

B. *Building Fund only.*

			£	s.	d.				£	s.	d.
Due from Government	...	...	4,376	0	0	Balance of account, 31st December, 1882	...	...	1,908	11	3
						Balance of amounts due, or to fall due, under contracts	...	...	100	0	5
						Balance	...	...	2,367	8	4
			<u>£4,376</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>				<u>£4,376</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>

HAWKE'S BAY.

SIR,—

Board of Education, Napier, 31st January, 1883.

In accordance with the requirements of the Education Act, the Board of Education for this district has the honour to forward its general report upon the progress and condition of education for the year ended 31st December, 1882.

MEETINGS OF BOARD.—The Board meets for the transaction of ordinary business on the third Tuesday in each month. The attendance of members at each meeting averages about two-thirds of the number forming the Board, which average has been maintained for the past three years. The following are the attendances made by each member: Mr. J. D. Ormond (Chairman), 11; Captain Russell, 10; Rev. D. Sidey, 10; Mr. Robert Dobson (9 months), 8; Mr. R. Harding, 11; Mr. G. E. Lee (9 months), 2; Mr. S. Locke, 3; Mr. F. Sutton, M.H.R., 8; Mr. T. Tanner (3 months), 2; Mr. J. N. Williams, 10. Several slight alterations have taken place in the constitution of the Board. At the annual election for three members in March Mr. T. Tanner, one of the retiring members, did not seek re-election, being about to visit England; and Mr. G. E. Lee, a former member of the Board, was elected, along with Mr. F. Sutton and Mr. J. N. Williams, who were the other two retiring members for the year. In November an extraordinary vacancy was caused by the resignation of Mr. Robert Dobson, and Mr. William White has recently been elected in his place.

BUILDING OPERATIONS.—The past year has not been a busy one in the way of school extension and improvements. Whilst there have been numerous applications for much-needed enlargements and new school-buildings, the smallness of the building grant has made it impossible for the Board to provide the accommodation necessary for the proper advancement of education in the district. The average attendance at the schools during the year is no measure of the number of children of school age in the district. At the close of the year there were only 1,833 males and 1,533 females, or a total of 3,363 children, returned as attending school; but from the census returns which have recently been published it appears there are in the district 2,693 males and 2,702 females of school age, or a total of 5,395 children. If 10 per cent. be deducted from this total for the children attending the Catholic and other private schools, there will then remain 1,855 children who ought to be attending the schools under the Board in addition to the number whose names were on the register in December last. But the accommodation in the schools belonging to the Board is not sufficient for the children attending school in December, so that accommodation is required for the large number of children who cannot, with existing school room, share the benefits of the educational system of the colony. The only building operations which have been undertaken during the year are the erection of a small schoolhouse at Wainui, and additions to the schools at Clive, Hastings, and Wairoa. No teachers' residences have been provided, although a number are much needed for the teachers in charge of schools in outlying districts. Since April, 1880, the Board has received from the Government the sum of £4,194 for building purposes, and with such slender resources it has been found impossible to place this district in a satisfactory state as far as relates to the supply of school accommodation and teachers' residences.

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE.—Although the schools have suffered greatly owing to the prevalence of measles, diphtheria, scarlatina, and whooping-cough in most of the districts, the average weekly number on the school rolls for the year shows an increase of about 3 per cent. over the previous year. The average attendance for the year likewise shows an increase over the average for 1881 of about 4 per cent. At Norsewood, where the average attendance under ordinary circumstances exceeds one hundred pupils, the school was closed for nearly half a year in consequence of the intensity of the measles and diphtheria which prevailed in the district and carried off many of the children. Similarly the school at Waipukurau was closed for several months, and in neither case has the attendance reached what it was eighteen months ago. The compulsory closing of these schools, from causes beyond the control of either teachers, Committees, or the Board, occasioned a heavy loss to the School Fund, as the Board felt itself bound to pay the salaries of the teachers engaged in those schools, although the department refused to recognize the Board's claim for payment when made under such special and exceptional circumstances. In England, where payments are made in great part upon the average attendance at the schools, a Government regulation recognizes payment to schools which are compulsorily closed owing to the existence of epidemics similar to those which have caused such havoc among the children in the Norsewood and Waipukurau school districts; and the Board suggests the adoption of a similar regulation for the benefit of schools in this country.

The following table gives a comparative statement of the average number of children on the