

During the year the Board moved into its new offices. These have proved a boon to the staff, which is enabled to carry on the Board's work with greater efficiency and convenience. In the workshop and yard attached a staff is continually employed making furniture for new schools and for replacements. It has already been proved that this is being turned out cheaper, better, and under much better control than under the old contract system.

Finance.—The cash balance on the 31st December, 1912, was £5,524 18s. 9d. During the year receipts have totalled £70,565 13s. 10d., the disbursements £73,157 5s. 2d., leaving a credit balance of £2,933 7s. 5d. The decrease in the balance is accounted for by the expenditure on the Board's new office and workshop.

Classification of Teachers.—Promotion scheme: During the year the Board adopted a scheme for the classification and promotion of teachers. The scheme has the general approval of the teachers, Inspectors, and members of the Board. In practice, however, the scheme can never work quite satisfactorily until the Government undertakes to make some allowance for the removal expenses of teachers. The Board has already approached you on the matter, but has received no reply. The Board cannot conceive why in common justice you can longer delay making some such provision as is requested, particularly in view of the fact that what is wanted is already granted in every other branch of the Public Service. The Board is convinced that no classification scheme can possibly be effective until teachers are reimbursed their removal expenses.

School Committees.—During the year the incidental allowances paid to Committees have totalled £3,340 15s. 5d., or 6s. 6d. per unit of the average attendance in the district. This is 1s. per unit in excess of the minimum amount required by the departmental regulations, but the Board and most of the Committees recognize that this amount, though apparently large, is not sufficient to provide funds for all that Committees are expected to do. The majority of the Committees face the position, and with the help of funds raised locally assist in maintaining the school buildings and surroundings in a highly creditable state. The Board regrets that though the cost of everything has increased, and the duties of the Board and Committees have been added to, the Department has not raised the capitation payable to the Board for general administration and maintenance purposes, and consequently the Board is not in a position to pay to Committees allowances commensurate with the work they are expected to do. Relations between Committees and the Board have during the year been of the most amiable character.

General.—During the year Inspector Smith retired from the service on superannuation. Mr. Smith's services under the Board as teacher and Inspector have been long and faithful, and he carries with him on his retirement the Board's best wishes for his welfare. Mr. D. A. Strachan, M.A., Inspector of Schools in the Marlborough District, was appointed to succeed Mr. Smith.

The Board desires to record its pleasure at the conciliatory spirit in which all its applications to the Department have been dealt with. The utmost harmony has existed between the Department and the Board.

I have, &c.,

The Hon. the Minister of Education, Wellington.

C. M. WHITTINGTON, Chairman.

MARLBOROUGH.

SIR,—

Education Office, Blenheim, 9th March, 1914.

In accordance with the requirements of the Education Act, the Marlborough Education Board has the honour to present the following report of the proceedings for the year ending 31st December, 1913:—

Board.—At the beginning of the year the Board was constituted as follows: Eastern Ward—Messrs. John Conolly, Alexander Mackay, and Charles Ferguson; Central Ward—Messrs. R. McCallum, M.P., E. H. Penny, and J. J. White; Western Ward—Messrs. Charles Nees, John S. Storey, and James Fulton. The members who retired in accordance with section 11 of the Education Act were Messrs. Ferguson, McCallum, and Storey. Mr. Ferguson was returned unopposed. The contested elections in the Central and Western Wards respectively resulted in the return of Mr. R. McCallum and Mr. J. S. Storey. At the annual meeting Mr. White was elected Chairman. Twelve ordinary meetings of the Board were held during the year.

Schools.—The number of schools open at the close of the year was ninety-three, being a decrease of three on the figures of the previous year. Six private schools were visited by the Board's Inspector.

Attendance.—The average attendance for the year was 2,157, the figures for the four quarters being—March, 2,169; June, 2,166; September, 2,114; December, 2,178. The number on the roll at the close of the year was 2,457, being an increase of fifty-six on the figures for 1912. The percentage of attendance for the year was 90·02, being 0·43 per cent. higher than in 1912. As was the case in 1912, epidemics seriously affected the attendance at many of the schools. Whooping-cough was very prevalent, and the after-effects of vaccination were responsible for many children having to be excused from attendance. The number of children attending the private schools inspected was 176. The Truant Officer's report to the Board shows that thirteen informations were laid against parents for failing to comply with the School Attendance Act. The convictions numbered twelve, the remaining case being withdrawn. The total amount of fines received by the Board during the year was £7 8s. 6d.

Teachers.—At the close of the year there were in the service of the Board twenty-eight male teachers, ninety-two female teachers, three female pupil-teachers, two male and three female probationers, making a total of 128. Of the 120 adult teachers, forty are certificated and one other holds a license to teach.