

year, the difficulty is to find time for these new subjects. But I feel there is a strong probability that some kindergarten work will be demanded for our schools in the near future, and I cannot but think that we ought at least to give our students opportunities to make a beginning in the practical part of the work. Mrs. Bullock, head mistress of the Infants' Department, who has had charge of this part of the work with the students, has taken very great interest in the subject, and it was especially gratifying to me to find that at the end of the year she was to some extent rewarded for her trouble by the success that attended her exhibition of kindergarten work done in her department.

In the Girls' School a noteworthy feature has been the attendance for the last six months of about forty girls at a weekly class in cookery at the School of Domestic Instruction. The usual fate of classes in subjects outside of the school course is for them to dwindle down and cease. This particular class has, however, so far escaped this fate, owing largely to the interest the girls feel in the subject. But another contributory cause has been the fact that the time for this class has been taken from the ordinary school day. The time that has been thus given up could ill be spared from the preparation for the work of the standard syllabus, but the subject is one of such immense practical value that the opportunity of sending the girls to these classes could not be lost. In cases like this, where facilities exist for attendance at valuable classes of any kind, I cannot but think it would encourage teachers and children alike to take advantage of them if in the assessment of the work done in the standard subjects some allowance could be made for this diminution in the time available for those subjects.

The Boys' and Girls' Schools, I am glad to say, met with considerable success in the examinations held in December for scholarships and exhibitions.

I have, &c.,

EDWIN WATKINS, B.A., Principal.

The Chairman, Normal School Committee.

SOUTH CANTERBURY.

SIR,—

Education Office, Timaru, 31st March, 1899.

I have the honour to submit herewith the report of the Education Board of the District of South Canterbury for the year ending the 31st December, 1898.

BOARD.—The Board consists of the following members: Messrs. W. B. Howell, J.P. (Chairman), John Talbot, J.P., John Jackson, J.P., John Stephen Keith, J.P., Peter Keddie, J.P., Daniel Newman Inwood, J.P., Lieut.-Colonel Moore, J.P., the Rev. W. J. Comrie, and the Rev. George Barclay, J.P. Eighteen meetings of the Board were held during the year, twelve ordinary and six special meetings, the average number present being 7.38. The officers of the Board were the same as last year.

SCHOOLS.—At the end of the year there were sixty-seven full-time schools in operation, the classification of which was as follows: Under 15 pupils, five schools; 15 and under 20, four schools; 20 and under 25, ten schools; 25 and under 50, twenty-eight schools; 50 and under 75, eight schools; 75 and under 100, four schools; 100 and under 150, one school; 150 and under 300, three schools; 300 and under 500, three schools; 500 and upwards, one school. Number of aided schools included, nineteen.

ATTENDANCE.—The accompanying table shows the number of scholars attending the Board's schools during the last ten years [not all reprinted]:—

Quarter ending 31st December.	Number of Schools.	Number of Teachers.	Number on Rolls.	Strict Average Attendance.			Yearly Average.
				Male.	Female.	Total.	
1889	52	123	4,804	1,995	1,885	3,850	3,847
1893	60	143	5,167	2,187	1,876	4,284	4,174
1897	65	147	5,211	2,379	2,194	4,573	4,570
1898	67	144	5,197	2,341	2,145	4,486	4,465

The working average for the four quarters of 1898 gives an average of 4,492 against the strict average of 4,465. The working average for 1898 is ninety-one less than it was in 1897, and 121 less than it was in 1896. During the winter months there was a great deal of sickness amongst the children—typhoid fever, measles, and colds, with inclement weather, keeping the scholars at home, and thereby greatly reducing the average attendance. The average roll-number for 1898 was 5,183, against 5,275 in the previous year.

FINANCE.—The Building Account shows a credit balance of £93. The Board during the year cancelled the indebtedness of the Building Fund to the Maintenance Account by striking out the sum of £1,158 19s. 10d., the Building Fund at the same time repaying to maintenance a sum of £200. The Maintenance Account shows a credit balance of £950 1s. 1d., but, as the sum of £1,214 7s. received from the School Commissioners for primary education is in reality part capita-tion for 1899, the Maintenance Account actually shows a debit balance at the 31st December, 1898, of £264 5s. 11d.