

MEETINGS OF THE BOARD.—During the year the Board has held twelve monthly, twelve adjourned, and one special meeting, the average attendance at each being 7·68. The October meeting of the Board was held in Westport, seven members again being able to attend. Members of the Board visited the schools at Granity Creek, Burnett's Face, Waimangaroa, Cape Foulwind, and Denniston, the immediate outcome of the inspection of the latter school being a resolution to erect a new and more commodious one in a more favourable and central position at the earliest possible date.

WESTPORT DISTRICT HIGH SCHOOL.—The secondary classes of this school continue to do very satisfactory work. The number of pupils on the roll at the beginning of the year was twenty-five, and at its close twenty-six, the average for the year being 25·5.

SCHOOLS.—There were 127 schools at work during the year, and at the end of the year 124. Of the latter number, twenty-one were aided schools, with an average attendance at each of 15·2, and twenty-three were household schools, the average attendance at each being 5·5. Aided schools in this district are managed by committees elected by the parents, and are carried on and treated exactly like district schools, the committees receiving the same quarterly allowances as committees in school districts, the only difference between the two being that aided school committees have no voice in the election of members of the Board. However, when an aided school has shown an average attendance of twenty or more for two successive quarters, a school district is usually constituted.

SCHOOL DISTRICTS.—One new school district has been constituted during the year—viz., Orinoco—which brings the total number up to sixty-seven.

ATTENDANCE OF SCHOLARS.—The average weekly number on the roll during the year 1899 was 5,913; during the past year it was 5,844·75: a decrease of 68·25. The working average attendance during 1899 was 4,900·75, and during the past year 4,844·75, a decrease of 56. The continual fall in the average attendance, and the consequent shrinkage of the Board's income, is causing serious inconvenience, and is a matter for grave anxiety.

SCHOOL BUILDINGS.—During the year no new school has been erected, but additions have been made to those at Dovedale and Progress. New houses have been built at Waimea West and Clifton Terrace, to replace old ones which, having been standing some fifty years, had become, by reason of the rotten state of the timber of which they were constructed, quite insanitary and unfit for habitation. Additions have been made to the teacher's house at Caplestone, and £500 has been paid off the debt on the site of the Central School in Nelson, while no less than £753 has been expended in smaller additions and general repair and upkeep of the Board's numerous wooden buildings.

BOARD'S FUNDS.—The balance to credit of the Board's General Account at the beginning of the year was £139 4s. 3d., with liabilities £192 4s.; at its close there was a debit balance of £471 15s. 9d., with liabilities £144 0s. 10d.

The Building Account at the beginning of the year had a credit balance of £1,480 14s., with liabilities, inclusive of the debt on the Central School site, of £1,311 13s. 3d.; at the end of the year the credit balance was £1,790 8s. 11d., and the total liabilities £2,181 13s. However, the building grant for the year, amounting to £2,000, had not then been received.

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The Hon. the Minister of Education, Wellington.

GEO. TALBOT, Chairman.

GENERAL STATEMENT OF RECEIPTS AND EXPENDITURE for the Year ending 31st December, 1900.

<i>Receipts.</i>			<i>Expenditure.</i>		
	£	s. d.		£	s. d.
Balance—			Office Staff—salaries	300	0 0
On Building Account	1,480	14 0	Clerical assistance to Treasurer	5	5 0
On General Account	139	4 3	Departmental contingencies	424	5 10
Government grant for buildings	2,157	0 0	Inspectors' salaries	558	6 8
Subscriptions and donations for buildings	20	0 0	Inspectors' travelling-expenses	286	19 0
Other receipts for buildings—			Truant Officer's salary and expenses	32	11 0
Bank interest	15	0 0	Teachers' salaries and allowances (including rent, bonus, &c.)	15,774	8 9
Contractors' deposits	50	16 0	Incidental expenses of schools	1,902	8 3
Government statutory capitation	17,418	4 1	Training of teachers	202	17 8
Scholarship grant	368	0 11	Scholarships—		
Inspection subsidy	300	0 0	Paid to scholars	355	0 0
Grants for manual and technical instruction	5	7 6	Examination expenses	22	7 6
Payments by School Commissioners—			School buildings—		
For primary education	856	10 0	New buildings	540	8 3
For secondary education	112	10 0	Improvements of buildings	799	13 4
District High School fees	120	4 9	Furniture and appliances	26	14 6
Other receipts—			Contractors' deposits returned	38	0 0
From sale of school-books	434	14 3	Sites	527	10 0
Refunds	7	18 4	Bank charges	0	15 0
Subscription to Patriotic Fund in error	7	11 9	Manual and technical instruction	15	2 3
Rent of school grounds	1	13 0	Purchase of school books	356	10 11
			Refund Patriotic Fund contribution	7	11 9
			Balance	1,318	13 2
	<u>£23,495</u>	<u>8 10</u>		<u>£23,495</u>	<u>8 10</u>

GEORGE TALBOT, Chairman.

STEAD ELLIS, Secretary.

Examined and found correct—J. K. WARBURTON, Controller and Auditor-General.