

by the close of the year every school of two or more teachers had received its equipment of new furniture. A commencement has already been made with the work of similarly equipping sole-teacher schools, and it is just a matter of a short time before the old type of long desk and form will be a thing of the past. The total amount expended in this direction during the year was £1,452.

*School Buildings.*—In addition to the usual maintenance of school buildings, erection of out-buildings, &c., the following works were completed during the year: Remodelling or additions at Lumsden, Ohai, Otautau, Riverton, and Invercargill Middle, £682 19s. 11d.; Tuatapere (addition to school), £433 4s. 8d.; Wyndham (new residence), £981 1s.; Winton (secondary department), £1,376 6s. 7d.; Wairio (rebuilding school), £733 1s.; Gore High School (additions), £825 14s. 2d.; Gore (woodwork building), £717 13s. 4d.; Thornbury (residence), £872 14s. 7d.; Winton (dental clinic), £245 0s. 11d.; Nightcaps (hot-water heating), £200 7s.; Mataura (out-offices), £182 8s. 1d.; dental clinic, Invercargill (alterations), £114 3s. 4d. In addition, the erection of a new Manual-training School at Winton and the remodelling of the Queenstown School were nearing completion at the close of the year.

*Finance and Accounts.*—The total receipts for the year amounted to £148,271 18s. 8d., and the payments made during the same period were £150,148 6s. 11d.

*Board's Jubilee.*—During the year the Board attained its jubilee, the first meeting of the Southland Education Board having been held in the County Council Offices on the 13th May, 1878. To mark the occasion an interesting record was compiled containing a list of all the schools taken over from the Otago Education Board, copies of the minutes of the Board's earliest meetings, and of the Board's first annual report, complete lists of the Chairman and members of the Board and also of the office staff, copies of the Board's first and latest balance-sheets, &c. The record showed unmistakably the wonderful progress made educationally in this district in a period of fifty years.

*Retirement of Board's Secretary.*—Reference must also be made in this respect to the retirement towards the end of the year of the Board's Secretary, Mr. F. G. Stevenson. In taking farewell of Mr. Stevenson after a period of thirty-eight years on the staff, the Board placed on record an expression of its appreciation of the long and faithful service rendered by him to the cause of education in Southland.

*Conclusion.*—In conclusion, the Board would take the opportunity to thank you and the officers of your Department for the courtesy and attention shown in dealing with the many matters that have been brought before your Department. The thanks of the Board are also due to the Inspectors for their valuable assistance at all times, and to the School Committees, too, the Board would convey its appreciation of the untiring zeal they have displayed in the cause of education in this district.

I have, &c.,

ALFRED WILLIAM JONES, Chairman.

The Hon. the Minister of Education, Wellington.