

calculated in the manner recommended by the Inspector in his report for the past year. 2. \* That a special allowance of per head be granted as gold-fields allowance, in this following the method adopted with other departments. 3. That the Government defray the whole cost of inspection. 4. That the district be extended to include the whole of the West Coast gold fields, thereby in some degree modifying the injustice committed in adding to the Westland District that part of the Nelson District most miserably provided educationally.

The following are the schools affected by the alterations:—Reduction in staff: Hokitika, Greymouth, Kumara. Schools made half-time instead of full-time schools: Arawata Town and Arawata Flat, Marsden and Dunganville, Totara Flat and Orwell Creek, Greek's Gully and Callaghan's. Schools brought under the 88th clause: Upper Crossing, Greenstone. Schools closed: Okuru, South Spit, Wallsend. Unless some relief be given, as suggested, further alterations will be found necessary, and eight or ten more schools will either be brought under the 88th clause or closed altogether. Up to the period (October, 1878) at which the reductions were decided upon, the Board had in operation regulations fixing the staffs to be allotted to schools according to average attendance, but were then compelled to rescind them, and are now guided by financial considerations, instead of by what are the actual requirements of a school or district, or by what is fair to the teachers and most beneficial to the scholars. It may here be pointed out that the average daily attendance for the quarter ended 31st December was 2,132, whereas the number of pupils who passed at the result examination in December was 2,434, or 302 more than the Board received payment for.

**BUILDINGS.**—Nearly the whole of the original Westland Education District is now well provided with school-buildings, the following having been opened during the past year: Kanieri, Blue Spur, Woodstock, Arahura Road, and Arawata Flat. All the new buildings in the part of the district above referred to have been carefully designed with reference to the purpose for which they are intended, being well ventilated, and a liberal allowance of floor space having been given—matters so conducive to successful teaching. They are also well supplied with maps and apparatus of every description. The Board will find it necessary to build a schoolhouse during the present year at the Kokatahi, there being fifty children of school age in the neighbourhood. In that part of the district, which at one time was under the charge of the Nelson Board, and which comprises nine schools, taken over by this Board, a very different state of affairs is in existence. There are only one or two buildings which belong to the Board, the schools, in most cases, being carried on in buildings rented, and which are, in every case, dilapidated and generally unfit for the purpose. The Board therefore hope that the Government will make them as liberal an allowance as possible out of the sum of £100,000 to be voted for the next financial year. The schools are in some degree better off than when the Board took charge, they being now well supplied with maps, &c. Since the Board commenced operations in the year 1875, they have erected twenty-one school-buildings and purchased seven others, upon which latter, in every case, some expenditure has been necessary.

There is one want, which was referred to in the Board's report for 1877, which is still severely felt—namely, that of residences for teachers. The absence of these buildings in every part of the district (with only two exceptions) is now more severely felt than hitherto, owing to the Board having been compelled to discontinue payment of house allowance. This, taken in connection with the reduction of salaries, will no doubt make it very difficult for the Board to retain the services of efficient teachers, and thereby will materially retard the progress of education in the district. Table C shows the expenditure upon buildings, school furniture, fencing, clearing, and draining sites and playgrounds, in the various districts, for the past year.

**SCHOLARSHIPS.**—The amount placed at the disposal of the Board for the purpose of establishing scholarships has enabled them to offer two, one of the value of £50, and the other of £40 per annum, both tenable for two years. The regulations framed with regard to these scholarships have been submitted to, and have received the sanction of, the Minister of Education. The establishment of scholarships, as a valuable stimulus and incentive to exertion both on the part of teachers and scholars, has been frequently recommended by the Board's Inspector; but want of funds has hitherto prevented the adoption of any of his suggestions. The Board are therefore much gratified at being placed by the Government in a position to offer these prizes, and thereby give to the two most promising pupils at the public schools of the district the highest educational advantages which the colony affords. It is the more gratifying in that the proceeds from the reserves set apart for secondary education in this district will not for some time to come be sufficient to enable the Board to provide a higher class of instruction within their own district.

**SCHOOL DISTRICTS.**—The following new districts were constituted during the past year under clauses 60 and 61 of the Act: Nelson Creek, Ahaura, Arnold, and Brunnerton. The following were constituted new districts under clause 36 of the Act: Kanieri, Hokitika, Arahura, Kumara, Marsden and Greymouth; the Kokatahi and Christchurch Road being outlying districts.

**MILITARY DRILL AND PHYSICAL TRAINING.**—Taking the provisions of clause 85 of the Act in a literal sense, the Board secured the services of a competent instructor in the branches there referred to, but were obliged to dispense with his services when making the general reductions. Nothing which the Board found themselves compelled to do caused them greater regret; as the extremely beneficial results of good physical training were, in the short time the advantage was enjoyed, most strikingly apparent. The Board hope that the time may not be far distant when the Government will be able to make provision for thoroughly scientific physical instruction in all the schools in the colony.

**EXAMINATION OF SCHOOLS.**—Two examinations were held by the Inspector during the past year—one in June, and the result examination in December. The result of the latter in the case of the larger schools is extremely satisfactory; but, though fairly satisfactory in all cases, there is evidence sufficient to show that many of the teachers in the smaller schools suffer from the want of special

\* With reference to the special allowance above mentioned, the Board are of opinion that a fair allowance would be 10s. per head of average attendance.