

TARANAKI.

SIR,—

School Commissioners' Office, New Plymouth, 20th May, 1909.

I have the honour to hand you herewith the balance-sheet and statement of accounts of this Board for the year ended 31st December last, duly audited and certified.

It will be noticed that the account of income shows an increase from rents of £1,114 1s. 10d. as compared with that of the previous year. Many of the leases granted for twenty-one years with perpetually recurring rights of renewal are now arriving at the revaluation period, and the awards made in nearly all cases show an appreciable increase in the rentals payable during the next term. These rents are fixed by arbitration and based upon the unimproved or prairie value of the land, so that lessees are not penalised by the taking into account of their own improvements. In every case the separate valuation made of the tenant's improvements has shown substantial interests acquired as the result of occupation and industry, and invariably much in excess of the requirements of the lease.

Unlet reserves have been few and of indifferent value, but lands recently vested in the Commissioners appear to be of a better description, and are shortly to be offered for lease by public auction, as is the Board's custom.

There has been no change in the membership during the past year, the Board still consisting of Messrs. Francis Simpson, Charles Edwin Major, and William Thomas Jennings, M.P., appointees of the Crown, and Henry Faull and myself, nominated by the Education Board.

The noxious-weeds question continues to be the one great trouble of the Commissioners, and the utmost vigilance has to be exercised to keep careless tenants alive to their responsibilities. Fortunately, most of the Board's lessees are fully sensible of the importance of combating the growth of blackberry and ragwort, which infest certain localities; but so long as Native lands are allowed to remain neglected (as is so often the case), so long will the industrious and careful settler find his difficulties intensified and his own hard work discounted by the indifference of his neighbour.

I have, &c.,

The Hon. the Minister of Education, Wellington.

JAMES WADE, Chairman.

GENERAL STATEMENT OF RECEIPTS AND EXPENDITURE for the Year ending 31st December, 1908.

	Primary.	Secondary.	Total.
<i>Receipts.</i>			
Balance at 31st December, 1907	£ 1,287 5 8	£ 815 6 9	£ 2,102 12 5
Rents from reserves	4,065 11 3	526 1 9	4,591 13 0
Transfer fees	1 10 0	...	1 10 0
Interest on fixed deposits	21 15 1	26 15 8	48 10 9
Sale of old building	3 0 0	...	3 0 0
Sale of old safe	7 10 0	2 10 0	10 0 0
Total receipts	5,386 12 0	1,370 14 2	6,757 6 2
<i>Expenditure.</i>			
Secretary's salary	£ 93 15 0	£ 31 5 0	£ 125 0 0
Office accommodation	18 15 0	6 5 0	25 0 0
Stationery, stamps, telegrams, and printing	11 7 11	3 16 1	15 4 0
Travelling-expenses, members and secretary	20 4 9	4 15 7	25 0 4
Insurances—			
Guarantee, fire, and employers' liability	9 16 11	2 17 2	12 14 1
Purchase of safe, and repairs to old safe	13 12 4	4 10 8	18 3 0
Advertising	2 1 0	...	2 1 0
Acts of Parliament	1 0 8	0 6 10	1 7 6
Law-costs	17 5 9	0 6 8	17 12 5
Arbitrations and new leases	79 8 4	29 11 6	108 19 10
Commission on sale of leases	7 11 6	...	7 11 6
Rates	15 15 4	...	15 15 4
Bank commission	0 7 6	0 2 6	0 10 0
Surveys and architect	9 13 6	...	9 13 6
Ranger and other inspection	98 6 3	32 4 9	130 11 0
Land Fund—			
Improvements on reserves	3 16 0	...	3 16 0
Purchase of school-site	15 0 0	...	15 0 0
Distribution from revenue—			
Taranaki Education Board	2,702 10 0	...	4,000 0 0
Wanganui Education Board	1,297 10 0	...	...
New Plymouth High School Board	...	200 0 0	300 0 0
	4,417 17 9	416 1 9	4,833 19 6
Balance, 31st December, 1908	968 14 3	954 12 5	1,923 6 8
Total expenditure	5,386 12 0	1,370 14 2	6,757 6 2