

**LIBRARIES.**—The money sent to the Board for distribution under the Public Libraries Subsidies Act has been paid over in due proportions to the libraries at Blenheim, Picton, and Canvas Town, these libraries being free to the public.

**SCHOLARSHIPS** are but two in number; are set apart by the governors of the Nelson College, who remit the tuition fees. The Board pays £40 a year for each. The qualification is for all boys between the ages of twelve and fifteen attending a public school. One scholarship is given each year, and is tenable for two years. The last examination was held in December, 1878, when eleven candidates competed. The successful pupil was E. J. Robinson.

**EXPENDITURE.**—The balance in hand at the beginning of the year and the receipts from arrears of rates and fees collected, together with the payment of £60 due under an arbitration award to the late Board, has enabled this Board to pay its way. However, while showing a credit balance at the end of the year, it will be seen that the Board has expended £3,725 13s. 8d. on the schools and departmental expenses and libraries, while the amount received from Government was only £2,931 0s. 4d. Thus the Board has expended £795 13s. 4d. in excess of the amount granted to it for these purposes. The Board has exercised throughout the strictest economy, but it cannot continue to maintain the schools under its charge unless further assistance is granted to it. The Board, therefore, feels it cannot too strongly urge upon the Government the necessity of increasing the grant to some extent in those cases where education has to be administered for the benefit of a population somewhat thinly scattered over a large area.

The Hon. the Minister of Education.

I have, &c.,

A. P. SEYMOUR, Chairman.

**GENERAL STATEMENT of INCOME and EXPENDITURE for the year ending 31st December, 1878.**

<i>Income.</i>		£	s.	d.	<i>Expenditure.</i>		£	s.	d.
To Balance on 1st January, 1878 ...	...	1,239	15	4	By Office and Board—	...	106	5	6
Grants from Government—General ...	...	2,811	16	10	Office salary ...	...	45	3	8
"    "    Buildings ...	...	2,305	16	5	Departmental contingencies ...	...	62	10	0
Arrears of rates and fees collected ...	...	175	3	3	Inspection—Salary ...	...	39	2	0
Net receipts from education reserves ...	...	21	17	6	"    Travelling expenses ...	...	3,028	18	4
Donation ...	...	60	0	0	Teachers' salaries and allowances ...	...	261	4	5
					School Committees, for general educational purposes ...	...	85	3	9
					Scholarships ...	...	2,033	8	11
					Buildings—Works ...	...	80	3	9
					"    Plans and supervision ...	...	872	9	0
					Balance in hand ...	...			
							<u>£6,614</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>4</u>
							<u>£6,614</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>4</u>

**DETAILS.**—Office Staff: Secretary, £100; messenger, £6 5s. 6d.: total as above, £106 5s. 6d. Departmental Contingencies: Office rent, £6 10s.; printing, £20 10s. 6d.; advertising, £16 2s. 6d.; stationery, £2 0s. 8d.: total as above, £45 3s. 8d. School-buildings: New schools, £1,375 18s. 6d.; enlargement and improvements, £642 18s. 11d.; purchase of sites, £14 11s. 6d.: total as above, £2,033 8s. 11d. Total of general statement as above, £6,614 9s. 4d.; Public Libraries Account, £97 6s.: total of Board's general statement, £6,711 15s. 4d.

**NELSON.**

SIR,—

Nelson, 25th March, 1879.

I have the honor to lay before you, in compliance with the requirements of "The Education Act, 1877," a report of the proceedings of the Education Board of this district for the year 1878.

The statistical information applied for in Circular No. 14, issued by the Education Department, 31st October, 1878, will be found in Tables 1 to 4, appended to this report. Information required in the same circular, as to inspection, school books, scholarships, and libraries, is also given. At the first meeting of the new Board, held April 4th, J. W. Barnicoat, Esq., was unanimously re-elected Chairman. From April to December, 1878, the Board has met eleven times, the average number of members present at each meeting being eight.

The number of scholars in the district has steadily increased during the past year, the working average for the March quarter being 2,357, that for December being 2,770.

The grant of £5,000 for school buildings, the whole of which will have been expended by the close of the financial year, has enabled the Board to meet the demand for more school accommodation, caused by the additional number of scholars, and also to replace several old and inconvenient schools with more roomy and better-designed structures.

The rate of attendance continues to be high, even in the remoter schools, the percentage for the December quarter of 1878 having been 76. Nor does it appear that more than a very small proportion of children of school age within reach of any public school in the Nelson District habitually absent themselves from school. Under these circumstances, School Committees have not thought it expedient, except in a single instance, to adopt the compulsory clause.

The difficulty of filling up vacancies, especially in small country schools, with competent teachers is increasing. Applicants for posts worth from £200 to £300 a year are plentiful enough; but country schools, where the emoluments consist of £120 a year with a house, are frequently closed for considerable periods, because no suitable applicants are forthcoming.

By order of the Education Board.

W. C. HODGSON,  
Secretary.

The Hon. the Minister of Education,