

their own department, and are thus prepared to go well beneath the surface of each subject upon which they are called on to advise the Board. Four of these committees have annually been appointed, bearing the names of the Buildings, the Appointments, the Finance, and the Normal School Committees. To refer to the work in which these committees have successfully led the way, reviewed, revised, and adopted as their recommendations have been by the Board as a whole, will be to refer to by far the most important work of the Board itself.

*Buildings Committee.*—By the Buildings Committee the state of each school building is intimately known, and the work most necessary to preserve the property intrusted to the Board has generally been accomplished, although with restricted means, as the reduced and altogether insufficient sum lately allotted to the Board has made it impossible to provide in all cases the required accommodation, or even to keep the buildings painted and repaired.

*Appointments Committee.*—By the Appointments Committee the performance of each teacher in the employ of the Board has become intimately known, and a well-arranged record has been kept of all the reports affecting their character, their value, and the kind of work for which they are most adapted. A considerable number of unsatisfactory teachers have been weeded out; each examination report received from the Inspectors has been carefully considered, and prompt action taken upon it when required; so that the staff of teachers now employed is one upon which the Board can look with very considerable satisfaction and confidence. Except in very few instances, where some strong local or personal feelings prevail, the School Committees show increased confidence in the recommendations of the Board, and in many instances prefer to leave the appointment of teachers entirely to the Board. The Inspectors' annual reports show a steady advance in educational results, and the confidence and interest of parents are strikingly indicated by a regular increase in the percentage of the average attendance of children on the rolls from 73·83 in 1878 to 82·78 during the past year. It is perhaps to be regretted that the teachers in the employment of the Board, so far as indicated in the action of their Institutes, as well as by the direction of their apparent influence upon the Press, are too hastily inclined to deprecate the vigorous and well-informed action of the Appointments Committee in the matter of appointments and dismissals. But the Board believes it to be impossible that such a feeling can long continue; for, although one dismissed teacher will naturally make more noise than forty that are secured and promoted, a body of well-educated men and women cannot long fail to see that the respectability and the stability of their position as worthy members of an honourable staff can in no way be so well secured as by the existence of a local power sufficiently well informed, disinterested, and strong to dismiss those who would pull down the character and usefulness of their profession, and which is capable of jealously guarding the reputation and position of meritorious teachers, and of fearlessly investigating the actions even of those supervising officials of the Board upon whose conscientious impartiality the security and comfort of the profession so largely depend. The Board is quite conscious that, notwithstanding the correct information and the uniform care of the Appointments Committee, the best possible appointment of a teacher has not in all cases been made. It is not always possible for the Board to insist narrowly and absolutely upon a selection based upon its own more extended and reliable information, without some danger of destroying the confidence of the School Committees that every reasonable attention will be paid to their wishes in the appointment of a teacher for their own school, and that no interference which is not absolutely necessary will be allowed to lessen the sense of responsibility and interest which it is so desirable that every School Committee should feel in its useful work of gratuitous local supervision.

*Finance Committee.*—The economy of administration practised by the Board, under the guidance of its Financial Committee, is best shown by the fact that, whilst almost all other public departments in New Zealand have largely increased both in actual and relative expenditure since the passing of the Education Act in 1877, the purely administrative expenditure of the Board upon each child educated has been steadily reduced from more than 2s. 5d. per head in 1878 to less than 1s. 4d. in 1889. The supervision by the Board as such costs the taxpayers nothing except the travelling expenses of members, which amounted last year to £185 12s., or about 2d. per head of the children educated. In the month of May one of the three Inspectors previously in the service of the Board resigned to accept the headmastership of Timaru High School, and the Board decided not to fill the vacancy, believing that the necessary inspection work may be satisfactorily accomplished by the two very able officers now employed. This has reduced the outlay on inspection by something like £600, which keeps the expenditure of the Board safely within the capitation grant, and enables it to make a small addition to the salaries of some thirty-eight teachers, whose powers are taxed very severely to meet the work required of them in the largest of those country schools in which a second teacher is not employed.

*Normal School Committee.*—The energies of the Normal School Committee have not been severely taxed, but the result of their work has been most satisfactory. The able, conciliatory, and truly parental supervision of the present Principal has established a spirit of harmony, confidence, and co-operation amongst the teachers and students that causes the work of both to tell most effectively in the desired direction. More students apply for admission than can be conveniently received, and it has been necessary to convert part of the drill-shed into a room for the Model School, in order to provide sufficient accommodation for the increased number of children that are now sent to the practising department. As the necessarily migratory character of the student teachers makes it almost imperative that the few high-class permanent teachers employed in this school should not be frequently changed, some slight increase of salaries has been found necessary to remove the probability of that inconvenience. But, notwithstanding this increase of a few salaries and the large increase of attendance, the amount spent upon the Normal School is now £3,461 4s. 2d., as against £5,382 14s. 5d. in 1887. This reduction in cost has not been attained at any sacrifice of efficiency. The results of the Inspectors' last examination show that the Practising School continues to hold a very satisfactory position among the great schools in the district. In the training department twenty-nine out of thirty students admitted completed the full