

defined; and shews that there were 4,189 children on the rolls at the beginning of the year, and 5,633 at the end, the average weekly roll for the last quarter being 2,941 boys and 2,418 girls—altogether 5,359. The working average attendance of the four quarters was 4,053, and for the last quarter alone 4,402, being an increase of 1,028 on the corresponding quarter last year.

ACCOUNTS.—Appendix No 3 is the balance sheet shewing the Board's revenue and expenditure; and Appendix No. 4 is a statement of Assets and Liabilities on Maintenance Account and on the Building Account. On the Maintenance Account there is a deficiency of £605 9s. 4d.; but the Board hope to reduce this deficit by the end of the financial year. On the Building Account there is an unexpended, though not an unappropriated balance of £4,700. The Board have a small accumulated sum of £516 invested with the Trust, Loan, and Investment Company as an insurance fund. Details of departmental expenditure accompany the balance sheet.

AGES AND SUBJECTS OF INSTRUCTION.—Table No. 4 shows that of 5,633 children on the books 1,615 are under 7 years of age, and 500 are over 13, the number under 5 being 365, and the number over 15 being 69. 3,056 are boys, and 2,577 are girls. At the end of the year there were 66 pupils attending school, who had passed Standard VI., the Inspector's examination of the large schools being then just completed.

SCHOOL BUILDINGS AND SITES.—The city of Wellington being in the past altogether unendowed with sites for public schools, now that land has become valuable, the Board have experienced great difficulty in acquiring suitable sites, and the cost has been a heavy drain upon their resources. They have, however, been very fortunate during the past year in purchasing a site for the Normal School and for a large Practising School at the Thorndon end of the city for the sum of £2,500. The Practising School is a two-storey building containing two school rooms, eight class rooms, a committee room, and a headmaster's room. It is fitted throughout with dual desks of wood, six deep, of an improved plan, placed on platforms with four inches rise. The desks have backs. The lighting and ventilating are good; there are large lobbies with cap rooms and lavatories. The play grounds for boys and girls are distinct, asphalted and convenient; and the general arrangements for out-houses and appliances are suitable. The school will seat 576 children, and accommodate 600. The buildings are approaching completion. At the Te Aro end of the city they have also secured the right to purchase for a similar sum a large and suitable site in Upper Willis-street; and on this they are about to erect a school for 600 children to replace the old Te Aro School now quite unfit for the purpose. The sale at some future time of the two sections granted by Government on the reclaimed land will enable this Board to complete the purchase, convenient arrangements having been made with the vendor. The Board have also purchased for a like sum of £2,500 a site for a large infant school in Sydney-street, which they hope to erect during the present year. A school on an acre of land acquired from the Government, with infant room and class rooms to accommodate 350 children, has been erected and opened during the year at Newton. In the country districts new schools have been erected at Mungaroa, Park Vale, Eketahuna, and Judgeford, and additions made to Featherston.

SCHOLARSHIPS.—The first examination for scholarships given by this Board was held in the month of August, and was conducted by Mr. Gammell, of the Wellington College, and the Rev. W. H. West. The scholarships were open to all competitors, and forty candidates presented themselves, thirty-two boys and eight girls. The scholarships were awarded as follows, the successful competitors all being pupils in the Board schools:—City, £30, A. Whitehouse; Wairarapa, £30, R. Fairbrother; Country Districts, £30, A. McKenny; Whole Districts—£20, Phoebe Myers; £15, F. G. Bolton and G. M'Gregor; £10, C. Richardson and W. Toomath. These pupils are now attending the Wellington College, in terms of the conditions under which the scholarships were awarded. Appended are regulations as to scholarships and particulars as to their tenure; also copies of examination papers and the report of the examiners.

PUBLIC LIBRARIES.—The sum of £415 15s. handed to this Board for distribution among the Public Libraries within the Education District, was apportioned in proportion to the amount of voluntary subscriptions received, to all libraries which claimed to participate in the grant, and which were entitled to do so in terms of the Public Libraries Subsidies Act, 1877. No school or public libraries are established in connection with the Board. These libraries appear to exercise a very beneficial influence, more especially among the country districts; and the grant apportioned enables them to provide a supply of standard works and periodicals for the use of members. Returns from each of these libraries have been forwarded to the Education Department.

SCHOOL COMMISSIONER.—During the year the Hon. C. J. Pharazyn was appointed School Commissioner in place of the Hon. W. Gisborne, resigned.

SCHOOL FUND ACCOUNT.—A summary of the accounts of the school committees within the district is, in accordance with your instructions, given in the appendix. This summary has been made out from the audited balance sheets of the school committees sent into the Board, in terms of clause 103 of the Education Act.

PUPIL TEACHERS' EXAMINATION.—The annual examination of pupil teachers was held in the first week of July, and conducted by the Principal of the College and the Inspector of Schools. A copy of their report is attached as appendix.

AIDED SCHOOLS.—In the supply of schools throughout the country, the wants of the outlying districts, which are least able to provide schools, have been well considered. No settlement more than two miles from an existing school is uncared for. Indeed, as a whole, the country has received more consideration than the city of Wellington. Assistance amounting to £4 a head on the average attendance is offered in aid to any school giving an education which is reported on by the Inspector as satisfactory under the circumstances; and it is clearly in the power of a few settlers to provide tuition for their children by supplementing this grant. Only two aided schools at present exist; seven other schools are maintained which are small enough to rank as such, but, as these have been established some time, the Board continue indulgent towards them, hoping that in a short time their attendance will increase so as to give them an average attendance of at least 25, that being the lowest number for which this Board think a separate school should be fully maintained by them.