

compares very favourably with the best work done in previous years, though not so many as hitherto have distinguished themselves by obtaining high percentages. By way of explanation of this apparent falling-off in the efficiency of the candidates' work, it is pointed out that there has been a reduction of one year in the age of the candidates, and also that there were, for some unexplained reason, fewer candidates than the average of past years.

TECHNICAL EDUCATION.—In last year's report reference was made to the probability of the Board taking over the work for several years carried on by the Technical Classes Association of Invercargill. The Board has now to report that the overtures then made by that association were agreed to, and the sole control of technical education throughout the Southland District was assumed by the Board. With the view to a proper organization of technical and continuation classes under the Manual and Technical Instruction Act, the Board at its August meeting appointed Mr. W. A. McCaw to the position of Director of Technical Instruction, and from that officer's annual report full particulars respecting the inauguration and continuance of technical instruction under the supervision of the Board will be obtained.

In the month of June last, and at the invitation of the Board, the then recently appointed Technical Inspectors for the colony, Messrs. Isaac and Brown, paid a visit to the district, and while here delivered a series of demonstration lectures illustrative of the method of conducting school classes. An audience of over one hundred teachers met the Inspectors, and it is quite safe to state that the opportune visit of those gentlemen did much to foster and encourage the enthusiasm of our teachers in the matter of technical education.

Financially, the Board has reason to congratulate itself on the satisfactory result of its first year's control of technical education in Southland. The total sum received up till the 31st December was £399 11s. 4d., and the expenditure for the same period was £418 17s. The chief items of receipts were as follows: Government grants for (1) capitation £54 5s. 3d., (2) apparatus £114 18s. 7d., (3) subsidy on voluntary contributions £7 12s. 6d.; from students' fees, £213 1s. 6d.; amount handed over to the Board by the Technical Classes Association, £9 13s. 6d. The aggregate of expenditure was made up as follows: Instructors' salaries, £253 15s.; material, £11 16s. 1d.; apparatus, £127 19s. 8d.; rent, £1; and incidentals, £24 6s. 3d. The foregoing figures do not represent the aggregate financial results of the year's operations, as several sums due by the Government in respect of capitation earned by the classes were not received before the close of the year, while considerable liabilities also existed at that date. It is perfectly safe to assume, however, that the general financial result of the year's work will be a substantial sum to the credit of the Technical Instruction Account wherewith to commence and carry on next year's operations.

BUILDINGS.—The maintenance in an efficient state of repair of the numerous buildings throughout the district has absorbed a considerable proportion of the funds available for the year, no less than a sum of £1,224 having been spent on such works. A sum of £1,459 was spent in new buildings, the principal works in this category being the erection of new schools at Waimahaka and Lower Hedgehope; small residences for the use of the teachers at Kapuka, Otapiri, Mokoreta, and a larger-sized residence at Otatara Bush on the site of the new school, the old building and ground being sold. Additions were also made to the schools at Nightcaps and Kennington, and to the teachers' residences at East Gore and Waimatuku. The total expenditure chargeable against the Building Account for the past year was £3,196 4s. 3d.; while the revenue for building purposes was £3,967 0s. 7d., which included receipts from sale of old residence and glebe at Otatara Bush, the sale of the old residence at Gore, and a deposit on the sale of the old school building and site at the Bluff. The surplus of receipts over expenditure was thus £771, which, after providing for the debtor balance at the beginning of the year, leaves a net credit to the Building Account of £377 11s. 11d. It is specially fortunate that this credit exists, in view of the circumstance that the Board stands committed to the expenditure of a very large sum to erect a new school at the Bluff, and, further, if funds permit to commence in sections the erection of a building suitable to the requirements of the Invercargill South District. These works will absorb in themselves more than one-half the Board's ordinary building revenue for the coming year.

FINANCE AND ACCOUNTS.—The year opened with a sum of £1,249 4s. 10d. to credit, and closed with a credit balance of £938 14s. 3d., a falling-off to the extent of £310 10s. 7d. Both accounts—General and Building—stand in credit, the former to the extent of £561 2s. 4d., the latter £377 11s. 11d. The actual liabilities are—against General Account, £822 6s. 9d.; against Building Account, £920 1s. It is certain, however, that the passing of the Teachers' Salaries Act will favourably affect the General Account. The sum to be obtained for the general expenses of the management of Boards (teachers' salaries being now excluded) will be considerably in excess of the average expenditure for this purpose for several years past.

With the introduction of an entirely new system of payments to Boards, by which at least three-fourths of their revenue is set apart absolutely for the payment of teachers' salaries, it will be incumbent—nay, imperative—that the Government provide year by year a sum amply sufficient to meet all reasonable requirement for buildings.

By order of the Board.

The Hon. the Minister of Education, Wellington.

JNO. NEILL, Secretary.