

By-laws.—In May, 1917, the Board held a special meeting for the purpose of revising its by-laws. These have now been compiled in pamphlet form and issued to Committees and teachers.

Board Offices.—Since the present Board was constituted in 1916 there has been a considerable increase in the Board's staff, owing to the larger area administered, and developments in agricultural and manual and technical instruction; consequently the office accommodation available in the Normal School buildings was found insufficient. In view of this, and the Training College requiring more accommodation owing to increase in numbers of students, arrangements have been made to lease for a period of fifteen years central offices in Oxford Terrace. The new offices, which have been planned to meet the Board's requirements, will enable the whole of the Board's staff to be accommodated in one building, and this central position should prove a great convenience not only to the staff, but to teachers, Committees, and others having business transactions with the Board.

Buildings.—New schools were erected at Cameron's, Huntingdon, Mount Nessing, Sherwood Downs, and Whiterock; arrangements were made for the building of new schools at Lagimhor and Parnassus; and schools were rebuilt at Methven, Mikonui, and Paroa. Additions were authorized to the schools at Beckenham, Cashmere, Clandeboye, Fairton, Shirley, Somerfield, and Sutherland's, and at date of this report, with the exception of Fairton, are either finished or nearing completion. The teacher's residence at Milford was rebuilt, and a small residence erected at Waitaha. Considerable improvements were effected at the Normal School, where complete and up-to-date outbuildings have been provided. The school building at Rangatira Valley was removed to Winchester Settlement, and opened under the name of Te Awa. Extensive alterations were carried out at the Halswell School, and temporary class-rooms were erected at Christchurch West to provide for increased attendance. At the new Methven School an open-air class-room was built in accordance with the plan approved by the Medical Inspector of Schools, and steps are being taken to erect a detached open-air class-room at the Wainataitai School, Timaru. Since the close of the year the Department has granted the Board's application for a contribution towards the erection of a complete new school in brick at Ashburton, and the rebuilding in brick of three rooms at St. Albans and four rooms at Sydenham. The Board's thanks are due to Mr. H. Friedlander for his generous gift of £1,000 towards the rebuilding of the Ashburton School. The urgent need of improving the school buildings at the Chatham Islands was brought under the notice of the Department, and it is hoped that a grant for this purpose will be made at the close of the war. The Board is arranging for the carrying-out at once of the most urgent repairs. In the case of fifty school buildings, a sum of £50 or over was expended either on repairs, renovations, or furniture, or on improvements to school-grounds. Owing to the high cost of painting-material, the Board is carrying out painting of buildings only in urgent cases. A site of half an acre has been purchased in Moorhouse Avenue for the erection of workshops in Christchurch to be used in connection with the manufacture of school furniture and ordinary repair work.

Finance.—From the statement of receipts and expenditure it will be noticed that, as regards the General Account and Rebuilding Account, the financial position of the Board has improved considerably during the past year. In order to make provision for the rebuilding of worn-out schools it was decided at the beginning of the year to set apart 40 per cent. of the building grant for this purpose, the money being placed on fixed deposit. For a long time past the Board has desired that the Department should divide the building grant into separate amounts for rebuilding and maintenance of buildings. In October the Department decided to do this, and from the 1st November separate grants have been paid. It is worthy of notice that the amount allotted by the Department is almost the same as that approved by the Board earlier in the year. Owing to the rapidly increasing cost of building the Board has had great difficulty in keeping the cost of new works near the amount of the special Government grant for the purpose. In many cases the cost has considerably exceeded the grant, in which connection, however, the Minister has intimated his willingness to make such adjustments of special grants as may be reasonable and equitable, having regard to the rapid increase in the cost of building.

Schools.—The number of schools in operation at the end of the year, including thirty-one aided schools but excluding eight side schools, were 376, classified as follows: Grade 0, 15; Grade I, 100; Grade II, 98; Grade III, 108; Grade IV, 23; Grade V, 12; Grade VI, 5; Grade VII, 11; Grade VII½, 4: total, 376. During the year schools were opened at Sherwood Downs, Te Awa, and Waipara, and household schools at Lyttelton Heads and Waikerikikeri. The schools at Flea Bay, Four Peaks, Kaimata, Skipton, Taipo, Tormore, and Westbrook were closed. The undermentioned table shows the number of schools at the end of the year of each decade given, and at the end of the year 1917, also the number of children on the rolls, the approximate number in average attendance, and the percentages of attendance:—

Year.	Total of Schools.	On Roll at End of Year.	Average Attendance.	Percentage of Attendance.
1880	185	23,086	16,412	71.1
1890	268	29,605	23,728	80.1
1900	335	27,930	23,806	81.6
1910	360	29,778	25,587	85.9
1917	376	34,119	30,062	88.1