

ANNUAL STATEMENT OF THE CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS.

[NOTE—Those parts of the Report dealing with the Boys' and Girls' High School, the School of Art, the Museum, and the Public Library are not reprinted.]

At the meeting of the Board of Governors of Canterbury College, held on Monday, 27th May, 1912, the Chairman (Mr. J. C. Adams, B.A.) laid on the table the accounts of the Board for the year 1911, duly certified by the Auditor-General, and in doing so delivered the following address:—

It is my privilege to lay before you the thirty-ninth annual report of the Chairman of the Board, and in doing this I shall follow the custom that has been usual for the past few years, and refer very shortly to such matters of finance as may seem to require notice, and to some of the particular events that may seem worthy of notice in connection with the institutions under the Board's control.

FINANCE.

The total receipts for the financial year of 1911 amounted to £32,419, as compared with £33,078 for the previous year, showing a falling-off of £659; but it should be pointed out that the Government grants for 1911 were £500 less last year than in 1910, while the Public Library revenue was £146 less than in the preceding year.

The expenditure for the year 1911 totalled £29,262, as against £34,395 in 1910, nearly the whole of the saving being on buildings (including repairs), and apparatus, plant, and equipment.

College.

College.—The College Maintenance Account shows an apparent loss during the year of £328, but the sum of £1,000 was contributed towards the extinction of the debt on the College buildings, and £215 was expended on the establishment of a botanical station at Grassmere. The receipts from rents of reserves and from students' fees both show a slight increase when compared with those of the previous year.

SCHOOL OF ENGINEERING.

Following on the determination of the Senate to establish a travelling scholarship in engineering, I am pleased to be able to report that this year we have been able to act upon it, and to have one of our graduates appointed. I hope that ere long the Senate may see its way to enable this scholarship to be tenable for a longer period than one year, as the present term is too short for a student to acquire such a full theoretical and practical knowledge as he should.

The recent alterations made in the course for the degree of Bachelor of Engineering should result in more students coming from the distant parts of the Dominion, as the shortening of the course by one year means a corresponding reduction in the cost of obtaining a degree. The cost of equipping and maintaining the School of Engineering is so great that it is our business to attract as many as intend to take a thorough course for their future profession. At one time during the past year it was freely rumoured that another University college intended to equip and maintain a similar school. Were such to be done it would not only be a great pity but a great waste of public money, for it is much better for the whole community to have one school properly equipped, staffed, and furnished with students, than to have two or more such poorly attended, and for some time at all events one of them not fully equipped. In connection with this matter it must be remembered that arrangements were made some years ago for each University college to specialize in one particular branch of study, and the specialization in engineering was allotted to Canterbury College on account of the magnitude of the equipment, and the grant made for that purpose has enabled the school to possess most of the latest appliances necessary for its work. That this work enables the students to advance in their profession is evident from the lists supplied year by year of the positions obtained by erstwhile students.

COLLEGE.

The change that is foreshadowed in the extension of the free-place system to the University colleges must necessarily cause one to think what may be the result as far as University teaching is concerned. We have had for some years a certain amount of free education, first in connection with the Junior University Scholarships, then the extension of that system by granting bursaries to all those who were in the credit list at that examination. These free places, if they may so be termed, were won by those whose attainments enabled them to stand above their fellows and take an Honours course at the University. Now the proposal is that a four years' course at a secondary school shall entitle a student not only to admission but also to instruction at a University college. I am not one who is opposed to any one who is likely to really benefit by higher education receiving facilities for obtaining such instruction, but I certainly think that the State should insist on such a standard being reached, that neither the money of the State nor the time of the individual is wasted in striving for the impossible. If some such standard is not insisted on both for entrance and continuance at the colleges affiliated to the University, then the time and energy of both professor and student will be wasted, and assistants must be provided to prepare backward students so that they may be able to eventually attend the lectures which at first must be beyond the understanding of immature students, and this would mean an increased expenditure that the circumstances would not warrant. Another pertinent question may be asked: Are the circumstances such that more free places are required? I can only answer that by stating that so far as the Boys' and Girls' High Schools are concerned, I had occasion to see if further assistance was wanted in the direction of giving free or partially free University education to any more pupils, and on inquiry I found that with the present liberal help given by means of bursaries there was only one ex-pupil at that time who was not materially helped in the matter of higher education, and the opinion of the Principals of the two schools was that further help was not needed.