

WESTLAND.

MEMORANDUM by the SECRETARY for EDUCATION.

As explained in last year's report, there was no legally-constituted authority at the beginning of 1884 to take charge of the public schools in the District of Westland, and it therefore became necessary, in the interest of the district, that the Government should undertake the maintenance of the public schools until the General Assembly should make legal provision for the administration of educational affairs within the district. The services of the Board's Secretary and Inspector of Schools were retained, and officers of the Government at Hokitika and Greymouth respectively were appointed to aid the Education Department in distributing the necessary payments on account of the public schools. Owing to the late period of the year at which the Westland Education District Subdivision Act was passed, the care of the schools devolved upon the department during the whole of 1884.

An investigation of the former Board's accounts showed that the scale of its ordinary current expenditure at the close of 1883 exceeded the rate of its legitimate income by a very considerable amount. As the Government had no other funds at its disposal than the amount voted by the General Assembly for the maintenance of the Westland schools, it became absolutely necessary to equalize the income and expenditure. After very full consideration it was resolved that no reduction should be made in the ordinary salaries of the teachers and pupil-teachers, and that the indispensably necessary reductions should be effected by paying only one-half of the moneys that the Board had undertaken to pay on account of the School Committees' grants, and teachers' and pupil-teachers' bonuses. A circular letter explaining the determination of the Government was sent to the several School Committees early in the year.

By a rigid adherence to this resolution the Education Department, during its term of administration, has succeeded in limiting the expenditure on public-school purposes to the ordinary legitimate income, as shown by the General Statements of accounts for thirteen months appended hereto. No expenditure on school buildings was incurred; the usual grant for buildings that, in other circumstances, would have been available for the Westland District for last year, has been disposed of in meeting the liabilities of the former Board for the year 1883.

It is due to Messrs. M. F. South, of Hokitika, and H. Calders, of Greymouth, to place upon record the department's appreciation of the value of the services zealously and gratuitously rendered by them during the whole of the year 1884 in connection with the monthly distribution of the moneys payable to teachers and others. In other ways those gentlemen greatly aided the department in the administration of school affairs in their respective localities.

In accordance with the provisions of "The Westland Education District Subdivision Act, 1884," the original Education District of Westland has now been divided into the Education District of Westland and the Education District of Grey. The members of the Westland Education Board are Messrs. R. J. Seddon, M.H.R. (Chairman), Mr. M. W. Jack, J. McWhirter, and C. Ross, elected by the School Committees, and Messrs. G. Mueller, H. R. Rae, and J. Grimmond, nominated by His Excellency the Governor. The administration of school affairs in the Grey Education District is committed to three Commissioners appointed by His Excellency the Governor; they are Major Keddell, R.M. (Chairman), and Messrs. R. Nancarrow and T. Ronayne. It is due to the gentlemen who have undertaken the management of educational affairs in Westland and Grey to state that their administration is proving successful and generally satisfactory.

As the Act in virtue of which the existing arrangements have been made remains in force only until the termination of the next session of the General Assembly, it will be necessary to obtain further legislation in order to provide for the future administration of educational affairs in the Westland and the Grey Districts.

The Secretary for Education was appointed a Commissioner under the Subdivision Act to ascertain the debts, &c., of the late Education Board of Westland, and that officer spent some time in the district for the purpose of obtaining all necessary information relating to the pecuniary affairs of the Board. His report and awards were published in the *New Zealand Gazette* of date 29th January, 1885, pages 174-176. The following is a summary of the liabilities of the late Board, as set forth in the Commissioner's report:—

Westland Division.

	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
School buildings	1,080	13	1			
Current school purposes	186	14	10			
Proportion of joint liabilities	686	8	2			
Balances due to teachers	244	2	0			
				2,197	18	1

Grey Division.

	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
School buildings	1,367	15	6			
Current school purposes	112	16	1			
Proportion of joint liabilities	514	16	1			
Balances due to teachers	254	9	8			
				2,249	17	4

Total 4,447 15 5

From information subsequently received by the Commissioner he has admitted a few additional claims. The settlement of three other claims for small amounts awaits further investigation.

The liabilities in respect of school buildings have been defrayed out of the usual special grants from the school-buildings votes for 1883-84 and 1884-85. The other liabilities have been paid from the vote of £2,350 passed by the General Assembly last session. The expenditure under this vote has been as follows:—