

J.P., and Samuel W. Goldsmith, Chairman. Messrs. John Talbot, Melville Gray, and R. H. Pearpoint retired in terms of section 15 of the Act. The following gentlemen were nominated by the School Committees to fill these vacancies, viz.: Messrs. John Talbot, Melville Grey, R. H. Pearpoint, C. R. Meredith-Kaye, Frank Slee, and W. H. Beckett; and the voting of thirty-nine School Committees (out of fifty-two) resulted in the election of the retiring members of the Board, Messrs. Talbot, Gray, and Pearpoint. No extraordinary vacancy occurred during the year. At the usual meeting of the Board in April Mr. S. W. Goldsmith was re-elected Chairman. Twelve regular meetings were held during the year, the day of meeting being the first Thursday in the month, except in the month of January when the Board assembled on the third Thursday; the average attendance for the year being 7.33. The officers of the Board were the same as at the end of last year.

NUMBER OF SCHOOLS.—On the 31st December, 1887, there were forty-nine schools in operation, counting Timaru Main and Timaru Side as separate schools. One new school, Adair, has since been completed and opened (Glenavy being in course of erection only), making a total of fifty schools open for educational purposes on the 31st December, 1888, whilst the Cave and Seadown districts have been proclaimed.

Of the fifty schools under the Board, the classification is as follows:—

Under 25 pupils in average attendance ...	11	Between 100 and 300	5
Between 25 and 50 ...	22	" 300 and 500	1
" 50 and 100 ...	10	" 500 and 1,000	1

There are no half-time schools included in the above; and the number of aided schools at the end of the year was eleven. There were no schools closed during the year.

The number of Maoris and half-caste scholars attending schools (five) in this district is as follows:—

	Boys.	Girls.	Total.
Pure Maoris ...	3	1	4
Half-castes living as members of a Native tribe ...	1	2	3
Half-castes living among Europeans ...	5	3	8

The number of scholars shows a steady increase on the returns of former years, the roll number at the end of the year being 4,703, as against 4,584 in 1887. The average attendance for the same period was 3,821, against 3,477, showing an increase of 344, or an increase of the "strict average" attendance of 189 over the "working average" attendance of the previous year, in spite of the number of people who have left the towns for Sydney and Melbourne.

The ratio of average attendance to roll number is about 77 per cent. for this year, as against 78 for last year; but it must be borne in mind that in previous years this ratio was calculated on the "working average," whereas this year it is on the "strict average."

An exceedingly boisterous and rainy quarter—from June to September—reduced the strict average attendance from 3,705 to 3,492, which meant a loss of nearly £200 to the Board for those three months. The districts, however, as a rule, have been very healthy for the whole year.

The following table shows the attendance in the district since the Board was established. [Not reprinted.]

The balance-sheet, duly certified by the Auditor-General, is appended. The Building Account shows an expenditure of £1,304 11s. 1d., against receipts £2,238 1s. 3d., leaving a balance of £932 10s. 2d. This sum is, however, more than pledged, £300 having been set aside for Geraldine, £136 10s. for the Cave, £53 balance on Glenavy, and £388 18s. balance of amounts due on contracts entered into; and a further sum of £70 for the furniture required for Waimate, Glenavy, Cave, and Hilton, which leaves the Building Fund in debt to date £15 17s. To this must be added the new furniture required for the extensions at Washdyke, Orari Bridge, Orari South, Hilton, and Pleasant Valley, which items were not considered in forming the estimates, and which will, with architect's fees and other incidental charges, amount to upwards of £100.

The Maintenance Account shows a balance credit at the end of the year, after deducting the amounts paid by the School Commissioners on account of capitation for February and balance for March (£1,341 16s. 10d.), of £329 16s. Considering the fact that the "strict average" system of payment has ruled during the year, necessitating a new scale of salaries, the low average of the district for the quarter ending the 30th September, and the payment of over £400 in bonuses at the commencement of the year, this result may be held to be fairly satisfactory.

BUILDINGS.—During the past year the Adair (Beaconsfield) School has been erected, and opened in the month of September with an average of thirty-two. Towards this school the residents and property holders contributed the sum of £50. Large repairs have been made to the roofs of both the Timaru Main and Side Schools, as well as to the master's house. The ventilation has been attended to, the drainage made more efficient, and water laid on to the urinals, and the fencing repaired, although very much in this respect remains to be done. The roof of the Washdyke School has been covered with iron and painted, and considerable additions have been made to the seating capacity in the way of a new class room. The master's house at Milford has been roofed with iron; and a class room has been added to the Pleasant Valley School, and the old roof covered with iron. At Hilton the class room has been enlarged, and the master's house repaired and painted. The St. Andrew's School and master's house have been repaired and re-ceiled. The Geraldine School has been repaired, and a new grate put in the master's house. A new arch has been put in the Timaru Main School; and the roof of the Temuka School has been repaired. The closets at Waimataitai School have been altered; and new brick closets erected at Waimate. Additions have been made at Orari South and at Orari Bridge. The roof of the Pleasant Point School has been repaired. The closets at Totara Valley and the washhouse at Albury, blown away by a hurricane, have been rebuilt. A new school has been erected at Glenavy, towards which the residents subscribed £30. New furniture has been supplied to Adair and Glenavy; and additional furniture to Waimate, Pleasant Valley, Sutherland's, Pareora, Silverstream, South Orari, Kingsdown, Timaru Main and Side, whilst a great many small grants have been made in aid of the incidental funds of various schools.