

at present to fairly accommodate the children attending. It is probable that, owing to the amalgamation of the schools at Waitara, the Board will have to consider at an early date the question of constructing a school at Waihi, to the north of the Waitara Township. Applications have also been made for aided schools at the Upper Carrington Road, near New Plymouth, and the Cape Road District, near the Cape Lighthouse: at both places it is stated there are children who never attend school, and are brought up in a state of ignorance of the ordinary elements of education. The difficulty in dealing with such cases is that if small schools are opened they are apt to injure to a certain extent existing schools by taking away some of the children already receiving education, and thus directly lowering the salaries of the teachers, which are too low already. It is represented to the Board that it is essential to the proper and efficient working of the Central School that the infant branch of that school, now carried on in Courtenay Street, should be removed to the Central establishment, so as to be under the practical control of the headmaster, and to enable him to properly adjust the work of his teaching staff on a proper and efficient basis. To carry this out effectually requires more money than the Board has at its disposal at present; consequently the proposal must be postponed. The Waitara East School has been closed, and the Waitara West School enlarged by adding to it a portion of the Waitara East School. This school will now accommodate 240 children, and meet the requirements of the whole of the Waitara Township and the residents in the immediate vicinity. It is hoped that with a larger attendance and an efficient staff the result will prove a benefit to the district. A large number of the schools are still unprovided with residences for the teachers. In some districts the want of a suitable residence is much felt. The smallness of the building grant to this district prevents the Board from remedying the evil, as the bulk of the money is required to build new and enlarge existing schools, which can only be done by the assistance of the ordinary fund. The Board therefore regrets that it cannot build residences so speedily as the circumstances of some districts require.

DRAWING AND RUDIMENTARY SCIENCE.—The subject of drawing is making some progress in the schools, and, as the teaching of it becomes more efficient, no doubt better results will be obtained. As pointed out by the Inspector, there is a great deficiency in the schools of the necessary appliances for teaching, such as proper models, which might be provided by the Government, with advantage to Boards, at cost price. It is obvious that one purchaser of the whole requirements of the schools could purchase much cheaper than several smaller buyers. There is much misapprehension on the part of the general public with respect to the teaching of drawing in the public schools, and there is no doubt, when it is fully realised that the object is to lay the foundation on a sure basis of the rudiments of an art which will in future years enable the child to apply the knowledge gained in school to the practical work of life, where a knowledge of drawing is required, the prejudice against it now will gradually fall away, and it will be looked on as an essential part of a practical education. With respect to elementary science, the Board has made no attempt of a serious character to enforce its teaching. It was considered that the children of the provincial district were generally so backward in the rudiments of primary knowledge that it would be unwise to attempt teaching science. The advance of knowledge in the district, and the greater public attention given to the matter, indicates that the Board will have to consider seriously the question of teaching certain branches of physical science in the schools. The difficulty in the way is the want of efficient knowledge on the part of teachers. It is doubtful whether teaching of science by teachers who have but a slight knowledge of the subject would be of any lasting advantage to the children taught. Still, it is possible that it could be taught with advantage in some schools if the Board could supply the necessary appliances in the way of apparatus. Here the Government could step in with advantage, by supplying such a set of apparatus as the department deemed necessary, at cost price, and providing suitable text-books. The method on which the rudiments of science should be taught is essentially one for departmental initiation.

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE.—The abnormal disturbance of the Board's finance by the reduction of the capitation grant and the payment of such grant on the strict average basis has now had time to subside into the normal condition of affairs. The revenue for the year has amounted in the aggregate to £8,371 1s. 2d.—viz., capitation and scholarship grants, £6,848 15s. 10d.; building grant, £307 17s.; sundries, £412; balance from last year, £802 8s. 4d. The expenditure was £8,033 15s. 4d.; leaving a credit balance of £337 5s. 10d., chargeable with liabilities on account of building contracts of £499 12s. With an increased attendance at the schools, it is estimated that the revenue for the year 1890 will be increased in a greater ratio than the liabilities, and thus enable the Board to adjust inequalities in salaries where such action may be deemed necessary.

SCHOOL COMMITTEES.—The School Committees generally continue to take an active interest in the management and well-being of the schools under their local charge. In some instances a more active assistance in the improvement of the school grounds is desirable, in order that their appearance may assume a more attractive aspect. In some districts the grounds have been planted with trees, in others this has been sadly neglected; and it is hoped that in the future the beautifying of the school grounds generally will receive the attention of Committees.

The Hon. the Minister of Education.

THOMAS KELLY, Chairman.