

THE SCHOOLS.—There were eighty schools in operation at the end of the year, four more than for the previous year, the new schools being Cannington, Waitohi Upper, Allandale, and Riverlands. Owing to the continued small attendance in the secondary department, the Geraldine District High School was disrated during the year, the secondary department being closed.

TEACHERS.—At the end of the year there were 175 teachers in the Board's service, including twenty-six pupil-teachers and eight probationers. Of the 141 adult teachers, twenty were uncertificated, but most of these are making some effort to improve their scholastic status. However, it should be pointed out to those who are not improving their position that section 54 of the Education Act states clearly that the engagement of an uncertificated teacher is only temporary, and that as soon as certificated teachers are available the Board may dispense with the services of uncertificated teachers. In the past there has been a dearth of fully qualified teachers, and the Board has been compelled to employ those not fully qualified, and it is only fair to them to say that some are doing good work; but there are signs that the supply of teachers will soon equal the demand, and that the time is not far distant when the Board will be able to fill all but the lowest positions in the service with certificated teachers.

SCHOLARSHIPS.—The annual examinations were held in November and December, the number of candidates being fifty-seven for the Junior Examination and forty-two for the Senior. The Board awarded ten Junior and eight Senior Scholarships, of the annual value of £182, and the Junior National Scholarships were won by Rosa Vague, of the Pleasant Point School, and Philip T. Mauger, of the Salisbury School.

PHYSICAL DRILL.—Drill and physical exercises are taught in all the schools of the district, and generally the reports of the Inspectors on this work are very favourable indeed. This is especially the case with reference to the large schools where special attention is given to the physical development of the pupils.

AGRICULTURAL INSTRUCTOR.—During the year the Government decided to make special grants to those district high schools which make a special feature of the teaching of agriculture. This Board, recognizing the great importance of the subject in an agricultural and pastoral district like South Canterbury, at once set to work to secure the services of a properly qualified instructor to organize and supervise the teaching of agriculture in its primary, secondary, and technical schools. The co-operation of the County Councils, High School Boards, and agricultural and pastoral associations was secured, and promises of financial assistance were readily given. Applications for the position of organizing instructor were obtained from the Dominion, America, and Britain, and early this year Mr. John Brown, B.Sc., of the West of Scotland Agricultural College, was appointed. The Board hopes soon to devote to the teaching of agriculture the attention it deserves.

ATTENDANCE.—The roll-number at the end of the year shows an increase of 152 over that of the previous year, while the yearly average attendance (4,767) shows an increase of 111, and constitutes a record for the district. The average attendance expressed as a percentage of the mean of the average weekly roll-numbers for the four quarters was 87.28, and is an increase of 0.25 over that for the previous year, but is still one below the record for the district. The attendance at many of the schools was affected by various epidemics during the year, and this will partly explain the somewhat low average attendance; otherwise there is no reason why the regularity of the attendance of this district should not be the highest in the Dominion.

BOARD OFFICES.—In April the Board removed to its new suite of offices adjoining the technical school. The building, which the Board has provided at a cost of over £1,000, includes Board room, public office, Secretary's office, Inspector's room, and store-room. The present offices give better accommodation for the Board's official and administrative staff, whose work in the past was carried on under considerable difficulties and personal discomfort.

BUILDINGS.—Nearly all the ordinary repairs and painting of school buildings during the year were carried out by the Board's staff of workmen, the new method having been initiated during the previous year. It is difficult yet to say whether, on the whole, the work is done more cheaply than formerly; but it is certain that it is done more thoroughly, and that there will not be in the future as there have been in the past the numerous complaints regarding inefficient and careless workmanship. During the year the following school buildings were thoroughly repaired and painted: Albury, Cave, Chamberlain, Cricklewood, Glenavy, Gleniti, Hannaton, Hazelburn, Kapua, Milford, Morven, Opihi, Pleasant Point, St. Andrew's, Skipton, Southburn, Sutherlands, Temuka, Te Ngawai, Timaru, Main Waihao Downs, Waitohi Flat, Waitohi Upper, and Willowbridge. Besides, extensive works were carried out at Hook, Kingsdown, Makikihi, Waimataitai, and Waimate. The carrying-out of the underground drainage in Timaru is compelling the Board to incur very heavy expenditure in connection with the three town schools. It has been found advisable to instal ranges of automatic syphonic latrines, and these require new buildings in some cases, and considerable alterations in others. The total cost is expected to be over £600, and the Board will have to provide for this out of its materially decreased grant from the Government this year.

FINANCE.—A statement of the Board's receipts and expenditure is given below. The chief items of receipts were: Teachers' salaries, £22,640 18s. 6d.; grants for administration, £2,907 2s. 4d.; scholarships, £423 4s.; manual and technical grants, including £600 for Timaru Technical School building, £2,050 6s.; school buildings, £648 15s. 1d.; special grants for buildings, £1,010 19s. 3d. The chief items of expenditure were: Teachers' salaries, £22,716 0s. 10d.; general administration, £2,882 14s. 2d.; Board offices, £719 11s. 9d.; scholarships, £420 0s. 10d.; manual and technical, £2,143 3s. 11d.; maintenance of buildings, &c., £3,314 18s. 9d.; special new buildings, £189 2s. 11d. At the end of the year the Board had a nominal credit balance of £2,799 8s. 7d.; but after allowing for all liabilities, and taking credit for all moneys due, including the building grant of £1,711, the credit balances of the three accounts were: General Account, £681 11s. 3d.; Building Account, £2,632 7s. 7d.; Technical Account, £240 12s. 3d.

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The Hon. the Minister of Education, Wellington.

W. M. HAMILTON, Chairman.