

BOARD'S SCHOLARSHIPS.—During the past year, after protracted negotiations with the Minister of Education, the Board adopted a new set of regulations, which in several respects differ materially from the regulations which have been superseded. It was found that the new regulations could not be brought into full operation for the examination, which was, as usual, held in the month of December last, owing chiefly to the fact that the time was too short to give due notice to all parties interested. The examination was, however, conducted in terms of the new regulations except that (1) the age was retained at fifteen years, (2) the restriction as to candidates being in attendance at a public school was not enforced, (3) the syllabus of the old regulations was retained. In all sixty-five candidates presented themselves, of whom twenty-nine gained over 60 per cent. of the marks attainable, and thus qualified for scholarships. Scholarships of the value of £35 each were awarded to the eight highest of those who—for lack of a better term—may be designated country candidates, while five scholarships of the value of £15 each were allotted to the first five of those who, in the opinion of the Board, were able to reside at home while prosecuting their studies at the High School. The remaining sixteen of those who gained 60 per cent. and over were offered free education (equivalent to £10 per annum) by the Southland High School Board of Governors. It is yet too soon to predict with any degree of accuracy the probable results of the adoption of the new regulations, but it may safely be affirmed that in many respects they are a decided improvement on those which they have superseded. The total expenditure on scholarships for the year 1900 amounted to £612 16s. 3d., of which sum £595 12s. was paid to the winners thereof, the balance of £17 4s. 3d. being absorbed in payment of examination expenses. It is creditable to the holders of scholarships in this district that their record for attendance, diligence, and progress at the High School has been and continues to be exceptionally meritorious.

TEACHERS' QUARTERLY RETURNS.—The teachers as a whole attend to the preparation of the quarterly returns of attendance with commendable promptitude and accuracy, and with only a very small minority is there ever found cause of complaint. It is rarely, however, that in any one quarter *all* the returns are correctly made out and forwarded to the office within the time allotted for their receipt. Were teachers to recognise, as most of them do, the importance of thorough accuracy in the compilation of these returns, on which depend considerations so grave, they would in all cases furnish the information required without the possibility of error.

TECHNICAL CLASSES.—The Saturday carpentry classes, carried on during the past five years, have been continued with fairly favourable results. The Instructor reports that these classes have been attended by fifteen boys from the public schools and one teacher, and that the work done was fairly good. These classes are being recognised by the tradesmen of the district as of value when selecting apprentices—several of the past year's students are now engaged in the work in which they received their rudimentary training in the Board's workshop. The Technical Classes Association has made overtures to the Board with the view of handing over control of the technical classes hitherto carried on under its supervision. In view of the passing of "The Manual and Technical Instruction Act, 1900," it is more than probable that the Board will acquiesce in the proposal made, and carry on the work as hitherto. The matter of bringing the public schools under the provisions of this Act will doubtless occupy the earnest attention of the Board during the coming year.

INSPECTION OF SCHOOLS.—The progress of education throughout the district is dealt with in the annual report of the Board's Inspectors. Details of the success or otherwise achieved by individual schools, as well as a summary of results for the whole district, are given. The Board, judging by the general character of the reports which are read at each monthly meeting, has reason to feel satisfied that the teachers in its service perform their duties in a conscientious and creditable manner. While this eulogium is perfectly true of the staff as a whole, it must not be thought that there are not individual exceptions. These exceptions, however, the Board is pleased to report, are comparatively rare, and every year becoming more so. The Inspectors deal with the new regulations affecting the examination of schools, and record their impressions as to the probable success of the innovation as compared with the system which it has superseded.

TRANSVAAL WAR—PATRIOTIC FUND.—At its ordinary meeting in the month of March the Board adopted a resolution expressive of its feelings respecting the prosecution of the South African War, and on the same date received the report of a special Committee previously appointed to consider the question of instituting a children's patriotic fund. The Board had in view a double purpose in inaugurating such a fund,—first, the instilling of patriotic principles into the minds of the children; and, secondly, the giving of an opportunity to supplement the contributions of their parents and friends towards the relief of sufferers by the war. With these ends in view a patriotic function, to be held on a given date, was arranged for in each school district, when addresses on patriotic subjects were delivered by local residents. The total contributions to the children's relief fund reached the satisfactory amount of £280, representing an average contribution of 9½d. for each child attending the schools of the district. The Board, quoting from the report of its committee, cannot refrain from expressing the opinion that the results achieved are a magnificent tribute to the loyalty and patriotic devotion of the children of Southland, and believes that this practical lesson in patriotism will live in their memories for many years to come. The Board has placed on record its grateful appreciation of the energy and loyalty of the teachers and School Committees of the district, whose zealous co-operation contributed so materially to the success of the project.

BUILDING OPERATIONS.—From the paragraph under the heading of "Schools" in a previous part of this report, it may be inferred that there has been a decided lull in the matter of the erection of new buildings; and, while this surmise is in the main quite correct, and the expenditure necessary in this connection not so extensive as in previous years, yet the annually recurring expense of maintenance of existing buildings is, and must of necessity be, very heavy, when the perishable nature of the materials used in their erection is taken into account. The principal items of expenditure (omitting shillings and pence) in connection with building operations are: New