

entitled to bonuses will increase every year, and, small as they are, they will be a great drain on the Maintenance Fund. As the classification of the teachers is made under Government regulations, it is suggested that bonuses should not form a charge against the Maintenance Fund, but that they should be provided for by a special Parliamentary vote, and that a uniform scale, on a liberal basis, should be prescribed and sanctioned by the Governor for all the education districts. At present, when great inequality exists in the amount of bonuses paid by the different Boards, there is every inducement for the best teachers in those districts where the bonuses are low, to remove and seek employment under those Boards by whom a more liberal scale has been adopted. If the inequality in the bonus scales is allowed to continue, the consequence will be that the weaker districts will lose their best teachers, their places will necessarily be supplied by those of an inferior grade, and the standard of education will be gradually lowered.

SCHOOL GROUNDS.—The new school buildings erected in this district from plans furnished by the architect to the Board, while combining neatness with economy, are a very great improvement on the barn-like structures of the old schools, which not only disfigured the landscape, but were repulsive in their appearance. Tourists in Southland are beginning to mark the change, and speak in high terms of the neat and cheerful-looking school buildings which are rising in many directions. This remark, however, does not extend to the school grounds, which with few exceptions have the same “bleak, cheerless, and untidy” appearance as they had on Mr. Hislop’s visit in 1875. “With few exceptions,” says that gentleman in his report for that year, “no attempt has been made to enclose the school grounds with live fencing, or to plant any portion of them with trees and shrubs. There are few school gardens worthy of the name, and a tidily kept one is quite a rarity. . . . The school committees and settlers, who have a more permanent interest than the teachers can be expected to take, might do much to encourage and substantially assist the teachers in improving the appearance of the school grounds by the planting of trees, shrubs, and live fences for shelter and ornament.” However desirable the ornamenting of the school grounds may be, its accomplishment is not unattended with difficulties. No funds for the special purpose are at the disposal of the Board or school committees, and it can scarcely be expected that teachers can afford to expend sums from their narrow incomes in order to ornament any property the tenure of which is only by sufferance. These remarks are made solely with the view of drawing attention to the subject, and of some scheme being devised by which committees may be encouraged and assisted in ornamenting the school grounds, so as to render them what they ought to be, “things of beauty, and the sources of good influences.”

I have, &c.,
JOHN G. SMITH,
Secretary.

The Hon. the Minister of Education.

GENERAL STATEMENT of RECEIPTS and EXPENDITURE for the Year ending 31st December, 1879.

Receipts.			Expenditure.		
	£	s. d.		£	s. d.
To Balances, 1st January, 1879—			By Office and Board—		
Maintenance Account ..	369	8 3	Office staff, salaries ..	300	0 0
Special Buildings Grant ..	1,191	13 0	Clerical assistance ..	4	10 0
Grants from Government—			Departmental contingencies ..	341	10 11
Statutory Capitation (£3 15s.) ..	18,519	0 0	School Inspection—		
Grants to Committees (10s.) ..	1,466	0 0	Salaries ..	500	0 0
Inspection subsidy ..	300	0 0	Examination of pupil teachers ..	1	7 3
Specially for Buildings ..	9,365	0 0	Teachers' salaries and allowances ..	10,489	16 1
Payments by School Commissioners from			School Committees for educational pur-		
Education Reserves ..	2,475	11 0	poses ..	1,301	1 5
Fees for District High Schools ..	147	0 0	Scholarships—Expenses of examinations..	1	7 3
From Public Libraries vote ..	283	10 9	Training of teachers ..	60	0 0
Deposits, libraries ..	37	9 0	Insurance of school buildings..	89	13 6
Rent of school reserves ..	10	0 0	School Buildings—		
Bank Interest ..	86	5 9	New buildings ..	7,211	19 6
Insurance Policies—Amount received ..	700	0 0	Enlargement, improvements, and repairs	1,120	16 10
Grant for training ..	60	0 0	School furniture and appliances not in-		
			cluded in preceding ..	121	6 7
			Purchase of sites ..	222	0 0
			Plans, supervision. &c. ..	251	12 9
			Library Committees out of Public Libraries		
			vote ..	289	17 6
			Drill instructor ..	21	13 4
			Rents of schoolhouses ..	34	12 0
			Balance—Board fund ..	2,610	12 10
			In deposits—Libraries ..	37	9 0
	£25,011	6 9		£25,011	6 9

THOMAS M. MACDONALD, Chairman.
JOHN G. SMITH, Secretary.

I certify this statement to be correct.
H. LIVINGSTON, Auditor.