

forced the Board to cut down staff salaries, Committees' allowances, and administrative expenses to the lowest limits.

(2.) That, owing to the sparsely-settled condition of the district, and the existence of so many small centres of population, a comparatively large number of small schools must be provided and maintained.

(3.) That the weather in Westland is exceptionally unfavourable to a good attendance. The almost constant downpour of rain that prevails materially reduces the daily attendance, and seriously diminishes the Board's income. The meteorological returns show the rainfall of the West Coast of the Middle Island to be about five times as great as the average of all the other stations in New Zealand. Next, and in addition to the unfavourable climate, the long distances and bad tracks over which many of the children have to travel cause irregularity of attendance, and help to reduce the daily average attendance.

These drawbacks were serious enough when the Board's revenue depended upon the working average—they will be intensified when the strict average attendance is substituted.

PUPIL-TEACHERS.—The number of pupil-teachers as given above is the same as last year. Two requests for the appointment of a pupil-teacher have been made by School Committees; but the Board, apart from financial considerations, is disinclined to add to the number at present employed in this district.

The Board desires to reiterate the opinion already several times expressed in its reports, and largely indorsed by other Boards and educational experts, that the examination and classification of pupil-teachers should be entirely taken in hand by the department.

SCHOLARSHIPS.—There is at the present time only one scholarship held under the Board's regulations, one having expired on the 31st December; whilst, owing to an unfortunate informality, the scholarship competed for in January has not yet been awarded; but, the difficulty having been removed by the Minister of Education, the award will be made before this report is received by the department.

The value of the Board's scholarships is £50 per annum, and they are tenable for two years. In last year's report the Board gave expression to its views on the subject of scholarships generally, and desires to commend those opinions to the consideration of the present Government:—

"Seeing that the funds devoted to the establishment of these scholarships are derived from the taxpayers of the colony as a whole, the Board is of the opinion that the present system of distributing the grant amongst the education districts in proportion to the average daily attendance of scholars not only gives an undue advantage to thickly populated districts, but is also wrong in principle. It is particularly unfair to Westland, and similar districts, inasmuch as the older and wealthier provinces are already possessed of valuable endowments for secondary education, derived from large reserves of the public lands of the colony. It is presumed that the object of devoting public money to the foundation of scholarships is to assist in discovering and developing, for the benefit of the whole community, the best youthful talent in the colony, wherever it may be found; but, under the present management, not only is there no guarantee that these prizes shall fall to the lot of the most deserving youths of the colony, but, as each district has its own scholarship regulations, it is highly probable that the successful candidates in one district may be much inferior in ability to some of the unsuccessful ones in another. It appears to the Board that the expenditure of large sums of money for this purpose can only be justified on the assumption that the greatest possible value obtainable is secured to the State in return, and that, to insure this result, the whole of the amount voted should be applied to the foundation of scholarships open for competition to all scholars attending the public schools of New Zealand, irrespective of locality. If this were done it would be easy, and also very advantageous, to frame regulations so that candidates satisfying certain conditions at these examinations could obtain Civil Service certificates, thus holding out an additional inducement to scholars to present themselves as competitors. Another very useful purpose would be served by thus making the scholarship examinations colonial instead of provincial—viz., the opportunity it would afford of comparing, with some approach to accuracy, the relative proficiency of the scholars in the several education districts."

I have, &c.,

The Hon. the Minister of Education.

RICHARD JOHN SEDDON, Chairman.

GENERAL STATEMENT of RECEIPTS and EXPENDITURE for the Year ending 31st December, 1887.

<i>Receipts.</i>			£	s.	d.	<i>Expenditure.</i>			£	s.	d.
To Balance at beginning of year—						By Office staff—Salaries..	..	..	125	0	0
On Building Account ..	..	..	189	14	2	Clerical assistance ..	..	..	22	0	0
On General Account ..	..	..	208	16	1	Departmental contingencies ..	..	..	166	16	6
On Petty Cash Account ..	..	..	1	12	6	Inspector's salary ..	..	..	175	0	0
Government grant for buildings ..	..	..	813	8	10	Inspector's travelling expenses ..	..	..	77	15	0
Supplementary grant for buildings ..	..	..	158	5	3	Examination of pupil-teachers ..	..	..	4	0	0
Government payments on account of Hokitika School ..	..	..	3,903	15	8	Teachers' salaries and allowances (including rent, bonus, &c.) ..	..	..	5,057	14	4
Government statutory capitation ..	..	..	5,640	18	9	Incidental expenses of schools ..	..	..	414	14	5
Special capitation ..	..	..	324	19	0	Scholarships—					
Scholarship grant ..	..	..	106	10	0	Paid to scholars ..	..	..	125	0	0
Inspection subsidy ..	..	..	175	0	0	Examination expenses ..	..	..	12	12	0
Carried forward ..	..	..	£11,523	0	3	Carried forward ..	..	..	£6,180	12	3