

same thing may be said to apply to all rules and regulations relating to teachers which may be adopted by the Board. It arises from the very indefinite and vague manner in which the powers and duties of Boards and committees are defined in the Act. At present if a committee neglects or refuses to see that the bye-laws relating to schools are carried out, it is open to question as to how far the Board have the power to enforce their observance.

GENERAL PROGRESS OF EDUCATION DURING THE YEAR.—With reference to the progress of education in the district during the year, it has already been pointed out that the changes made had operated prejudicially; and it is quite clear that such an amount of progress could not be expected as if no such changes had occurred. The reductions in the staffs of several schools, the placing of schools under the 88th clause, and the constituting others half-time schools, with the additional alterations found necessary during the year, all contributed to retard and obstruct the progress of education. Taking all things however into consideration, the result of the year's teaching may still be considered satisfactory, and in some cases surprising, considering the difficulties experienced. The Board desire to express their appreciation of the zeal and energy displayed by the teachers in the performance of their duties, notwithstanding a considerable amount of discouragement. No effect has been given during the year to the compulsory clauses of the Act. The reasons for this will be referred to in remarks concerning school committees.

SCHOOL BUILDINGS, &c.—Though in making a comparison between the condition of the district with reference to school buildings and furniture, at the present time, and when the Board commenced operations in 1876, it is evident that very considerable improvement has been effected, still a great deal remains to be done before the district can be considered to be in an entirely satisfactory condition. Contracts were let during the year for new school-houses at Hatter's Terrace, No Town, and Totara Flat, and for enlarging the school-houses at Kanieri, Stafford, Cobden and Taylorville. Buildings were purchased at Orwell Creek, Greenstone, and Westbrook, and were altered to suit requirements. Contracts were let for repairs to several schools, and for clearing, fencing, and draining the school reserves at Hatter's Terrace, Totara Flat, Orwell Creek, and Taylorville. In all cases where such a course has been possible, the Board have purchased buildings for conversion to school purposes, in preference to erecting new buildings; and have been able, in several cases, to effect a considerable saving thereby. When the buildings for which contracts were let during the year are finished, the number of new school-houses erected by the Board will be twenty-four. The number of buildings purchased by the Board up to December 31st, 1879, is nine. Four new school-houses are still urgently required, and twenty-four teachers' residences. Special reference was made to the latter in the Board's report for 1878; and until either residences be provided, or some allowance be made for house rent, the Board cannot hope to retain the services of good teachers for any length of time. In the erection of new buildings, the main objects kept in view by the Board have been to secure as large a floor space as possible; to obtain all the light available; and so to arrange the rooms (in the larger schools) that whilst preventing one class interfering with another, they shall be easy of access to the head teacher, for purposes of supervision. Perfect ventilation has also, as far as possible, been secured, Tobin's ventilators being used. During the year 1878, and previously, the Board employed an architect, but during the past year the Chairman of the Board and the Inspector of Works have prepared all plans and specifications required. The Board's experience in connection with building has been that the amount expended in securing strict supervision of works has been money well laid out. Four schools were, at the end of the year, carried on in buildings not belonging to the Board, and the Board may at any time receive notice that these buildings can no longer be used for the purpose.

SCHOOL SITES, &c.—The usual area of a school site in the district is one acre, though a few are larger. The land being heavily timbered, and the general cost of clearing, draining, &c., ranging from £50 to £150 per acre, the Board cannot, in all cases, make such provision for playgrounds as they consider desirable. Most of the larger schools are, however, well furnished in this respect, and provision has been made, as far as possible, for separating the sexes during play hours, although this cannot be effectually carried out until stricter supervision be exercised. Provision for retiring places has been one of the matters to which the Board have given considerable attention, and, wherever possible, the greatest care has been exercised with reference to the number of places furnished, and their position in the school grounds.

SCHOLARSHIPS.—The Board have established four scholarships, tenable for two years, two of the value of £50, and two of £40 per annum, one of each being competed for annually. An examination was held at Hokitika on January 7th, 1879, at which eight competitors presented themselves. The successful competitors were Robert Acheson and Herbert Perkins, for the first and second respectively, they being both scholars belonging to the Greymouth school. Robert Acheson is attending the Christchurch College, and Herbert Perkins the Dunedin High School. These scholarships will lapse on December 31st, 1880. The district was fairly represented at the contest, there being two competitors from Greymouth school, three from Hokitika school, and one each from Kanieri, Kumara, and Goldsbrough schools.

No expenses were incurred in connection with the examination. There is no doubt that the possibility of securing a prize in the shape of a scholarship acts as an inducement to diligence in study, and therefore, apart from the advantages enjoyed by the successful competitors, the results are beneficial. It is, however, questionable whether the amounts offered are sufficient to induce the acceptance of the scholarships by successful competitors, whose parents are unable to supplement the sums received from the Board. Seeing that no high school exists in the district, the gainers of scholarships must prosecute their studies in some one of the other districts, and therefore it is evident that the amounts offered are insufficient to defray all expenses, unless the successful competitor may have some friends or relations living in one or other of the cities where high schools or colleges exist. As with the capitation allowance for general expenditure, so it is with the allowance for scholarships (1s. 6d. per head of average attendance), the amount is quite insufficient to meet the special requirements of the district. As there is no probability whatever of the Board receiving special grants, as provided by clause 52 of the Act, they would respectfully suggest that portions of land (which would at once be available for purposes of revenue) should be set aside in various parts of the