

SIR,—

I have the honour to lay before you a report of the proceedings of the Education Board of the District of Nelson for the year 1896.

SCHOOLS.—At the end of the year 112 schools were at work, seventy-nine being within school districts, and thirty-three aided schools outside school districts. New schools have been opened at Central Takaka, Bedstead, and Gledhill's, in the County of Collingwood, and at Progress, in the Inangahua County. The Hardy and Tasman Street Schools, in the City of Nelson, have been amalgamated, so that the net increase in the number of schools is three.

ATTENDANCE OF SCHOLARS.—The number of children on the roll of the schools under the jurisdiction of the Board was at the end of last year 6,004, the strict average attendance being 4,873, and the working average attendance 4,969. The corresponding numbers for the previous year were: on roll 5,995, strict average 4,854, and working average 4,958.

BUILDINGS.—The more important works carried out during the year were the new school at Central Takaka, the Denniston Junior School, and Griffiths' Mill School, additions to Tasman Street and Happy Valley schools, and a teacher's cottage at Upper Motupiko.

CAPLESTON SCHOOL BUILDINGS.—During the year this property has been so seriously damaged by floods in Boatman's Creek—which have brought down *débris* from the gold-mines to such an extent as to make the school ground practically a river-bed—that it has been deemed absolutely necessary, for the safety of both teachers and scholars, to remove the buildings to a more secure position. A new site has been purchased: and it is quite clear that an unforeseen occurrence, for which the Board is in no way responsible, will entail upon it an expenditure of at least £500. The Board considers that it has an equitable claim on the Government in this matter.

BOARD'S FUNDS.—The amount to credit of the Board's General Account at the beginning of the year was £737 3s. 11d., and at its close £965 3s. 7d. At the beginning of the year the balance to credit of Building Account stood at £2,332 12s. 6d., with liabilities of £831. At the end of the year the credit balance was £299 12s. 7d., while the liabilities were £368 18s. 6d. No building grant was received from Government during the year.

The Hon. the Minister of Education.

GEORGE TALBOT, Chairman.

[illegible]

STEAD ELLIS, Secretary.

Examined and found correct.—J. K. WARBURTON, Controller and Auditor-General.