

and Mr. E. G. Allsworth was elected in the place of Mr. Andrews. The Board then consisted of the following persons, viz.: Mr. T. Kelly (Chairman), Miss Heywood, Messrs. G. A. Adlam, E. G. Allsworth, R. G. Bauchope, H. Faulk, E. Olson, D. Teed, and J. Wade. Mr. Kelly was re-elected Chairman for the year. The Board held twenty-four ordinary and one special meeting during the year, and the attendance of members has been as follows, viz.: Mr. Kelly, 21; Miss Heywood, 22; Mr. Adlam, 23; Mr. Allsworth, 18; Mr. Bauchope, 23; Mr. Faulk, 24; Mr. Olson, 21; Mr. Teed, 16; and Mr. Wade, 24.

SCHOOLS.—There were forty-five schools in operation at the beginning of the year, and one has been opened—viz., the Rowan Road School—making the total of schools now open forty-six.

TEACHERS.—The number of teachers in the employ of the Board was 108, classified as follows: Head-teachers, 31 males, 16 females; assistant teachers, 3 males, 8 females; pupil-teachers, 4 males, 23 females; sewing-teachers, 23 females: total, 38 males, 70 females.

Notwithstanding the fact that the Board cannot offer the same scale of salaries to teachers as other Education Boards where population is more dense, it is satisfactory to find, from the Inspector's report and the Board's knowledge, that the quality of the education now given in the Board's schools is gradually improving, and the acquirements of the children in the essentials of primary education are not below those of other education districts. This is owing to the fact that the staff of teachers now employed by the Board is more efficient, and that the majority of the teachers take a deep interest in the very important work which is committed to their charge—a work of great responsibility, and one in this district attended with many difficulties and discouragements.

DRAWING.—It is satisfactory to find that drawing, the basis of all technical work, is gradually assuming an important position in school teaching. So long as the elementary drawing taught is of a practical character, calculated to teach the hand and the eye to work in harmony, it will be found to be of great advantage in after life on the farm, in the workshop, and the manufactory, helping to make skilled workmen and workwomen, by giving them a truer conception of the form and shape of material things, and creating a new faculty by stimulating invention.

ATTENDANCE.—The roll-number on the 31st December, 1891, was 2,997; on the 31st December, 1892, the number had increased to 3,148, an addition of 151, the result of an increase of population in the district. The average attendance of 1891 was 2,094, equal to 72 per cent. on the roll, as against 2,351 for 1892, equal to 74·6 per cent., showing an increase of 2½ per cent. in the attendance of the district. This improved attendance is no doubt due to the active efforts of some of the School Committees to enforce the compulsory-attendance clauses of the Education Act. The increase is specially noteworthy, as the past year has been distinguished for its excessive rainfall through every month of the year, averaging in the bush districts, where population is now rapidly extending, about 100 in. for the year; and where the so-called roads are but extended mud-holes, effectual barriers to school attendance on the part of young children for many months in the year.

SCHOLARSHIPS.—Two scholarships in Class A and four in Class B were awarded by the Board during the year. One of the candidates in Class A declined to take up the scholarship awarded. The annual payments on account of scholarships for the year was £125 11s. 3d.

BUILDINGS.—The Board has, during the year, built a new school at Rowan Road, a teacher's residence at Fitzroy, and made additions to the Norfolk Road and Midhurst Schools. The attendance at the Stratford School, which is the centre of a district which is rapidly increasing in population, filled the school to overflowing, and forced the Board to anticipate the building grant for 1893 to make an addition to the school, which now accommodates 250 children. This addition is now complete, but it is possible that still further school accommodation will be required during the present year.

Owing to the small building grant received—a sum altogether inadequate to meet the requirements of the district and the rapid extension of settlement—the Board has been unable to comply with the demands of several out-districts for school-buildings, and has also been compelled to refuse to build cottages for the necessary accommodation of teachers where no house can be procured. It is evident to the Board that the Legislature, having undertaken the duty of providing for the primary education of the children of the colony, should seriously consider the case of those persons who take up the arduous work of extending settlement, and see that their children receive at least equal chances of obtaining the elements of education that are afforded to urban populations.

In order to overcome the difficulties which surround pioneer settlement, such as a sparse population and the absence of good ordinary roads, the Board must necessarily provide a larger number of small schools in bush districts compared with what would be deemed necessary in older-settled districts. If such a policy is not adopted a large proportion of the children living in such districts must, as a matter of fact, grow up without education. Such a result should, if possible, be prevented, and a special remedy should be applied in order to meet this special evil. The Board has before represented that the distribution of the building grant on a population basis is not calculated to meet the requirements of districts where small settlements in the bush are extending rapidly, and, in the absence of any special vote, requested that the rents of educational lands within the district should be given to the Board to meet the urgent wants of the settlers. The Board considers the request to be a reasonable one, and again respectfully urges the Minister to give the matter the serious consideration which its importance demands.

SCHOOL COMMITTEES.—The School Committees of this district now number thirty-two, and, as a general rule, to each new school is allotted a school district and a Committee of local management. This system involves more work, but it has the advantage of securing persons as Committeemen who take an interest in school work, and it affords a wider electoral basis for the election of members of the Board. The school is also more likely under such a system to receive that special attention to its local wants which it is the duty of School Committees to provide. The total payments made by the Board to the various School Committees in aid of revenue during the year by way of capitation and special grants was £701 11s. 3d.