DETAILS.—Departmental Contingencies: Office rent, cleaning, and fuel, £17 5s. 6d.; furniture and fittings, £138 9s. 9d.; printing, £20 2s. 6d.; advertising, £9 2s. 4d.; stationery, £44 8s. 11d.: total, as above, £229 9s. The grants from Government include the following sums handed over by North Canterbury Board: General, £1,598 2s. 10d.; buildings, £6,805 16s. 11d. Total of general statement as above, £12,879 12s.; repaid to North Canterbury, £206 3s. 10d.: total of Board's general statement, £13,085 15s. 10d.

STATEMENT of ASSETS and LIABILITIES as at 31st December, 1878.

Assets.

1878—Dec. 31.	£	s.	d.
To Cash in Bank—Maintenance ...	1,451	10	2
" " Buildings	3,476	14	2
Building grant for 1878-79 ...	6,000	0	0
	£10,928	4	4

Liabilities.

1878—Dec. 31.	£	s.	d.
By Liabilities—			
Maintenance—Office liabilities ...	86	4	8
Buildings—Works in hand and sanctioned	9,268	10	0
Balance—Maintenance	1,365	5	6
" Buildings	208	4	2
	£10,928	4	4

WESTLAND.

SIR,— Hokitika, 13th March, 1879.

I have the honor, in compliance with the provisions of clause 102 of "The Education Act, 1877," to present the following report of the proceedings of the Education Board of the District of Westland for the year ended 31st December, 1878:—

BOARD.—The Board, at the commencement of the year 1878, consisted of the following gentlemen: E. Patten, Esq. (Chairman), W. H. Revell, Esq., J. Greenwood, Esq., G. Mueller, Esq., J. Plaisted, Esq., G. A. Paterson, Esq., F. A. Learmonth, Esq., R. J. Seddon, Esq., and W. Todd, Esq. The first election of a Board under the Act took place in April, when the following persons were elected: W. H. Revell, Esq., E. Patten, Esq., J. Greenwood, Esq., R. J. Seddon, Esq., G. Mueller, Esq., R. C. Reid, Esq., J. Plaisted, Esq., G. A. Paterson, Esq., and F. W. Morgan, Esq. G. Mueller, Esq., was elected Chairman of the Board, in place of E. Patten, Esq., who refused re-election. In addition to two special meetings, the Board have held eleven regular monthly meetings during the past year. The average duration of the Board's meetings was nine and a half hours; the longest sitting (in the month of August) occupied fifteen hours—the shortest, six hours. The average attendance of members was six. E. Patten, Esq., and H. L. Robinson, Esq., were appointed by the Board to be School Commissioners for the Westland Provincial District, under the provisions of subsection (2) of clause 11 of "The Education Reserves Act, 1877."

SCHOOLS AND TEACHERS.—At the commencement of the year 1878, there were 27 schools in operation under the control of the Board, and 59 teachers were employed therein. Of these, 18 were pupil-teachers—namely, 3 males and 15 females. Of the adult teachers, 24 were males and 17 females. On the 31st December last, the number of schools in operation was 35, and the number of teachers (including those whose engagements terminated at the end of the year) was 78—namely, 34 male and 17 female adults, and 5 male and 22 female pupil-teachers.

Appendix A shows the schools that have been in operation; the name, status, and annual salary of every teacher employed; the average daily attendance; and the number on the roll for each school for the last quarter of the year. By a careful examination of the table (which shows the staffs and salaries before and after the recent retrenchments), it will be seen that the staffs allotted to the various schools were, as a rule, about equal to those allowed in other districts and colonies for similar schools; and the salaries were, in many cases, below what would be paid elsewhere, notwithstanding the acknowledged extra cost of living on the West Coast. The Board, however, have been compelled, owing to the insufficiency of the capitation allowance to meet the requirements of the district, to decrease the staff of three of the most important schools; to make sweeping reductions in the salaries of their teachers and officers; to abolish the house allowance and bonus for results; and have not been able—even after all these reductions—to pay their teachers with that regularity which is so desirable. The Board, moreover, have been compelled to close some schools, and open others as half-time schools, as shown in Table A. The prejudicial effects of such a course of action are already apparent. One of the very best teachers in the Board's employ has already left, others are only waiting an opportunity to do so, and all are more or less dissatisfied and unsettled. These reductions, occurring at a time when the requirements of the new code demand extra exertion and superior attainments on the part of the teachers, if the work prescribed is to be efficiently performed, cannot but have a very unfavourable effect upon the welfare of education in this district; and the Board feel sure that had the peculiar circumstances of the district, and the disadvantages attending a residence here, been fully understood by the Government, they would not have been compelled to make these reductions. The Board desire further to state that, while obliged by the action of the Government (in limiting them strictly to the capitation allowance) to take these steps, they do not consider that (with the exception of closing some of the smallest schools) any part of this retrenchment was called for; neither salaries nor staffs, as before stated, being excessive.

The Board desire most respectfully, but most urgently, to draw the attention of the Hon. the Minister to the necessity of giving the relief to the district which its peculiar circumstances so imperatively demand; and, as a reason for asking for such relief, would point out that the Act at present in force was supposed to place all parts of the colony on an equal footing educationally, and that abundant proof is now before the Government that it utterly fails to do so. The Board would respectfully submit the following suggestions as to the manner in which some relief may be given to the district, to meet its exceptional case: 1. That the amount due to the district as capitation allowance be