

GENERAL STATEMENT of RECEIPTS and EXPENDITURE for the Year ending 31st December, 1889.

RICHARD NANCARROW, Chairman.
E. T. ROBINSON, Secretary.

Examined and found correct.—JAMES EDWARD FITZGERALD, Controller and Auditor-General.

SIR,—

Hokitika, 4th March, 1890.

In accordance with section 102 of "The Education Act, 1877," I have the honour to present the report of the Education Board of the District of Westland for the year 1889.

BOARD.—At the date of the last annual report the Board consisted of Messrs. Mueller, Bevan, Grimmond, and McWhirter, nominated by the Government, and Messrs. Jack, Seddon, and Will, elected by the School Committees. By clause 4 of "The Westland and Grey Education Boards Act, 1888," it was provided that the members then in office should continue to hold office until the last day of March, 1890; consequently there has been no alteration in the constitution of the Board. Seventeen meetings of the Board were called during the year, one of which lapsed for want of a quorum, and four were special meetings. The average attendance during the year was 5·4 members at each meeting, and the attendance of the individual members was as follows: Mr. Bevan, 13; Mr. Grimmond, 8; Mr. Jack, 15; Mr. McWhirter, 12; Mr. Mueller, 13; Mr. Seddon, 11; Mr. Will, 16.

SCHOOL DISTRICTS.—There has been no alteration in the number of school districts, but in two cases it has been thought necessary to make alterations in their boundaries. The boundaries of the Kumara District were altered so as to exclude the Rangiriri School, which is so distant from Kumara that the Committee could not conveniently look after it to the satisfaction of the residents. Rangiriri is therefore now an aided school, the alteration taking effect from the 1st January, 1890. In the second case, the Kokatahi River, which is frequently impassable through floods, has been made the southern boundary of the Kokatahi School District.

NEW SCHOOLS.—Seven small schools have been opened this year—namely, Taipo, Upper and Lower Otira (half-time), Koiterangi, Mapourika, Haast (half-time with Okuru), and Callaghan's. One school, Lake Brunner, has been closed. The three first named were opened in consequence of the closing of the Lake Brunner School, and at these and Mapourika no expense has been incurred for buildings. At Koiterangi and Haast new buildings have been erected, comprising quarters for the teacher in addition to the schoolroom. At Callaghan's the Board reopened a school that had been closed for some years, and has added to the building a cottage for the teacher.

ATTENDANCE.—The total number of children on the school rolls at the end of the year was 1,696, and the average attendance for the last quarter was 1,420, or 83·7 per cent., which is 4·4 per cent. higher than the New Zealand average for 1888, as given on Table A of the Minister's last report. The mean average attendance for the four quarters amounts to 78·9 per cent. of the mean average weekly roll for the year. This is exceeded by only three districts in the colony. Although the roll number has decreased by 3·5 per cent., the mean average attendance has increased by 1·2 per cent.

RETRENCHMENTS.—The retrenchments effected during the year 1888 in the Board's expenditure, and which were fully explained in the last annual report, have hitherto had the desired effect of keeping it within the limits of the Board's revenue; but it is only by the exercise of a rigid economy, and by a strict adherence to its regulations respecting staffs and salaries, &c., that the Board can hope to continue to administer its affairs in the same satisfactory manner, especially if the gradual decrease of population which has been observable of late years is not soon arrested. Any further attempts at retrenchment could not but result in serious injury to, if not a total collapse of, the education system in Westland. The Minister has only to glance over the salaries paid to teachers in Westland, and compare them with those paid to teachers of similar schools in other