

NORTH CANTERBURY.

SIR,—

Christchurch, 31st March, 1890.

I have the honour to present the following report of the proceedings of the Education Board of the District of North Canterbury for the year ended the 31st December, 1889.

THE BOARD.—The three members of the Board who retired by rotation at the end of March were Mr. Bowen, Mr. Cunningham, and Mr. Saunders. Mr. Bowen did not stand for re-election. Mr. Cunningham and Mr. Saunders were re-elected, and Mr. Parker Westenra now fills the place vacated by Mr. Bowen. At a meeting held on the 18th April, Mr. Saunders, Mr. Weston, and Mr. Anson were elected members of the Appointments Committee, and Mr. Peryman, Mr. Wright, and Mr. Westenra members of the Buildings Committee. On the 9th May Mr. Saunders was elected Chairman of the Board. The Board held seventeen ordinary meetings and one special meeting during the year. The Buildings Committee met twenty times, including three special meetings, and the Appointments Committee forty-eight times.

SCHOOL BUILDINGS.—No new districts were formed during the year 1889. A new schoolroom was built at Glenroy, and a master's house at Marshland; additions were made to the schoolrooms at Belfast and Little River; and considerable improvements and repairs to the schools at Akaroa, Ashburton, Christchurch East, Christchurch West, Clarkville, Fernside, Killinchy, Lincoln, Prebbleton, Rakaia, Rangiora, Russell's Flat, Spreydon, St. Albans, Sydenham, Weedon, Woodend. The total expenditure on buildings was £5,243 0s. 6d.

MAINTENANCE OF SCHOOLS.—The expenditure on teachers' salaries (including all allowances) was £50,117 7s. 7d., and the grants to Committees for incidental purposes amounted to £6,432 0s. 2d., making a total of £56,549 7s. 9d. The average attendance for the year was 16,653. The cost per head for teachers' salaries was therefore £3 0s. 2½d., and the entire cost per head of maintaining the schools, including all incidental expenses, was £3 7s. 11d. The following table gives the expenditure on salaries and incidentals for the years 1878, 1888, and 1889:—

Year.				Salaries.		Incidentals.		Totals.	
				£	s. d.	£	s. d.	£	s. d.
1878	...	...	...	31,919	0 0	6,276	6 9	38,195	6 9
1888	...	...	...	50,749	18 10	6,400	7 5	57,150	6 3
1889	...	...	...	50,117	7 7	6,432	0 2	56,549	7 9

Table No. 7* gives the amount spent in each school district for salaries and ordinary expenses, and the names and status of all the teachers employed. The number of teachers in the Board's service at the end of the year (exclusive of forty sewing mistresses) was 519, of whom 186 were pupil-teachers.

ATTENDANCE.—The number of school districts at the close of the year 1889 was 144; and the number of separate schools, including the practising department of the Normal School, was 161. Two of these, at Gough's Bay and Winchmore, were aided schools. The schools are classified as follows: Under 15 pupils, 8; 15 and under 20, 9; 20 and under 25, 13; 25 and under 50, 49; 50 and under 75, 30; 75 and under 100, 14; 100 and under 150, 15; 150 and under 300, 11; 300 and under 500, 7; 500 and upwards, 5. The usual returns of the number and ages of the children, and of the number taught in each subject of instruction, are appended. The following table shows the total number on the rolls, the number in average attendance, and the percentage of attendance for the years 1878, 1888, and 1889:—

Quarter ended 31st December.				District Schools.	Aided Schools.	Total Schools.	On Roll.	Average Attendance.	Percentage.
1878	...	...	...	106	4	110	13,647	10,076	73·83
1888	...	...	...	155	1	156	20,388	16,395	80·42
1889	...	...	...	159	2	161	20,709	17,131	82·72

SCHOLARSHIPS.—The annual examination for scholarships was held in April. The number of candidates examined was 124, of whom sixty-two (thirty-nine boys and twenty-three girls) were in Class A, forty-seven (twenty-eight boys and nineteen girls) in Class B, nine (six boys and three girls) in Class C, and six (five boys and one girl) in Class D.

STANDING COMMITTEES.—As it is five years since this Board decided to make a division of the large and ever-increasing amount of executive work devolving upon it by the appointment of small select standing committees of its own members, each of which should undertake to thoroughly investigate and understand its own department of the Board's business, it has now had sufficient experience to be able to say that that system of apportioning the work has led to very good results. Largely composed, as it always has been, of gentlemen fully occupied with important private business of their own, it was never possible to get the Board as a whole to give such an amount of time to each detail of the work devolving on it as would constitute a real and effectual supervision of the work performed by its paid officers, so that it was only by some such division of labour as that afforded by the appointment of small standing committees that anything like effectual representative control could possibly be insured. Although annually elected, little change has taken place from year to year in the *personnel* of these committees, so that the members become experts in

* See Table 8, page 33, *ante*.