

I have audited this account, and have compared the items with the vouchers, and find it correct. The balance at the bank is accurately stated.—J. OLLIVIER, Provincial District Auditor.
February 24, 1885.

STATEMENT of ASSETS and LIABILITIES on 31st December, 1884.

A. *Exclusive of Building Fund.*

<i>Assets.</i>				<i>Liabilities.</i>			
	£	s.	d.		£	s.	d.
Cash in bank on this account, 31st De-				Due to teachers	26	4	10
cember, 1884	9,062	14	6	Due to General Government	4,841	6	6
Due from scholarships grant	190	0	0	Due to fund for Board's scholarships, train-			
				ing scholarships, and ex-pupil-teachers'			
				allowances	4,000	0	0
				Due to scholarships outstanding	21	5	4
				Due to printing and advertising	32	1	3
				Due to incidental expenses unpaid	162	18	10
				Balance	168	17	9
	£9,252	14	6		£9,252	14	6

B. *Building Fund only.*

	£	s.	d.		£	s.	d.
Cash in bank on this account, 31st De-				Balance of amounts due or to fall due			
cember, 1884	582	3	1	under contracts	854	17	0
Balance	833	15	11	Due on account of sundry repairs and im-			
				provements to be expended by School			
				Committees	561	2	0
	£1,415	19	0		£1,415	19	0

SOUTH CANTERBURY.

SIR,—

Timaru, 31st March, 1885.

I have the honour to submit the general report of the Education Board of the District of South Canterbury for the year ending 31st December, 1884.

THE BOARD.—At the annual election for three members, in March, Messrs. Steward, Barker, and Walcot were the retiring members. Messrs. Steward and Barker were re-elected, and Mr. George Gray Russell was elected in the place of Mr. Robson B. Walcot. The Board then consisted of the Rev. George Barclay, Messrs. Edward Wakefield, M.H.R., Richard A. Barker, Samuel W. Goldsmith, John Talbot, William Jukes Steward, M.H.R., Melville Gray, George Gray Russell, and Dr. Charles J. Foster. On the 3rd day of April the Rev. George Barclay was re-elected Chairman of the Board. During the year twelve ordinary and three special meetings were held, the average attendance being 6·06.

SCHOOLS.—New schools have been opened at Kakahu Bush, Hakateramea, Belfield, Silverstream; the North Orari School reopened under the name of South Rangitata, and the Opihi School restarted under better auspices, making an increase altogether of six schools during the year added to the Board's establishment.

Applications for the establishment of schools have been received from the inhabitants of Waitaki North, Cannington, and Upper Waitohi Flat. The two latter districts have been constituted; but, as no building fit for school purposes could be obtained in Waitaki North, and the residents were unwilling to promise sufficient material aid towards the construction of a building for that purpose, the question of establishment still remains in abeyance.

At the close of the year there were 45 schools in operation, and these schools were classified according to attendance, as follows: Under 25 pupils in average attendance, 11 schools; between 25 and 50 pupils, 22 schools; between 50 and 100 pupils, 5 schools; between 100 and 300 pupils, 5 schools; between 300 and 500 pupils, 1 school; and above 500 pupils, 1 school: total, 45 schools. Of these 45 schools there were 15 at the close of the year working under the Board's Aided Schools Regulations, five of which were entitled to be taken over by the Board, and applications on behalf of three have been since received.

ATTENDANCE.—The attendance of scholars shows a steadily increasing ratio, the average for the year being 175 above that of 1883, and 266 above that of 1882. The number of children attending school at the end of the year was 4,067, while the average attendance for that number was 3,220, or 78·8 per cent., a slight improvement even here on former years.

The average attendance, as compared with the roll-number, may be deemed not unsatisfactory, though, of course, it is considerably modified by circumstances not at all peculiar to this district—such as occasional severity of the weather, distance from site of school, age of the children, urgency of domestic or other claims. No doubt the average attendance could be considerably raised by greater energy on the part of the Committees in putting forth the compulsory clauses of the Act. The Board might also venture the opinion that, so long as no part of the cost of education is directly felt, a large number of parents will be content to allow their children to play the truant.

The following table shows the attendance of the district for the last quarter of each year since the Board was established:—