

Physical Instruction.—The Inspector of Schools in his report to the Board states that for the most part the physical exercises are of the Swedish type. Breathing-exercises are regularly practised. Various schools exhibit wand, dumb-bell, and club drill. Military drill was well taught in all the larger schools. The Board commends the proposal to exclude military drill from the primary schools, firmly believing that simple physical and breathing exercises will prove more beneficial in every way.

Scholarships.—The scholarships in force at the close of the year were: Board, 17; Junior National, 3; private, 1. On the results of the Junior National Scholarship Examination, held in November, five Board Scholarships and one Junior National Scholarship were awarded.

Free Books.—The Board begs to express its approval of the Department's action in withdrawing the grant for free school-books. We are strongly of opinion that in future, before introducing schemes of this kind, the Department would be wise to consult the various Education Boards, who should, to say the least, be able to tender sound advice on such questions. Had the Boards been consulted in the first place in connexion with this matter many thousands of pounds sterling might have been saved the country. This Board considers that good use can be made of the small grants available for the purchase of continuous readers, and also of the subsidy for school libraries. In this latter connexion a revision of the scale appears desirable, the rate of 9d. per head being too low in the case of small schools.

Manual and Technical.—Practically all schools are receiving instruction in some branch of hand-work. Recognized classes were conducted at fifty-eight schools, the following subjects being taught: Elementary agriculture, dairy-work, physiology, first aid and ambulance, swimming and life-saving, and various branches of handwork. School classes in woodwork, cookery, and advanced plain needle-work were continued at the Blenheim Technical School [details not printed.]

Buildings.—The expenditure under this head during 1912 was £3,798 5s. 6d., comprising £2,181 4s. 1d. for new works, £1,103 13s. 5d. for maintenance, £453 10s. 11d. for rebuilding, £15 18s. 3d. on account of damage done by fire, and £43 18s. 10d. in rents. During the year the Board completed the rebuilding of the Kaituna schoolroom, and the old class-room at Marlboroughtown. New schools were completed at Redwoodtown (Blenheim Side School), Picton (infants' room), Jordan, Deep Creek, and Pelorus Bridge; new residences at Koromiko, Te Rou, and Opouri Valley. The latter building was provided by the Marlborough Timber Company free of cost to the Board. During the current year the Board contemplates rebuilding the Fairhall schoolroom, and one of the class-rooms at Grovetown.

School-sites.—The Board again enters its protest at the practice of the Department in not paying the full cost of new sites and additional ground found necessary. It simply means that where Boards have to devote a portion of their funds to the above purpose, their Maintenance and Rebuilding Fund is being unwisely impoverished. Throughout New Zealand a large number of school buildings must be reaching that stage when it is no longer possible to repair them, and it is absolutely certain that the Boards will need every spare penny for rebuilding purposes, seeing that the whole cost of this work must be borne by them. If the Department continues its present policy it means that rebuilding must necessarily be delayed, thereby involving the teaching of children in rooms which are in most cases rapidly reaching a very insanitary stage. In its endeavour to save a few pounds the Department is overlooking the necessity of safeguarding the health of hundreds of young children.

Finance.—The balance-sheet shows a credit balance of £74 19s. 3d. Details of the receipts and expenditure for the year are appended.

Returns, &c.—The Board desires to express its appreciation of what has so far been done by the Department in the matter of abolishing unnecessary forms and returns, and the simplification of others. It is to be hoped that full effect will be given to the recommendations of the Education Commission in this direction.

Thanks.—Friendly relations between the Board and its servants have characterized the year's working; and once again we desire to place on record the good work done by the School Committees and teachers for the welfare of education in this part of the Dominion.

I have, &c.,

The Hon. the Minister of Education, Wellington.

R. McCALLUM, Chairman.

NELSON.

SIR,—

Education Office, Nelson, May, 1913.

In accordance with the provisions of the Education Act, the Nelson Education Board has the honour to submit the following report of its proceedings for the year 1912:—

The Board.—The members of the Board are: Messrs. A. T. Maginnity, F. W. O. Smith, and W. Lock (East Ward); J. D. Beuke, L. D. Easton (Chairman), and W. N. Franklyn (Middle Ward); and J. L. Munson, G. B. Shepherd, and J. W. Fair (West Ward). At the annual election held in July Messrs. Lock, Franklyn, and Fair were re-elected, whilst Mr. Easton succeeded Major Franklyn as Chairman in August last. During the year twenty-four meetings were held; the meetings in February were held in Reefton and Westport, and the November meetings at Motueka and Takaka. The average attendance of members was seven.

Primary Schools.—On the 31st December there were 116 schools under the Board's control. Of these, twelve were household schools—i.e., schools having less than nine children in average attendance. The Board continues to be faced with the difficulty of securing suitable applicants as teachers for the large number of small schools which the district contains, and in the case of several household schools children were denied facilities for education, owing to an inadequate staff. The Board is of the opinion that greater inducements must be offered to secure an efficient and effective teaching staff.