

SCHOLARSHIPS.—This year the Board, with the view of widening the advantages of the scholarships, lowered their value to £10, with an additional £20 to pupils who, living beyond the reach of a high school, are compelled to reside away from their homes. The alteration, which has been approved by the Minister, has enabled the Board to grant, on the results of the November examination, nineteen scholarships, ten of them being tenable for two years, and nine for one year.

The Board is pleased to report that those pupils who have hitherto succeeded in obtaining scholarships are doing well in their several callings.

PUPIL-TEACHERS.—At the close of the year sixty-four pupil-teachers were engaged in the Board schools. The Inspector reports upon the generally satisfactory character of the work done by the pupil-teachers in their annual examination, and, as the training college scholarships which were formally placed at the Board's disposal have been withdrawn, it is hoped that funds will be available next year to grant special prizes to those among the pupil-teachers who distinguish themselves in the examination. The sum of £358 6s. 8d. was paid last year for the instruction of the pupil-teachers.

SEWING.—The sewing examination of all the schools continues to be carried out by a committee of ladies, who meet at Napier in November each year, and examine the specimens sent from the different schools. The examination took place on the 10th November and two following days. Thirty-three schools sent in specimens of work for examination. The specimens were classed according to standards as follows: Standard I., 318; Standard II., 288; Standard III., 259; Standard IV., 155; Standard V., 104; Standard VI., 30: total, 1,154. The Board desires to express its appreciation of the services rendered by the examiners, more especially those who have continued to examine since the inauguration of the scheme. The reports of the examiners will be found appended [not reprinted], and the Board ventures to hope that the valuable suggestions and recommendations they contain will receive due consideration from the Government.

The prizes which are annually offered for competition by Captain Russell, for the best seating and patching a well-worn pair of trousers, the best-made nightshirt, and the best darning of a pair of well-worn worsted stockings, are keenly competed for each year. The awards will be found among the results of the sewing examination.

EVENING CLASSES.—Special attention has been called by the Inspector to the desirability of establishing evening classes where pupils who leave school before completing their standard course should be compelled to attend until the Sixth Standard has been reached, and where those who have passed the standards could carry on the preparation of some technical subject. The results of such a scheme would no doubt be valuable, but the cost is beyond the means of the Board to carry out. The advanced classes in connection with the Napier Athenæum, as referred to in a former report, have been carried on with fair success, but the small fees are insufficient to recoup the teachers, and it is probable that they will shortly be discontinued.

A teachers' Saturday class has been formed in Napier for the preparation of teachers in the subjects required for a pass in Classes D and E of the Government regulations. About a dozen teachers have availed themselves of the opportunities offered, and it is expected that the scope of the class will be widened during the current year.

COMMITTEES.—The Board again desires to express its appreciation of the good work which is being done by the School Committees in their respective districts. The annual balance-sheets of the Committees show that a comparatively large sum of money was provided by them for school-building and improvements during the year, in addition to the moneys paid to teachers in districts where the schools are subsidised by the Board.

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE.—The whole income for the year received by the Board, including building grant, was £20,922 17s. 3d. Of this amount, £17,345 7s. 2d. was School Fund, provided for the ordinary work of carrying on the schools and for inspection, and £3,577 10s. 1d. was Building Fund. The School Fund was augmented by a balance in hand from the previous year of £1,222 3s. 7d., making a total of £18,567 10s. 9d. available. The expenditure shows that the cost of maintenance of the schools, including salaries of Board's officers, salaries of teachers, grants to School Committees for cleaning, firing, &c., bonuses to teachers, house allowances, instruction of pupil-teachers, and inspection, amounted to £16,834 7s. 5d., leaving available a balance of £1,733 3s. 4d., out of which the sum of £271 18s. 1d. was voted in aid of the Building Fund, leaving a balance in hand to credit of the School Fund of £1,461 1s. 3d. The Building Fund for the year was as follows:—Income: General Government grant, £3,207 12s.; special grants, £369 18s. 1d.: total, £3,577 10s. 1d. Expenditure: On buildings, sites, plans, &c., £4,272 6s. 9d., which, added to £1,704 7s. 7d., the debit balance of last year, leaves a debit balance at the close of the year of £2,399 4s. 3d.

From these statements it will appear that the ordinary expenditure was considerably within the ordinary income after providing for all necessary cost of maintenance.

The Board has endeavoured to estimate how far the ordinary income for next year, calculated on the changes determined on by the Legislature, will provide for the necessary expenditure, with the following result:—

INCOME.				£	s.	d.
(a.) Strict average attendance, December quarter, 4,251, at £3 15s. capitation	...	...	...	15,941	5	0
(b.) Scholarship grant, at 1s. 6d. per head	...	...	...	318	16	0
(c.) Inspection subsidy	...	...	...	300	0	0
Total income School Fund	...	...	...	£16,560	1	0