

18 carpenters, 6 clerks, 5 coach-painters, 6 civil engineers, 3 drapers, 1 gardener, 2 goldsmiths, 8 joiners, 2 ironmongers, 3 iron-turners, 2 jewellers, 4 lithographers, 24 mechanical engineers, 5 masons, 5 painters, 5 plumbers, 4 pattern-makers, 2 plasterers, 3 photographers, 7 surveyors, 4 tinsmiths, 4 teachers, 2 tailors, 1 wood-carver, 16 students.

The Secretary to the Otago Education Board.

I have, &c.,

DAVID C. HUTTON.

### SOUTHLAND.

SIR,—

Invercargill, 31st March, 1879.

In compliance with the provisions of clause 102 of "The Education Act, 1877," I have the honor, by direction of the Board, to lay before you a report of the proceedings of the Education Board of the District of Southland for the period of nine months ended 31st December, 1878. The Board did not assume office till the 1st day of May, but it has been deemed expedient, for the quarterly payment of teachers' salaries and other matters of detail, to include the month of April also.

**BOARD.**—The Board, as constituted on the 1st of May, consisted of the following members: The Hon. Dr. Menzies, the Hon. Sir John Richardson, Messrs. George Lumsden, John McArdell, C. C. Sproull, Alfred Baldey, James Mackintosh, and Thomas Moran Macdonald (who was unanimously elected chairman). Ten meetings have been held, at the third of which it was found necessary to appoint an Executive Committee, consisting of five members, by whom all applications for new schools, permanent repairs, increase of staff, &c., are carefully considered, and their recommendations embodied in a report, which is laid before the next meeting of the Board, when its various clauses are dealt with *seriatim*, and finally disposed of. In the beginning of December an extraordinary vacancy was caused by the death of the Hon. Sir John Richardson, whose exertions for the promotion of the educational interests of the district were most untiring. Steps in pursuance of the provisions of the Act have been initiated for the election of his successor. The three retiring members, as ascertained by ballot, are Messrs. Lumsden, McArdell, and Mackintosh.

**SCHOOLS.**—When the Board came into office six new schools had been sanctioned in this district by the Board of Otago—viz., Athol, North Forest Hill, Upper Shotover, Gore, South Invercargill, and Moke Creek. The first four schools are in full operation; that at Invercargill will be opened after the holidays; and the erection of that at Moke Creek has been delayed owing to the difficulty of obtaining a suitable site. Two new schools at Ryal Bush and Forest Hill Railway Crossing respectively will be opened early in January, and the erection of new schools at South Forest Hill and Otautau is in progress. To meet the requirements of the large and daily-increasing population in the suburban municipalities of North Invercargill and Gladstone, two new school districts have been defined, and schoolhouses capable of accommodating 600 pupils will be erected forthwith. At the former place a building used for religious meetings has been temporarily leased, and will be opened as a school early in January. In various parts of the district the population has greatly increased owing to the sale of land on the "deferred payment" system, and new schools are required to meet the educational wants of the settlers. The erection of new schools in the Kingston and Nokomai, Pukerau, Chatton, Lumsden, Oreti Plains, and Pembroke districts, the boundaries of which have been defined and approved of, has been sanctioned by the Board. At Riverton, the South School, which was never recognized by the Otago Board, has been discontinued, and, the principal school being in a most dilapidated condition, it is proposed to erect a new school containing four or five class-rooms of sufficient dimensions to contain all the children of school age in the town. The District High School, and the North Public School, Invercargill, have been inconveniently crowded since the Act came into operation, and a large number of children have been refused admission. The erection of an infants' room in connection with the former, and the South Public School, now nearly completed, will, it is expected, meet the requirements of the town, at least for a time.

**BUILDINGS.**—The sum of £5,000 allocated by the Government to this district for school-buildings has been found to be quite inadequate to meet the various claims for the erection of schoolhouses and residences from all parts of the district. The liabilities incurred by the Board for works entirely necessary are much in excess of this sum, and it is hoped that the Government will act in a liberal spirit, and authorize the Board to draw, to the extent of at least three-fourths, on the Building Fund of next year. If this is not done it is evident that not a few localities in various parts of the district will be without the means of education for their children, who will, in the meantime, be growing up in ignorance and neglect.

**SCHOOL FURNITURE AND APPLIANCES.**—Not a few of the older edifices, which at the time of their erection were considered comfortable and convenient, have, through the supineness of School Committees or the want of funds, fallen into decay, which will necessitate extensive repairs and alterations. In a large number of schools, the furniture, usually consisting of double-desks in the centre of the room, or single ones placed along the walls, will require to be renewed, and arranged in accordance with the improved plans adopted in the State schools of other countries. School appliances have been very insufficiently supplied, and there are almost daily demands for maps, ball-frames, blackboards, primer cards, &c. From a return lately made by the teachers, it has been ascertained that no fewer than two hundred maps are required for the schools in the district. So long as these are wanting, efficient and intelligent teaching cannot be expected, and a scheme is under consideration for providing a supply of the requisite appliances at a moderate expense.

**INSURANCE OF SCHOOL-BUILDINGS.**—Shortly after the Board took office its attention was directed to the subject of the insurance of school-buildings within the district, and a resolution was passed for making special arrangements for the insurance of all the school-buildings and residences belonging to the Board. In carrying out this resolution tenders were invited from all the insurance companies in town, and the result was the insurance of all the school-buildings at a very reasonable rate, and much lower than if left to the action of the several Committees. The estimated value of the property thus insured amounts to £17,500, and the total premiums £80, being at the average rate of 9s. per cent.