

Thursday in the month except in the month of January, when the Board met on the third Thursday. The average attendance of members was very good, being 7·6. The officers of the Board were the same as at the end of last year.

NUMBER OF SCHOOLS.—On the 31st December, 1889, there were fifty-two schools in operation. Cave and Glenavy schools were opened during the year; the latter has progressed so rapidly that it now wants enlarging. Of the fifty-two schools under the Board the classification is as follows: Under 25 pupils, 11; between 25 and 50, 25; between 50 and 100, 9; between 100 and 300, 5; between 300 and 500, 1; 500 and upwards, 1. There are no half-time schools included in the above; nor were there any schools closed during the year. The number of aided schools was eleven.

ATTENDANCE.—From the accompanying return it will be seen that there is a steady increase in the number of scholars attending the Board's schools in spite of the number of families who have left for larger centres in consequence of depressed times—in fact, the decrease in the first quarter of the year caused very considerable loss to the Board. The average roll number for the year ending 31st December, 1889, was 4,858·2, against 4,703 of the previous year. The ratio of average attendance to roll number is steadily improving, being 79 this year as against 77 last year.

FINANCE.—The balance-sheet, duly certified by the Auditor-General, is appended. The Building Account shows a debit balance of £414 3s., without, however, taking into consideration the building grant of the year, £864 3s., which has since been paid, really leaving the Building Fund in credit* £450. Of this, £250 will be expended on the Hakateramea contract, leaving the Board with a residue of less than £200 to build Seadown and meet the contingencies of the next twelve months. The Maintenance Account shows a balance of £211, which, with other assets, brings up the credit to £438 5s. 6d.

BUILDINGS.—During the year just past the Board has built, furnished, and opened for educational purposes schools at Cave and Glenavy, commencing the former with a roll number of thirty-four and the latter with forty-three. The Glenavy School site has also been fenced. Additions have been made to Orari Bridge, Orari South, and Washdyke Schools, with extra furniture supplied. A partition also was erected in the Orari South School, to which the Committee contributed half. A new survey was made of the Washdyke School site on the occasion of a grant being made of another half-acre by the Christchurch College authorities. The schools at Burke's Pass, Opihi, and Fairlie Creek have been repaired and painted, the Committees handsomely contributing towards the same; and at the latter school a new well was sunk. A well was also sunk at Hunter. The sum of £300 was set aside and banked on account of the new school at Geraldine, and a further sum of £288 has been allocated to the same purpose out of the new building grant. Sites have been purchased at Hakateramea, Seadown, and Waihao. Extensive repairs, occasioned by the gale of the 9th September, had to be carried out at Upper Otaio, where very extensive damage was done to the residence and the teacher's house; at Kingsdown, where the school porch was destroyed; at St. Andrews, where the wall had to be taken down and rebuilt, besides other repairs; at Pareora, where the master's house was wrecked; at Temuka, where a chimney-stack was blown down, destroying the roof and floor of classroom; at Totara Valley, where the roof was very nearly blown away, as well as at Silverstream, where all the spouting was damaged. The roof of the school at Woodbury has been thoroughly repaired, the wash-house at Albury rebuilt (the former one having been blown away). A stove has been furnished to Hilton, with extra furniture. The roof of the Pleasant Point School has been renewed, and some repairs made to the fencing of the Timaru Side School. The ceilings in the Waimate School have been patched, but much remains still to be done to make the interior trim and slightly. Extra furniture, maps, and other material have been supplied to Waimate, Waitohi Flat, Upper Waitohi, Wai-iti, Timaru, Orari South, Orari Bridge, Hilton, and Washdyke; whilst a great many small grants have been made in aid of the incidental funds of various schools. The Board would put on record here its high appreciation of the efforts generally made by the School Committees to aid in carrying out any necessary repairs to their respective schools by contributing towards the cost; and in all small grants made by the Board the School Committees have been invariably required to contribute an equal sum of pound for pound towards effecting the desired purpose. One thing is pressing very urgently upon the Board, and seems as far off realisation as ever, and that is a general painting and restoring of the schools and residences throughout the district. Many of the buildings are really old, and the comparatively new ones are suffering from this neglect; but with a small Building Fund to satisfy the always increasing demands of population, and to maintain the interiors supplied with educational material, the Board has very little margin left for outside work. Residences are required at Adair, Cave, Gapes Valley, Glenavy, Hakateramea, Rangitata Station, Rangatira Valley, Redcliffe, Temuka, Timaru Side, Waimate, and Waimataitai. The Board will have to build this year a new school at Seadown, and also seriously to entertain the project of another school in the Waitaki North District. Wai-iti is urging the Board for extension, and Arundel is still pressing its claims.

SCHOLARSHIPS.—The annual scholarship examination took place in January, the examiners being a committee of gentlemen and teachers acting in conjunction with the Board's Inspector. There were eighteen candidates—including seven from the Waimate High School, who were examined for scholarships given by the Waimate Board of Governors—sixteen juniors and two seniors. On the report of the examiners the following new scholarships were granted: [five names follow]. There was no award made to any senior candidate.

DISTRICT HIGH SCHOOLS.—It appears from the Inspector's report on the district high schools that fifteen scholars were examined in secondary subjects at Waimate, and nine at Temuka. The subjects taken at Waimate were English, Latin, Euclid, and algebra; at Temuka, French, Latin, Euclid, and algebra. As in past years, the Waimate High School Board of Governors gave a contribution of £75 towards the cost of maintaining an extra teacher at Waimate.

* Since this was printed a further sum of £300 has been granted by Government as the Board's share of the balance previously unappropriated.