

the observance of formalities and accompanying delay prohibit. The Board therefore respectfully, but none the less strongly, protests against the action of the Government in depriving Education Boards of freedom of action when dealing with applications for new school buildings and additions. The number of schools in operation at the end of the year, including twenty-two aided schools, was 206.

MAINTENANCE.—The expenditure on salaries and allowances in regard to teachers engaged in primary departments amounted to £55,579 11s. 2d., and School Committee grants and ordinary incidental expenses to £6,027 5s. 8d., a total of £61,606 16s. 10d. The average attendances on which payment of salaries and incidentals was made (with the usual adjustments for broken periods) were 16,247 and 16,585 respectively; the cost per head of these teachers' salaries was therefore £3 7s. 8d., and that of incidental expenses (exclusive of the special grant of 9d. per head) 7s. 3½d., making a total of £3 14s. 11½d. per head. Adding £9,578 15s. 9d. (general capitation) to the sum expended on salaries, the total cost of primary instruction during the year, exclusive of grants to Committees and expenditure on buildings, was £65,158 6s. 11d., equal to £4 0s. 2½d. for each child in average attendance. The expenditure in salaries of teachers engaged in secondary departments was £1,640 4s. 8d.

The total number of teachers in the Board's service at the end of 1904 was 509. Of these, 205 (121 males and 84 females) were heads of schools or departments, or in sole charge; 203 (40 males and 163 females) were assistants; and 101 (22 males and 79 females) were pupil-teachers. The Board has again had a good deal of trouble in securing teachers for its smaller schools, and in a number of cases has been obliged to place these schools in charge of persons possessing but little experience.

As compared with the previous year, the roll-number on the 31st December, 1904, shows a decrease of 201, which is disappointing, the increase recorded for 1903 having raised the hope that each succeeding year would show an increase. At the end of the year 1895, the roll-number was 21,368, so that there are now 1,990 fewer children attending the public schools in North Canterbury than was the case nine years ago. On the other hand, the percentage of attendance during the year was remarkably high—86·73, a record for North Canterbury.

NORMAL SCHOOL.—The principal's report deals with some of the features of the work of the Normal School, to which 32 students (3 males and 29 females) were admitted during the year. Of these, 18 (3 males and 15 females) were of the first year, and 14 (all females) of the second year. As regards the Normal School and its several departments, the year has been productive of much doubt and uncertainty. Early in 1904, after carefully considering the representations made by the Inspector-General of Schools in regard to the proposed management and maintenance of training-colleges, the Board expressed the opinion that the Normal School should continue under its control. There were also matters of detail affecting the students to which, by resolution of the Board, the Minister's attention was drawn. In accordance with the recommendations of the parliamentary Committee, and acting on the representations made by the Department, a Committee of Advice was set up. At a special meeting of the Board, the recommendations of the Committee of Advice in regard to the proposed reorganization of the Normal School were adopted. The scheme, which was submitted to the Department, aimed at providing accommodation for 800 of the pupils then in attendance, to be distributed among three separate departments (exclusive of provision for students), viz., a model school, a practising or general training-school, and a normal public school (auxiliary training-school). In recommending this scheme the Board was to a great extent influenced by the fact that its adoption would provide for most of the pupils in attendance at the school, at the same time fully utilising the large Normal School buildings. Towards the close of the year the Inspector-General, in conference with the Board's committee, pointed out that the accommodation was insufficient for the successful working of the scheme proposed, about double the space being required, also that the playground was suitable for two schools under practically separate control. The Board, on further consideration of the matter, admitted the soundness of these objections and agreed to take steps to reduce the roll-number to 460, including forty secondary-school pupils and a model school of the same number, in accordance with the scheme recommended by the parliamentary Committee. As regards the staff, the Board felt it necessary, in the interests of the students, to propose that the director should have some tutorial assistance, a modification which the Department agreed to allow. At the date of this report, after a trial extending over some three months, the conclusion forced on the Board is that the staff is not numerically strong enough to cope with the ordinary work of the primary school plus the additional duties connected with the Training College. The Board has therefore proposed, as a temporary expedient (the permanent appointment of a third assistant master and an assistant mistress being regarded as really necessary), to appoint two additional assistant mistresses in lieu of a third assistant master, an arrangement which will provide a certificated teacher for each standard as well as the necessary assistance in the infants' department.

INSPECTION.—In the Inspectors' report a good deal of space is rightly devoted to a consideration of the new conditions under which the department expects primary education to be carried on in future. The Board would impress upon its teachers the desirability of their making a careful study of the advice tendered in regard to the several subjects of instruction, with special reference to the manner in which they will be expected to treat grammar in its bearing on composition. The Board regrets to learn that, owing to the easier conditions regulating promotion, the efforts of its teachers during the last few years have been less effective than in the past; and it desires to impress upon the Department the need of further consideration being given to a matter of such vital importance to the children passing through the public schools of the colony. In their report the Inspectors refer to the absence of the apparatus necessary to carry on school work under the new syllabus, the need of which as regards the teaching of science and geography is severely felt. The Board would respectfully point out that it has no funds with which to equip over two hundred schools with the teaching-aids considered to be necessary, and it therefore desires to urge on the Department that a special grant should be made to meet the expenditure.

About the middle of the year Mr. L. B. Wood, M.A., after a service of nearly twenty years, resigned his position as Inspector. The vacancy on the inspectorial staff was filled by the selection, from a number of well-qualified applicants, of Mr. T. S. Foster, M.A., for many years headmaster of the Christchurch West School.