

CANTERBURY.

SIR,—

Christchurch, 20th June, 1924.

I have the honour to present the following report of the proceedings of the Education Board of the District of Canterbury for the year ending 31st December, 1923 :—

*The Board.*—There was no change in the personnel of the Board during the year, the members representing the respective wards being as follows : Christchurch Urban Area—Messrs. E. H. Andrews, A. Peverill, C. S. Thompson, and W. H. Winsor ; Timaru Urban Area—Messrs. J. G. Gow and J. Maze ; Middle Ward—Messrs. W. A. Banks and W. P. Spencer ; North-west Ward—Messrs. H. J. Bignell and R. Wild ; South Ward—Messrs. G. W. Armitage and T. Hughes. The Board's representatives on other educational bodies were as follows :—Technical School Boards : Ashburton—G. W. Andrews and R. Galbraith ; Banks Peninsula—J. D. Bruce ; Christchurch Technical College—C. H. Opie, E. H. Andrews, and A. Peverill ; Fairlie—W. J. Ormandy ; Greymouth—H. J. Bignell and F. H. Kilgour ; Kaiapoi—W. Doubleday ; Pleasant Point—J. Maze ; Temuka—G. W. Armitage ; Timaru—J. G. Gow and G. J. Sealey ; Waimate—S. I. Fitch. High School Board representatives : Akaroa—A. H. Westenra and L. J. Vangioni ; Ashburton—R. Kennedy and R. Bell ; Rangiora—W. J. Stalker and H. Boyd ; Greymouth—W. R. Kettle ; Waimate—W. Lindsay and J. G. A. Shackleton ; Hokitika—Hon. H. L. Michel ; Timaru—J. Maze. During the year the Board held twelve ordinary and two special meetings.

*Buildings.*—The total sum expended by the Board on new buildings and sites and on the maintenance of existing buildings and sites was £60,483, or an increase of 10 per cent. on the previous year's figures. Included in the larger works carried out by the Board's building staffs were eight new schools and four portable schools. Several schools were also remodelled to bring them into conformity with modern ideas regarding lighting and ventilation. The necessity for more school accommodation, especially in the city and suburbs of Christchurch, is a matter that is becoming very pressing. Several of the largest institutions are considerably overcrowded, and additional new schools in other parts of the city will have to be provided to keep pace with the spread of population.

*Schools.*—Six schools were opened or reopened, and six were closed. Two side schools were constituted main schools. The number of schools open at the end of the year was therefore 388, including sixteen in Grade O.

The total expenditure on teachers' salaries and allowances, including those of the Training College and district high schools, was £316,792 10s. 9d., as compared with £310,697 8s. 3d. in the previous year.

There were 388 teachers in charge of schools, 591 assistants, 234 pupil-teachers and probationers, and thirty-two sewing-mistresses employed at the end of the year.

Incidental allowances paid to School Committees amounted to £16,375 5s. 8d. While most Committees find the allowance sufficient for ordinary requirements, about twenty, in consequence of extra charges (such as water, sanitation, &c.), have to exercise the strictest economy to make ends meet.

The following table, showing expenditure on salaries and incidental expenses for a number of years past, is inserted for comparison purposes :—

Year.	Salaries and Allowances.			Incidentals.			Totals.			Average Attendance.
	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.	
1880 .. ..	55,318	17	8	8,071	12	2	63,390	9	10	16,412
1900 .. ..	70,978	18	7	8,064	13	10	79,043	12	5	23,806
1920 .. ..	285,100	4	7	14,303	13	0	299,403	17	7	29,761
1922 .. ..	310,697	8	3	16,087	1	3	326,754	9	6	33,047
1923 .. ..	316,792	10	9	16,375	5	8	333,167	16	5	33,189

*Irregular Attendance.*—The Attendance Officers had occasion to take Court proceedings against fifty-three parents during the year for aggravated cases of irregular attendance. Generally speaking, however, the attendance of pupils at schools, both public and private, in the Canterbury District, which covers a wide area and in which climatic and other conditions are extremely varied, compares very favourably with other education districts of the Dominion. Very little trouble is now experienced in connection with the employment of children under school age, a greater problem being the ability to deal with uncontrollable children or those whose parents are indifferent to the welfare of their offspring.

*Physical Training.*—This branch of the service is carried out by the Department's officers. All schools in Canterbury are visited at least once a year for inspection and to advise and assist teachers in any possible way. Training-college students and pupil-teachers receive a considerable amount of this work during their training as teachers, and this knowledge is carried forward by them when they attain more responsible positions. The work in Canterbury is of a very satisfactory nature, and much benefit has been gained by the practice of the daily systematic exercises.

*Finance.*—The total receipts of the Board amounted to £424,095 16s. 7d., and the expenditure £427,929 8s. 1d., the cash balance at the end of the year on all accounts being £3,010 4s. 10d.

*Manual Instruction.*—As in former years, elementary handwork has been taken in some form or other at the 380-odd schools in the district. The spirit of the regulations is that handwork should be used as a method to an end rather than as a specific subject of instruction, and the material supplied should be used to give concrete examples in lessons where it might be profitably employed. An earnest endeavour was made to carry out this ideal during the year. At thirty-two small schools in the district