

death of Mr. A. Duncan. Mr. Duncan had occupied a seat at the Board since December, 1874, and had been one of its most active and efficient members. The Board desires to express its sense of the valuable service which Mr. Duncan had rendered to the cause of education in this district, and of the heavy loss it has sustained through the death of so esteemed a colleague. The members retiring on the 31st March, 1881, are Mr. Inglis, Rev. C. Fraser, and Mr. Stevens. At the date of this report Mr. Inglis and Rev. C. Fraser had been re-elected, and Mr. H. W. Peryman returned in place of Mr. Stevens, who did not offer himself for election. The extraordinary vacancy had not been filled up, in consequence of a double return, which rendered another election necessary. During the year 1880 the Board continued to meet on the first and third Thursdays in each month, and held in all twenty-three meetings, none being held on the first Thursday in January, which happened to be on New Year's Day. The average attendance of the members was 574.

NEW DISTRICTS AND BUILDINGS.—Seven new school districts were constituted in the year 1880—viz., Flemington, Kirwee, Mason's Flat, Hurunui, Hinds, and Bromley. Of these, Hinds is the only entirely new district, the others being formed, wholly or partly, by a subdivision of districts already existing. Preliminary steps were taken towards the formation of three other entirely new districts—viz., Lismore (Upper Hinds), Methven, and Pendarves. The names of several districts were altered, as follows: Colombo Road to Sydenham; Hillsborough to Opawa; Ashley Bank to Ashley; Cambridge to Newland; Heathcote Upper to Spreydon; and Hurunui (the district formerly so called) to Waikari. New schools were opened at Cambridge, Bromley, Elgin, Aylesbury, and Loburn North; new school-buildings were contracted for at Ashburton, Flemington, German Bay, Kaikoura Town, Kowai North, Mason's Flat, and Hinds; and at Dunsandel, Heathcote Lower, Heathcote Valley, Oxford East, Oxford West, and Tinwald considerable additional accommodation was provided. The total expenditure on buildings during the year was £18,200 0s. 5d. A detailed account, showing the exact sum expended in each school district, is given in Table No. 1. The Board would gladly have done much more had its means allowed; but the scantiness of its resources has been very severely felt. The amount allotted for expenditure on buildings during the current year—£6,000—was altogether inadequate to the requirements of the district. This small sum, together with such contribution as could be made from ordinary revenue, was speedily exhausted; and there remains a long list of applications for the formation of new districts and for the building or enlargement of schoolrooms, particulars of which have been furnished to the department—all of them works of admitted necessity, but for which the Board is unable to make even the smallest provision.

MAINTENANCE OF SCHOOLS.—The expenditure for the maintenance of schools, including all incidental expenses, was £43,992 19s. 9d.; and for instruction only £38,136 17s. The following table shows the expenditure on salaries (inclusive of all allowances to teachers) and incidental expenses for the years 1878, 1879, 1880:—

	Salaries.			Incidental.			Total.		
	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
1878	31,916	0	0	6,276	6	9	38,195	6	9
1879	34,417	14	6	5,856	9	8	40,274	4	2
1880	38,136	17	8	5,856	2	1	43,992	19	9

The average attendance for the year was 11,605. The cost of maintaining the schools, including all expenses, was therefore at the rate of £3 15s. 9½d. per head, and the cost of instruction only at the rate of very nearly £3 5s. 8¾d. No exact comparison can be drawn between these rates and those of former years, as allowance has to be made for the effect of a general reduction of salaries commencing on the 1st November. In consequence of the capitation grant being reduced by 10s. a head, the Board was required to make a corresponding reduction in every branch of its ordinary expenditure. After careful consideration the following plan of reduction was decided on: Salaries of from £21 to £50 to be reduced 5 per cent; from £51 to £100, 5 per cent. on the first £50 and 10 per cent. on the remainder; above £100, 10 per cent. Allowances to teachers of every kind were reduced 10 per cent., as were also the salaries of the Inspectors and all officers of the Board. The total reduction thus effected was about £5,000.

TEACHERS.—Table No. 1 gives a nominal return of all teachers in the Board's service, and the amount of annual salary and other allowances, at the reduced rates, paid to each. The number at the end of the December quarter was 391, besides 33 sewing mistresses, giving one teacher to every 31·27 children in average attendance. The teachers are classified as under: Male head teachers, 111; male assistant teachers, 21; male pupil-teachers, 40; female head teachers, 88; female assistant teachers, 27; female pupil-teachers, 104: total number of teachers, 391. Number of teachers of sewing, 33. The manner of appointing teachers in this district is as follows: The initiative is left to the Committees, who, on the occurrence of a vacancy, invite applications, and recommend to the Board the applicant whom they consider most eligible. Occasionally the Committee prefer to submit two or three names, and leave the choice to the Board. If there is no doubt that the recommendation is satisfactory, the Board makes the appointment; but, if the person nominated is not thought sufficiently qualified for the post, the Board desires to have the names of all the applicants, and itself selects one or more whom it will agree to appoint. When the situation is an important one, the Board generally requires to be furnished with a list of the applications before coming to a decision. The case of teachers of sewing is on a somewhat different footing, as by the Act the responsibility rests primarily with the Committee, who are empowered to appoint, subject to the Board's approval. The selection of pupil-teachers is left almost entirely to the Committees, under the conditions imposed by the regulations. But the Committee are expected to consult the principal teacher of the school, and to satisfy themselves that the candidate recommended is not only of the prescribed age and standing, but gives promise of the qualifications necessary to success as a teacher.

ATTENDANCE.—At the close of 1880 the number of school districts in the Education District of North Canterbury was 106, and the number of separate schools, including the practising department of the Normal School, was 123. They are classified as under: Under 15 pupils, 4; 15 and under 20 pupils, 4; 20 and under 25 pupils, 13; 25 and under 50 pupils, 43; 50 and under 75 pupils, 17; 75