NELSON.

SIR.-

Education Office, Nelson, 13th March, 1897.

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.

MEMBERS OF THE BOARD.—At the election of three members of the Board in March last, the retiring members, Messrs. William Norris Franklyn, Andrew Thomas Maginnity, and George Bell Sinclair were re-elected, the Board, therefore, has consisted of the same persons as before—viz., the gentlemen above named, and Messrs. George Talbot, Richmond Hursthouse, James Colvin, Philip Best, William Henry Phillips, jun., and William Lock. At the meeting in April Mr. Talbot was again unanimously elected Chairman of the Board. During the year the Board has held twelve monthly, nine adjourned, and two special meetings, the average attendance of members at each meeting being 6.8.

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.

Šchool Districts.—In accordance with the by-law of the Board which sanctions the setting up of a school district so soon as an aided school has a full committee of five parents or guardians of children attending the school, and has returned an average attendance of not less than twenty for two successive quarters, two new school districts have been constituted during the year—viz., Upper Motupiko and Kaituna. There are now no less than fifty-nine school districts within the Education District of Nelson.

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.

Teaching Staff.—When the year closed there were 61 male and 127 female teachers on the staff, making a total of 188 teachers of all grades, being an increase of 6 (2 male and 4 female teachers) over the previous year. The above comprise 29 male and 11 female "heads of schools"teachers having assistants or pupil-teachers under them; 18 male and 56 female "sole teachers," 8 male and 27 female "assistant teachers," and 6 male and 33 female probationers, these latter being equivalent to pupil-teachers.

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.

Central School Site.—It is matter for regret that the large sum—£1,300—owing on this account is still unpaid, and it is strongly urged upon the department that a Government grant

should be made specially to enable the Board to clear off this liability.

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 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.

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.

I have, &c., GEORGE TALBOT, Chairman.

GENERAL STATEMENT OF RECEIPTS AND EXPENDITURE for the Year ending 31st December, 1896.

					0	,	_	
$Rec_i pts.$		£	8.	d.	Expenditure.	£	s.	d.
To Balance—					By Office staff—Salaries	295	0	0
On Building Account		2,332	12	6	Clerical assistance	5	5	0
On General Account		737			Departmental contingencies	360	10	2
Other receipts for buildings-					Inspectors' salaries	550	0	
Contractors' deposits		24	19	0	Inspectors' travelling-expenses	200	Ó	0
Refund		0		0	Teachers' salaries and allowances		-	-
Bank interest		5	0	0	(including rent, bonus, &c.)	15,104	16	10
Government statutory capitation	• • •	17,882		0	Incidental expenses of schools	2,034		6
Scholarship grant	• •	348			Training of teachers	98		10
Inspection subsidy		300		0	Scholarships-	• •	-	
Payments by School Commissioner					Paid to scholars	331	2	0
primary education		856	10	0	Examination expenses	35		10
Other receipts—				-	School buildings—		•	
Sale of school-books, &c		531	6	1	New buildings	1,165	0	8
Rents of school sites	• • •		15		Improvements of buildings	737		_
200000 00 000000 00000	• • •	•		•	Furniture and appliances	81		11
					Sites		17	ō
					Contractors' deposits	20	ö	ŏ
			*		Purchase of school-books	672	6	9
					Contribution to school libraries	10	ŏ	ŏ
					Balance—	10	٠	•
					On Building Account	299	12	7
					On General Account	965	-3	7
						- 555		
		£23,025	2	0		£23,025	2	_
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GEO. TALBOT, Chairman. STEAD ELLIS, Secretary.