

The total number of pupils of these schools, which had declined in 1886, was still further reduced in 1887. The total in December, 1885, was 2,578; in December, 1886, it was 2,358; and last December, 2,242, with an average attendance of 2,093. The amount of the salaries of the teachers, exclusive of those of visiting teachers, was £32,634.

The income of the high schools, omitting Hokitika High School, which is not in operation, and from which accounts have not yet been received, was about £50,288, including £23,772 in the form of current income from endowments, £20,260 received as school fees, £3,362 as boarding-school fees, £69 as interest, and Government grants amounting to £2,825; but not including balances, refunds, sales, withdrawal of investments, and other matters of account. Intimation has been made to the high schools accustomed to receive grants from Parliament that aid in this form is no longer to be expected.

The proposals referred to in last year's report for the establishment of a general system of examination for the upper forms of the secondary schools have not found favour with the headmasters. A conference of masters was held in Nelson in February, 1888, at which resolutions were passed as follows:—

“That this conference is not at present prepared to suggest any practical scheme for the regular examination of secondary schools, and is of opinion that the entrance examination of the New Zealand University should be used as far as possible as a test examination of the highest forms.”

“That the Senate of the New Zealand University be respectfully requested to give every encouragement to high schools, by cheapening and localising the matriculation and junior scholarship examinations, so that they may be used to test the work of the ordinary fifth and sixth forms.”

MISCELLANEOUS.

The correspondence initiated in February, 1887, in the hope of engaging the interest of the colleges in a scheme for promoting the study of technical art and science has been temporarily suspended, on account of indications of probable expense to the Department.

No aid has been granted this year to the public libraries, which have for some time past been accustomed to receive an annual subsidy.

The fifth biennial examination for a Gilchrist Scholarship of £100 a year, tenable for three years, took place in February, 1887. There were two candidates. Mr. Charles George Spencer, to whom the scholarship was awarded, and who has gone to England to study as a condition of holding it, was bracketed equal for third place in the honours list of the London University matriculation examination, on which the award depended; and Mr. Charles Thomas Wilson Little was bracketed equal for fourteenth place in the same list.

The Gilchrist Trustees have announced that, “having taken into consideration the numerous replies which they have received from the colonies respecting their scholarships,” they have decided to withdraw the scholarships offered to Australia and New Zealand. No doubt one of the replies referred to was based upon a memorandum addressed by the Hon. Sir Robert Stout, as Premier, to His Excellency the Governor, in which evidence was adduced to show that in New Zealand the offer had in no way been slighted, an assurance was given that the interest taken in the scholarship was on the increase, and a suggestion was made that, if a change in the conditions attached to the scholarship was intended, keener competition might be induced by allowing the successful candidate to reside in the colony, and to carry on his studies in one of our University colleges, perhaps under the obligation to apply himself to original research.

The first Junior and Senior examinations under the regulations made in accordance with the requirements of “The Civil Service Reform Act, 1886,” were conducted by the Education Department in January of this year, simultaneously with the examination of candidates for teachers' certificates. At the Senior examination there were 37 candidates, of whom 15 passed, besides one