qualified to teach the subjects, or (in the case of singing) is physically unable to learn. Besides the training classes, the Principal instructs the uncertificated country teachers by means of correspondence. At the Thames separate classes are conducted under the same rules by the headmaster of the largest school.