

5,691; (b) presented in standards, 3,739. The total number of standard passes for the year was fewer by seventy-nine than for the previous year; but the average efficiency is somewhat higher, as these results are exclusive of forty-seven ex-Standard VI. pupils, most of whom attend the secondary department of the District High School, and do work of a higher character than that required for Sixth-Standard pupils. With regard to the work done in the different schools, the Inspector points out that sickness has hindered somewhat the style of the work in the upper standards, but that on the whole the progress is satisfactory. He suggests there should be held, what the Board has already recommended to the Minister, viz.: a meeting of the Inspectors to confer and report to the Minister of Education how a uniform interpretation of the standard requirements can be best procured. The absence of uniformity in the interpretation as to what constitutes a standard pass makes it necessary that some definite understanding should be arrived at by the Inspectors, and this can only be done by a conference such as the Board recommended in February, 1890.

SCHOLARSHIPS.—The examination for scholarships took place in December. In former years the scholarships were given on the result of the Sixth Standard examination, a synchronous examination being held for the purpose in November each year; but on the recommendation of the Inspector it was decided to revert to the old plan of examining the pupils in Standards V. and VI., and so the special examination for scholarships became a necessity. Amended scholarship regulations have already been approved by the Education Department. In December forty-six candidates presented themselves for examination, and eleven scholarships were granted by the Board and seven by the School Commissioners.

GISBORNE DISTRICT HIGH SCHOOL.—The Gisborne District High School, which was constituted three years ago, is being carried on with commendable success. The Governors of the Gisborne High School, who have no school of their own, subsidise the District High School to the extent of £150 per annum for a term of seven years. This sum, with the fees of the pupils, exceeds the amount actually required for the maintenance of a special master to teach the higher subjects, and arrangements have been made for the establishment of several secondary scholarships, the funds to be provided out of the accumulated funds standing to the credit of the secondary department of the school. At the matriculation examination in December last five of the Board's scholarship pupils at the end of their second year successfully passed the requirements.

NEEDLEWORK.—The synchronous examination of the sewing done by the pupils attending the Board schools still continues, and, as the table of results shows, the subject is taught with much care and success by a majority of the lady teachers engaged by the Board. The Inspector points out that much extra time is given by the lady teachers to placing work ready for the girls on sewing afternoons, and complaints are frequent as to the additional work imposed on the girls beyond the ordinary standard requirements. The Board has already recommended to the Minister, in a special communication, that sewing should be taken as an alternative for history in the case of girls. In their reports for the year, the sewing-examiners make recommendations with respect to special sewing-tests being given to girls at the time of the Inspector's visits to the different schools, but the course suggested is hardly possible at the present time. The subject, however, will be further considered at a future date.

SCHOOL LIBRARIES.—There are a number of school libraries in this district, and the circular which was issued by the Department of Education some months ago appears to have acted as an incentive to teachers, and at least five new libraries have been established on the lines suggested in the circular. Fourteen schools have each a library for the benefit of the pupils only. They are Ormond, Matawhero, Te Arai, Gisborne, Frasertown, Wairoa, Petane, Meancee, Taradale, Puketapu, Patangata, Porangahau, Norsewood, and Woodville.

BUILDING FUND.—No work of any kind has been attempted in the way of school buildings during the year. The grant received from the Government barely sufficed to meet the Board's overdraft on account of school buildings incurred in previous years, and it was found impossible to proceed with needful repairs to schoolhouses and residences without incurring a further overdraft, and this the Board steadfastly declined to do. As pointed out a year ago, a large amount of expenditure is wanted in this district to provide new buildings and to repair old ones. In the month of June a return was sent to the department showing that the sum of £7,527 was then needed to complete the building requirements, and this has been further increased by the demands received from Committees since that date. At Napier and Gisborne rooms have been hired for more than twelve months for the accommodation of pupils; and the instruction of children in a number of other schools has been, and is being, carried on under great disadvantages. Many residences are wanted for teachers, and numerous applications have been made for the erection of buildings in new settlements, but nothing could be done by the Board in consequence of the inability of the Government to supply the necessary funds.

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE.—The whole income of the Board for the year, including building grant, with fees and subsidy on account of the Gisborne District High School, was £20,936 5s. 9d. Of this amount, £18,801 12s. 3d. was General Fund provided for the ordinary work of carrying on the schools and for inspection, and £2,134 13s. 6d. was building grant. The General Fund was augmented by a balance in hand of £1,834 15s. 1d., making a total of £22,771 0s. 10d. The expenditure shows that the cost of maintenance of the schools, including salaries of officers and teachers, grants to School Committees for cleaning and firing, bonuses to teachers, house-allowance, scholarships, instruction of pupil-teachers, and inspection, amounted to £18,840 19s. 1d., out of which the sum of £53 8s. 2d. was paid to the Building Fund, and leaving a balance in hand to the credit of the General Fund of £1,742 0s. 1d. The Building Fund was as follows: Income—General Government grant, &c., £2,188 1s. 8d. Expenditure, £434 11s. 6d., which, added to the balance debit from last year of £2,142 4s. 9d., amounts to £2,576 16s. 3d., leaving a balance debit at the close of the year of £388 14s. 7d. The sum of £2,850 has been received this month, consequently the Building Fund is really £2,461 5s. 5d. in credit, but this amount will be more than absorbed in providing for the most urgent requirements.

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The Hon. the Minister of Education, Wellington.

J. D. ORMOND, Chairman.