

that in Dunedin and the large towns numbers of children of school age are to be found idling about the streets during school hours, and thus evading the law. That the Legislature declined to place in the hands of the Boards the full responsibility of enforcing the law in this respect was a great mistake. The evil of irregular attendance, which in the large towns and cities is a daily growing one, will never be satisfactorily coped with until the Legislature casts upon the parent or guardian of the irregular attender the onus of proving that the child is unable to attend school, and arms the Board with power—(1) To ascertain conclusively the total number of children of school age within the Education District, and (2) to compel teachers of all private schools to furnish quarterly to the Board accurate returns of enrolment and attendance at such schools. It is only by amending the law in these much-needed respects that there is a reasonable prospect of truancy being checked.

From the following statement a rough estimate may be gained of the work undertaken during the year for the suppression of truancy: Cases investigated, 527. Notices served on parents or guardians under section 5 of "The School Attendance Act, 1894," 218. Penalty summonses issued under section 7 of "The School Attendance Act, 1894" (dealing with parents or guardians of children who had not attended school the number of times required by the Act), 96. Under the above ninety-six penalty summonses there were forty-four convictions, forty-six cases were withdrawn on account of the production by the defendants of exemption certificates, and six cases were dismissed. The total of fines for the year was £4 8s. In accordance with section 7 of the Act, the fine inflicted in each case of conviction was 2s.

FINANCE. — A certified statement of the Board's income and expenditure for the year is appended hereunto. The sum expended in teachers' salaries (including bonuses on classification and bonuses for instructing pupil-teachers) was £63,300 3s. 7d.; the amount paid to School Committees for incidental expenses was £5,685 19s. 1d.; the amount expended in the erection, enlargement, and improvement of school buildings and the purchase of sites was £11,795 0s. 11d. A detailed statement of these payments appears in Appendix A.* The same table also gives the names of the teachers employed, their classification, and the annual salary of each at the rate paid during the last quarter of the year. The same table gives in detail the expenditure on school buildings, &c., and the amount paid to School Committees as incidental expenses.

By order of the Board,
P. G. PRYDE, Secretary.

The Hon. the Minister of Education.

GENERAL STATEMENT of RECEIPTS and EXPENDITURE for the Year ending 31st December, 1896.

<i>Receipts.</i>			<i>Expenditure.</i>		
	£	s. d.		£	s. d.
To Balance—			By Office staff—Salaries ..	1,022	4 4
On Building Account	3,809	13 1	Departmental contingencies ..	423	8 0
On General Account	7,015	4 3	Inspectors' salaries	1,360	7 0
Local contributions for buildings ..	78	5 7	Inspectors' travelling-expenses ..	607	6 11
Government statutory capitation ..	64,959	19 8	Examination of pupil-teachers ..	48	2 0
Government scholarship grant ..	1,519	13 8	Teachers' salaries and allowances (in-		
Government inspection subsidy ..	500	0 0	cluding rent, bonus, &c.) ..	63,300	3 7
Government grant for training of			Incidental expenses of schools ..	5,685	19 1
teachers	300	0 0	Training of teachers	869	17 3
Government grant for technical and			Scholarships—		
manual instruction	5	5 0	Paid to scholars	1,425	10 0
Payments by School Commissioners for			Examination expenses	66	11 0
primary education	9,227	13 5	School buildings—		
District High School fees	154	9 2	New buildings	7,064	16 6
Fees—School of Art and Design ..	373	0 0	Improvements of buildings ..	3,482	8 0
Interest	59	14 8	Furniture and appliances ..	501	17 4
Rents of school-sites	14	2 0	Sites	295	15 8
Dictionaries sold	6	0 0	Plans, supervision, &c. ..	450	3 5
			Truant Officer	97	9 6
			Gymnastic instruction	82	7 0
			Members' expenses	190	16 2
			Dictionaries—Proceeds paid over ..	6	0 0
			School of Art and Design	960	3 4
			Manual and technical instruction		
			grant	5	5 0
			Balance at end of year—		
			Cr. On General Account £7,983 11 8		
			Dr. On Building Account 7,907 2 3		
				76	9 5
	£88,023	0 6		£88,023	0 6

P. G. PRYDE, Secretary and Treasurer.

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

INSPECTORS' REPORT ON THE DISTRICT HIGH SCHOOLS.

SIR,—

We have the honour to submit the following report on the higher work of the District High Schools for the year 1896. The tabular statements show the subjects taught, the number of pupils taught, the number examined, and the amount of work done in each subject.

* See pp. 50–58, ante.