

additions suggested by the Director. The necessary application will be forwarded to the Department on the completion of the plans now in course of preparation. The Board feels that when the small amount expended by the Department on the Christchurch Training College is taken into consideration, in comparison with that expended on buildings for similar use elsewhere, its application for a special grant is reasonable, and more especially so having regard to the important part the Christchurch Training College has taken for many years in supplying teachers of ability for the several education districts in the Dominion. The number of students admitted to the training college during the year, together with further statistical information, is given in the Director's report.

SCHOLARSHIPS.—The Civil Service Junior Examination, on which the Board's Senior Scholarships are awarded, was held on the 20th November and following days. Twenty-eight candidates—eighteen boys and ten girls—presented themselves for examination, and ten scholarships were awarded. In the Junior class, of eighty-four candidates who entered for competition, forty-five—twenty-nine boys and sixteen girls—passed the examination, which was held on the 1st and 2nd December. One hundred and thirty-seven candidates entered for the Junior National Scholarship Examination, of whom eighty-three (fifty-one boys and thirty-two girls) passed. For the Board's Gammack Scholarships there were eight candidates, and four scholarships were awarded. In order to distribute as widely as possible the benefits arising from the Gammack bequest, the Board has resolved that in future candidates that qualify for Senior National Scholarships, in common with those that gain Junior University Scholarships, shall not be eligible for Gammack Scholarships; and, further, that the same restrictions shall be exercised in regard to candidates who obtain appointments as pupil-teachers.

With the view of directly encouraging pupils from public schools to take up technical education, the Board has decided to offer two scholarships—one Junior and one Senior—to be known as Art Scholarships, and two scholarships to be known as Technical Scholarships, tenable for two years at an approved school of art and technical college respectively, and open to all children who are eligible to compete for the Board's ordinary scholarships. The Board has also expressed itself as desirous of offering two scholarships, to be known as Agricultural Scholarships, tenable at the Canterbury Agricultural College. Unfortunately, the Board of Governors of the College have not been able to see their way to make any reduction in the ordinary entrance fee of £40, towards which the Board was willing to contribute the sum of £25—a difficulty which has delayed the completion of the scheme the Board had in view.

ATTENDANCE.—From the beginning of the school year until the month of August the attendance of children generally was very good. During the latter part of the year, however, an epidemic of sickness prevailed at many schools, some of which were compelled to close for a time, while others suffered to the extent of 30 per cent. of the roll-number. Under these unfavourable conditions the average percentage of attendance for the year fell to 85·51, as compared with 88·42 for the previous year. During the year the Truant Officer issued 2,068 notices to parents, the majority being in connection with the city and suburban schools. Of the ninety cases taken into Court, convictions were secured in fifty-eight, the fines amounting to £12 0s. 6d., exclusive of costs, £15 8s.* Of the remaining cases, twenty-nine were dismissed, the majority of them, in the opinion of the Truant Officer, on insufficient grounds. In his annual report the Truant Officer draws attention to the ease with which parents secure medical certificates, and he urges that some special provision should be made for dealing with supposed cases of sickness.

MANUAL AND TECHNICAL INSTRUCTION.—In addition to the work carried on at the Christchurch centres, where a large number of pupils have received instruction in woodwork, cookery, and laundry-work, handwork classes have been continued in eighty-eight of the Board's schools. At sixteen schools classes in swimming and life-saving have been held. School classes have also been conducted at Akaroa, Amberley, Ashburton, Kaiapoi, Lyttelton, and Rangiora. A general estimate of the progress made in technical instruction may be formed from a perusal of the annual reports sent in from the several centres. The Board's evening classes in subjects of the public-school syllabus for Standards V and VI have been continued at the Christchurch Technical College. In elementary agriculture, which includes nature-study and practical instruction in connection with school gardens, a notable advance has been made, recognized classes having been held at fifty-one schools. During the year, recognizing the great importance of this subject, the Board agreed to appoint a Chief Instructor in Agriculture and an Assistant Instructor, the former to be under engagement for two days each week to the Board of Managers of the Christchurch Technical Classes, who will pay proportion of salary. Mr. T. G. Malcolm, a teacher of wide experience, has been appointed to the first-named position, and his duties will be to direct the training in agriculture in the primary schools and to conduct theoretical and practical classes for students and teachers. The appointment of Mr. J. Moodie as Assistant Instructor will insure more frequent visits to the country schools, and enable the Instructors to give teachers personal assistance and advice in the establishment and maintenance of school gardens.

FREE SCHOOL-BOOKS.—During the year the Department's grant for free books has been extended so as to include Standard III. In its last annual report the Board expressed the opinion that the money would have been better spent in the purchase of essential school requisites. Nothing has taken place to cause the Board to alter its opinion. On the contrary, the representations made by School Committees and headmasters have strengthened the Board's conviction that parents generally would prefer to buy the books used by their own children, and that it would be of manifest advantage if a fund existed for the purchase of drawing-books, copy-books, exercise-books, and other items of school stationery. Such articles are, as a rule, retained in the school, and, as they belong to the individual children, there is not the danger in their use, as in the case of books which are the common property of the school. The Board understands that other Education Boards concur in the opinions expressed above, and it therefore trusts that as the disadvantages of the present system become more apparent the Minister will feel disposed to again give the whole matter his careful consideration.

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The Hon. the Minister of Education.

T. W. ADAMS, Chairman.