

the election of Mr. R. H. Pearpoint. At the usual meeting of the Board in the month of April Mr. S. W. Goldsmith was re-elected Chairman. Twelve regular meetings of the Board and one special meeting have been held during the year, on the first Thursday in the month (except January, when it was the third Thursday), the average attending being 7.10. The officers of the Board have been the same as at the end of last year.

NUMBER OF SCHOOLS.—On the 31st December, 1886, there were forty-eight schools in operation. One new school has since been opened (Totara Valley), making the number of schools in operation at the end of 1887 forty-nine in number. Four new districts have been proclaimed—namely, Arundel, Beaconsfield, Fairfield, and North Waitaki. At Beaconsfield the settlers have raised £50 to meet the Board's requirements, and this school will be proceeded with at an early date. In some of the new districts, however, the residents are too poor to contribute for the purpose of erecting school-buildings, seeing that it is as much as they can do to raise the sum required by the Board to supplement the teachers' salaries.

ATTENDANCE.—The forty-nine schools under the control of the Board, and in operation at the end of 1887, are classified in respect of attendance as follows: Under 25 pupils in average attendance, 11; between 25 and 50 pupils, 25; between 50 and 100 pupils, 6; between 100 and 300 pupils, 5; between 300 and 500 pupils, 1; between 500 and 1,000 pupils, 1: total, 49. The number of Maoris and half-caste scholars attending school in this district is: Pure Maoris, 7 boys and 5 girls; 1 half-caste girl living as a member of a native tribe; and 1 half-caste girl living among Europeans. The number of scholars shows a steady increase on the returns of former years, the roll number at the end of the year being 4,584, as against 4,369 at the end of 1886, an increase of 215. The average attendance for the same period was 3,632, as against 3,543 at the end of the preceding year, showing an increase here of 89, or, for the year, 3,598 against 3,415 in 1886. The ratio of average attendance to roll number is about 78 per cent. for the year. A very inclement, rainy season reduced the average attendance in the second and third quarters very considerably; for in the first and last quarters of the year the average attendance was exceedingly good. Whooping-cough and diphtheria have had an untoward influence in checking attendance. The following table shows the attendance in this district since the Board was established. [Not reprinted.]

The balance-sheet, duly certified by the Provincial Auditor, is appended. The Building Account shows an expenditure of £2,123 3s. 9d., against receipts £2,160 ls., leaving a balance of £36 17s. 3d., which sum, however, has been more than pledged, although the vouchers had not been presented for payment at the end of the year. The Maintenance Account shows a balance at the end of the year of £1,712 5s. 4d., from which the sum of £1,285 18s. 7d. must be deducted on account of money received from the School Commissioners, which will be balanced by that amount less in the monthly capitation grant paid by the Treasury for salaries in February, leaving the actual balance as £426 6s. 9d.

AIDED SCHOOLS.—There were twelve aided or subsidised schools at the end of the year, whose average attendance was less than twenty-five. Contributions are required from the residents of these twelve districts, which supplement the sum at the Board's disposal for the payment of the teachers' salaries.

The new regulations with a view to retrenchment in expenditure by the payment of capitation on the strict average cannot but have a very injurious effect on the small country schools. By the Board's regulations a school has never been allowed to be closed in wet or unseasonable weather, provided that any children make their appearance; but this regulation did not interfere with the teacher's salary. Now, under the present *régime*—which seems to offer a premium on dishonesty—the teachers of these small schools are more or less dependent on the elements. In fact, this, as well as taking away the extra 5s., cannot but affect this district very materially. We have a large duty to perform to a sparsely populated and poor district, and have but a few schools which do ought towards contributing to the maintenance of the greater number; and it is hoped that power will be given to Boards or School Committees to raise, in some just and equitable way, whatever sums they may deem themselves deficient in from time to time in order to continue the incidental grants, and keep the schools in proper repair.

BUILDINGS.—During the past year a new school has been built at Totara Valley, on a site purchased from Mr. Dugald Blue, at a somewhat nominal value, and towards which erection the residents liberally contributed nearly half the amount required. Winchester School was burnt to the ground during the month of July, and, after a short suspension, the school, under Miss Bennet, was reopened at the master's house. The school has since been completely rebuilt on a new site of three acres, and reopened, at a cost to the Board of upwards of £400, the Government having contributed £353. Masters' residences have been erected at Albury, Kakahu Bush, and Sutherland's. The schools at Makikihi, Rangitata Station, and Waimataitai have been enlarged, and new additional furniture has been supplied to Waimataitai, Winchester, Geraldine Flat, Waihao, Makikihi, Fairview, and Totara Valley; while a variety of repairs, construction of porches, drainage, and fencing were undertaken at Claremont, Burke's Pass, Fairlie Creek, Gapes Valley, Hook, Hilton, Pareora, Rangitata South, Timaru Main and Side, Temuka, Wai-iti, Waimate, Waitohi Flat Upper, Washdyke, and Waimataitai. A gymnasium was afforded to Pareora and Fairview, and that at Pleasant Point repaired.

SCHOLARSHIPS.—The annual scholarship examination took place in January, the examiners being a committee of gentlemen acting in conjunction with the Board's Inspector. Candidates for the scholarship given by the Waimate High School Board of Governors were examined with those who were competing for the Board scholarships, the total present at the examination being twenty—fourteen juniors and six seniors. On the report of the examiners the following new scholarships were granted: One at £4, three at £8, two at £10, one at £34; all tenable for two years. A scholarship of the value of £12, tenable for one year at the Timaru High School, and open for competition to scholars of the public schools, was also given by the South Canterbury Caledonian Society.