

if it were burnt down, nothing should be paid by Government, for the Board would in any case have been bound to rebuild it out of its ordinary building grant; or, again, if half the usual life of the building had expired when it was destroyed by fire, then, as no sinking fund is made for each school, but a certain percentage of the schools are rebuilt out of each year's ordinary grant, it may be said approximately that half the cost of rebuilding should be borne by the Government and half by the ordinary building grant of the Board; for otherwise in every case of a school so destroyed the ordinary building fund of the Board would be relieved to a corresponding extent. If in the last case the Government paid the whole cost of reinstatement, then the ordinary annual building grants should be reduced proportionately until the Board was in the same position as it would have been if no fire had occurred.

The practical difficulty that would be experienced in attempting to carry out such a method of payments on account of schools destroyed by fire would be very great, inasmuch as no valuation of the public-school buildings of the colony on a fixed general basis has ever yet been made. At present, therefore, all that can be done is to treat each case as far as possible on its merits.

In Table Q will be found figures in reference to the deficiency of school buildings, schools with less than nine pupils in average attendance being omitted. Out of 1,650 schools 109 were being carried on in buildings not belonging to Boards, whilst in 1901 there were 105 out of 1,613. The number of schools without residences increased from 542 to 568. Allowing 10 square feet per unit of average attendance, 34* schools were overcrowded. Additions to the buildings made since the close of the year have slightly reduced this number.

TABLE Q.—DEFICIENCY OF SCHOOL BUILDINGS.
(In this table schools with less than nine pupils have not been counted.)

Education Districts.	Schools in Operation.	Schools not belonging to Boards.	Schools without Residences.	Schools with less than 10 sq. ft. for each Child (but not less than 8 sq. ft.).	Schools with less than 8 sq. ft. for each Child.	Available in 1902 for Buildings. (Tables O and P.)
						£ s. d.
Auckland	407	49	214	5	..	[—1,012 10 6]
Taranaki	69	4	23	1	..	1,469 14 3
Wanganui	150	12	58	3	1	1,125 12 5
Wellington	139	8	84	8	1	[—7,651 3 0]
Hawke's Bay ..	76	15	25	2	1	3,208 1 0
Marlborough ..	35	2	8	1	..	815 11 6
Nelson	102	6	45	1	..	1,907 2 8
Grey	25	1	17	..	1	947 5 0
Westland	22	..	5	480 16 2
North Canterbury ..	201	7	43	2	..	3,771 2 9
South Canterbury ..	70	..	15	1,701 6 6
Otago	210	3	11	2	..	[—456 7 9]
Southland	144	2	20	5	..	3,245 5 7
Totals for 1902 ..	1,650	109	568	30	4	9,551 16 7
Totals for 1901 ..	1,613	105	542	33	7	14,722 13 5

The amount of floor-space allotted per child in different English-speaking countries varies from 8 to 15 square feet, and the cubical space from 120 to 300 cubic feet. For general information it may be as well to repeat here what was said in the last report in reference to this matter:—

Assuming that ample means of ventilation by means of sufficient and suitable inlets and outlets are provided, and that all rooms are emptied and thoroughly flushed with fresh air at intervals not greater than one hour and a half or two hours, the following seems for New Zealand schools a reasonable allowance, and one quite within practicable limits in the case of new schools: For each child in average attendance a minimum floor-space (exclusive of that occupied by such furniture as cupboards) of 12 square feet, and an allowance of cubical space not less than 200 cubic feet, the height of each class-room from floor to wall-plate being at least 14 ft. The dimensions could be adjusted in each particular case to provide the minimum allowances named, it being borne in mind that any height of a room over 15 ft. or 16 ft. should not properly be taken into account in calculating the cubic space available for securing sufficiency of air-supply. The lighting of schools is generally well provided for in the colony; but even in our clear climate no ordinary class-room should be lighted from one side only, and no child should be set to read or write, much less draw, at a greater distance than 22 ft. from a fully lighted window.