

MARLBOROUGH.

SIR,—

Education Office, Blenheim, 12th March, 1915.

In accordance with the requirements of the Education Act, the Marlborough Education Board has the honour to present the following report of the proceedings for the year ending the 31st December, 1914 :—

Board.—At the beginning of the year the Board was constituted as follows : Eastern Ward—Mr. John Conolly, Mr. Alex. Mackay, and Mr. Charles Ferguson ; Central Ward—Mr. J. J. W. White, Mr. R. McCallum, M.P., and Mr. E. H. Penny ; Western Ward—Mr. Charles Nees, Mr. John S. Storey, and Mr. James Fulton. The members who retired in accordance with section 11 of the Education Act were Messrs. Conolly, Penny, and Fulton. Mr. Conolly and Mr. Fulton were returned unopposed. The contested election in the Central Ward resulted in the return of Mr. E. H. Penny. At the annual meeting Mr. White was elected Chairman. Twelve ordinary meetings of the Board were held during the year, the attendances of members being—Mr. Conolly, 7 ; Mr. Mackay, 11 ; Mr. Ferguson, 9 ; Mr. McCallum, 11 ; Mr. Penny, 12 ; Mr. White, 12 ; Mr. Storey, 9 ; Mr. Fulton, 10 ; Mr. Nees, 11.

Schools.—The number of schools open at the close of the year was ninety-four, being an increase of one on the figures of the previous year. Four private schools were visited by the Board's Inspector.

Attendance.—The average attendance for the year was, 2,251, the figures for the four quarters being—March, 2,226 ; June, 2,222 ; September, 2,288 ; December, 2,268. The number on the roll at the close of the year was 2,516, being an increase of fifty-nine on the figures for 1913. The percentage of attendance for the year was 91·58, being 1·56 per cent. higher than in 1913. An epidemic of measles was prevalent during the winter, but was not serious enough to affect the attendance to any great extent. Whooping-cough was still in evidence in a few parts of the district, but it has, apparently, now disappeared for the present. The number of children attending the private schools inspected was 232. The Truant Officer's report to the Board shows that seven informations were laid against parents for failing to comply with the School Attendance Act, and convictions were recorded in each case. The total amount of fines received by the Board during the year was £2 12s.

Teachers.—At the close of the year there were in the service of the Board twenty-seven male teachers, ninety-four female teachers, one male and three female pupil-teachers, one male and four female probationers, making a total of 130. Of the 121 adult teachers forty-two are certificated, and one holds a license to teach.

Instruction of Teachers.—The courses of instruction held during the year were as follows : Elementary agriculture and dairy-work, by Mr. W. A. G. Penlington, M.A., and Mr. H. Rands, M.A. ; botany, by Miss H. Jenkins, M.A. ; vocal music, by Mr. G. H. Gray ; drawing by Mr. H. Robson, M.A. ; sewing by Miss J. Brown. The correspondence course for uncertificated teachers, under the direction of Mr. A. A. Wedde, is doing good work, the majority of the teachers evidencing a keen desire to improve their status. That the classes are doing much towards improving the efficiency of our teachers is proved by the results obtained at the recent examination for teachers' certificates.

Physical Instruction.—The Inspector of Schools in his report to the Board states that deep-breathing exercises are taken daily, and physical drill in the form of free exercises is practised in the majority of the schools. In a few instances dumb-bell and club drill are favoured, and in two schools military drill is still continued.

Scholarships.—The scholarships in force at the close of the year were—Board, 9 ; Junior National, 3. On the results of the Junior National Scholarship Examination, held in November, three Board Scholarships and one Junior National Scholarship were awarded.

Manual and Technical.—School classes in woodwork, cookery, and advanced plain needlework were continued at the Blenheim Technical School, being attended by pupils from the following schools : Blenheim, Picton, Grovetown, Marlboroughtown, and Convent. Classes in handwork were held in practically all the schools in the district, and at many of the larger schools a branch of manual instruction was also taught.

Buildings.—The expenditure under this head during 1913 was £2,883 2s. 2d., comprising £1,654 0s. 3d. for new works, £1,222 11s. 11d. for maintenance, and £6 10s. in rents. During the year new schools were completed at French Pass and Ronga Valley. The teacher's residence at Flat Creek was reconstructed, and new residences were erected at Marlboroughtown and Marshlands. A septic-tank system was installed at the Picton School, and the Board's programme for the year 1915 provides for the installation of similar systems at most of the larger schools in the district. Where septic tanks are provided the School Committees agree to pay to the Board, annually, an amount equal to what was formerly spent by them on the services of a sanitary contractor.

Finance.—The balance-sheet shows a credit balance of £1,029 17s. 9d.

Thanks.—The Board feels that the year under review has been a most successful one, marked by considerable progress, and records with pleasure its appreciation of the efforts of its officials, School Committees, and teachers in furthering the interests of the district generally.

I have, &c.,

The Hon. the Minister of Education, Wellington.

J. J. W. WHITE, Chairman.

NELSON.

SIR,—

Nelson, 1st June, 1915.

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 1914 :—

The Board.—The members of the Board are : Messrs. F. W. O. Smith (Chairman), W. Lock and H. J. Harris (East Ward) ; W. N. Franklyn, W. C. Baigent, and T. Symes (Middle Ward) ; and