

a friendly desire not to stand in the way of a fellow-student lower down on the Board's list, and not with the object of pecuniary gain. As now amended, the Gammack scholarships are of the value of £25 and £45 (£5 lower than the value of the University scholarships) according to whether the holders live with their parents or are obliged to board away from home, open to those candidates only who obtain credit in the examination, and who do not qualify for a junior University scholarship. The Board will now be able to offer two scholarships every year, thus distributing the benefits of the Gammack bequest among a larger number of the Canterbury candidates on the credit list, but who are not successful in obtaining a junior University scholarship.

TRUANCY AND IRREGULAR ATTENDANCE.—During the year, in the districts served by the Board's Truant Officer, 1,243 children were reported for irregular attendance, and with respect to 155 children it became necessary to institute Court proceedings. Of the latter, in 120 cases fines were inflicted, 22 were dismissed, and 2 withdrawn, while in the remaining 11 cases the parents or persons having the custody of the children could not be found. The total amount of fines during the year amounted to £18 4s.

Under "The School Attendance Act, 1901," several desirable improvements have been introduced, among the more important being the raising of the age of exemption from attendance at school to fourteen years, an increase in the number of compulsory attendances per week, and the power of the Court to inflict substantial fines, all of which amendments the Board has for several years consistently advocated.

MILITARY DRILL.—The teachers' Saturday drill classes were continued at Christchurch for two terms during the year, instruction in both physical and squad drill being given. At examinations held towards the end of the second term thirty-one teachers succeeded in passing the tests prescribed by the instructor, the majority securing a good pass. As recommended by Staff Sergeant-Major Coleman, to whom the Board is greatly indebted for his valuable services, certificates of competency will be granted to those teachers who have passed the examination, while the town teachers who desire a similar mark of proficiency will be examined at their respective schools at such times as can be conveniently arranged.

COLONIAL SCALE OF STAFFS AND SALARIES.—The Board's report for the year would be incomplete without reference to the important changes now taking place under "The Public-School Teachers' Salaries Act, 1901," the direct outcome of the recommendations contained in the report of the Royal Commission on the staffs of schools and salaries of public-school teachers. With the main object of the Act—the establishing of a uniform and equitable scale of staff and salaries—the Board is in complete sympathy, as it has always been ready to welcome any scheme which would place the salaries of its teachers on a satisfactory footing. That in some respects the scale should be open to criticism is not surprising when it is remembered how widely divergent were the conditions as to staff and salaries existing among the thirteen Education Boards to whom the primary education of the children of the colony is intrusted. For the present, until the Act shall have been tested in the light of experience, it will be sufficient to point out the directions in which modifications appear desirable, as follows:—

- (1.) Provision for the teaching of sewing in those sole-charge schools to which, either owing to the number of children in attendance or to other circumstances, it is desirable to appoint a male teacher.
- (2.) Adequate provision for the staffing of those schools which are termed "side" schools, but which to all intents and purposes are worked as separate schools.
- (3.) Adequate recognition of the services of infants' mistresses in charge of large departments at the city schools.
- (4.) A readjustment of the salaries payable to the first assistant masters, and to the first assistant mistresses.

The Board views with grave apprehension the probable effect the new Act will have on its finances and on the Board's ability to efficiently maintain the schools in this district. After making the necessary provision for all ordinary expenditure, based on the actual figures for the year covered by this report, the Board is left with an exceedingly narrow margin available for contingencies, and this margin will at once disappear unless the Department should defray all cost in connection with the employment of relieving-teachers. Already the Board has reduced the allowances payable to School Committees for incidental expenses, and in other directions economy has been practised; notwithstanding which the Board's liabilities largely exceed its assets. In this connection it may also be pointed out that, owing to the returns required by the Department under the Public-School Teachers' Salaries Act, there is reason to believe that the office staff will require strengthening in the near future, and more especially will this be the case if the Department continues so exacting as regards the formalities to be observed in the working of the Manual and Technical Instruction Act, which in itself has largely added to the Board's administrative responsibilities. In all these circumstances the Board submits that some addition to the capitation allowance of 11s. 3d. is absolutely necessary if the efficiency which has hitherto characterized the maintenance of its schools is to be continued.

MANUAL AND TECHNICAL INSTRUCTION.—The progress made in manual and technical instruction during the year has not been, the Board regrets to report, altogether satisfactory; nor are the causes leading up to the present position difficult to determine. So far as concerns the establishing of a central technical school, the Board has been without the means of securing a suitable site, the need of which has been repeatedly represented to the Minister.

With regard to school classes, after carefully considering the whole question the Board arrived at the conclusion that while it was not desirable to introduce any of the subjects into the higher standards until the syllabus had been revised, yet that no modification of the syllabus was necessary up to and including Standard II. The Board has accordingly confined its attention to the