

attendances during the three quarters immediately preceding, and under the former regulations would therefore have been excepted.

TRUANCY.—On several occasions during the year the question of irregular and non-attendance was under the Board's consideration. In April, when it was found that the assistance of the police could be secured to such an extent as to greatly lessen the labour till then inseparable from the serving of notices and summonses, the Board urged upon all Committees the necessity of enforcing "The School Attendance Act, 1894," in their respective districts. Seeing that the Act so completely enables Committees to take all the necessary steps to compel children to attend school, thereby showing very clearly what the intention of the Legislature was, it is a matter for regret that advantage of its provisions has not been more generally taken. But having regard to the extent to which in some districts the law is being contravened, as well as to the repeated applications of those Committees whose schools serve very thickly-populated localities, the Board has recently appointed a truant officer for six months. His duties, which will require to be carried out with great tact and care, as well as with the strictest impartiality, will at first be confined to the Christchurch city and suburban schools, the extension of operations depending upon the success or failure of the experiment.

NORMAL SCHOOL.—The arrangements made in 1895 for the working and supervision of the training and practising departments at the Normal School have continued to prove satisfactory. The number of students admitted in January, 1896, including six of the second year, was 42—viz., 10 males and 32 females. With the view of effecting the utmost economy, the number of students admitted to the Normal School this year has been reduced to the lowest minimum consistent with the efficient working of the several departments. In December, Mr. W. A. Robinson, B.A., whose year's engagement as part-time lecturer was about to terminate by effluxion of time, was reappointed to the same position till the end of August, 1897. The Principal's report, which is appended, gives information with regard to the results of the teachers' certificate examination.

SCHOLARSHIPS.—The annual examination for scholarships was held on the 15th December and following days. The number of competitors for the junior scholarships was 176 (106 boys and 70 girls), being an increase of 17 as compared with the number in 1895; and for the senior scholarships the number was 19 (13 boys and 6 girls), eight more than in the previous year. The effect of an alteration made in the regulations during 1896, whereby, under certain conditions, the privileges till then practically attached to junior scholarship holders only were extended to other children entering the secondary schools, is seen in the large proportionate increase in the number of those who competed in the senior division. In connection with the increased number of entries in the junior class, the Board has decided to draw the attention of Committees and head teachers to the following remarks made by the Inspectors in their Scholarship Report: "Whilst in one view the fullest candidature is desired, we have reason to wish that more discretion were observed in sending only those who might be deemed fairly prepared in the several subjects. In many cases not even the most favourable judgments of the abilities and attainments of the children could anticipate the slightest chance of success in the competition, or even of securing the qualification mark of 25 per cent. in each subject. To send up for examination children so qualified is only a source of expense to the Board and of useless trouble to the examiners."

In June, 1896, the Board received notice that the residuary estate of the late Mr. James Gammack, of Springston, had been vested in his trustees upon trust thereout "to pay to the Board of Education of North Canterbury the sum of £200 per annum for the purposes of establishing four scholarships in connection with the Canterbury College, to be called the 'Gammack Scholarships,' of such amounts, in such subjects, at such times, and generally in such manner as the said Board shall think fit." The Board caused a letter expressing its thanks for the bequest to be sent to the trustees, Mrs. Annie Gammack and Messrs. John and George Rennie, and, with the view of considering how effect could best be given to the testator's wishes, referred the matter to the Appointments Committee, who subsequently consulted the Board's solicitors as to the correct interpretation of the wording in the bequest. The legal opinion obtained, whilst admitting that the question was not free from doubt, was to the effect that the trust was for the purpose of establishing four scholarships in connection with the educational institution affiliated to the New Zealand University and known as Canterbury College, and that the Board would not be keeping within the terms of the bequest if the money, or any part of it, should be devoted to establishing scholarships to be held at the High Schools controlled by Canterbury College. The Board accepted this view, and adopted regulations, under which, when the scheme is in full operation, four scholarships, awarded on the result of the University Junior Scholarship Examination, and each tenable for three years, will be annually current. As the funds supplied by the Department for the purpose of establishing scholarships are not available for giving a helping hand to those who, having successfully passed through the several stages at the primary and secondary schools, must find an otherwise promising career brought to an abrupt close, it is a matter for special congratulation that the Board should now be in a position to award to the pick of its old scholars so valuable a prize as a three years' course at Canterbury College. Such a privilege would not now be vested in the Board but for the valuable bequest of the late Mr. James Gammack, of whose generosity the Board, through the medium of this report, desires to place on record its high appreciation.

MANUAL AND TECHNICAL INSTRUCTION.—In May, 1896, the Board held a conference with head-masters and delegates from School Committees, representing large and small schools alike, to consider the question of introducing manual instruction into the schools of this district, and of establishing classes for technical instruction. The evidence then taken, with that given by the Board's Inspectors at a special meeting held shortly afterwards, conclusively proved: (1.) That in connection with the lower standards and preparatory classes only, and that but in a modified degree, could manual instruction be introduced into the Board's schools during the ordinary school-