

SCHOOLS.—Four new schools have been opened during 1897, viz.: Wakarara, Western Spit, Pohui, and Waimate Valley. The last two are aided schools, in which the parents have to provide the buildings and guarantee a salary of £80 a year, while the Board furnishes the apparatus, and gives a capitation allowance of £4 10s. per head per annum on average attendance. Two new schools, with residences, will be opened shortly at Whetekura and Elsthorpe, two special settlements recently established. Towards the cost of these two school buildings the Government granted, from funds set apart by Parliament for this purpose, the sum of £110, while the Board paid from its ordinary funds the sum of £933. In addition to these buildings, a teacher's residence has been erected at Takapau and Wairoa, and additions have been made to the following schools: Te Arai, Wairoa, Weber, Ormondville, and Porangahau; also, alterations have been carried out in Hampden and Woodville.

SCHOOL COMMITTEES.—As in former years, the relations between the Board and the School Committees have been of the most cordial character. There have been no complaints of any importance during the year from the School Committees to the Board; while the Board has duly considered every request made by the Committees, and, as far as necessity called for and the Board funds allowed, have carried out their requests. It is with special gratification that the Board calls attention to the care taken of the school buildings by many of the Committees during the recent bush fires. It was entirely owing to their exertions that serious loss has not occurred.

SCHOLARSHIPS.—In the year 1897 there were forty-two scholarship holders from the public schools attending the Napier High Schools and the Gisborne District High School. Four of the scholarships were of the value of £50 per annum each, nine of £30 4s., eight of £12 4s., and twenty-one of £10 4s. The sum allowed is dependent on the place of the pupil's residence. The larger sums are given to children from the country districts. The whole sum expended was £783 12s. A portion of this amount is provided by the School Commissioners. Very few of the scholarship holders have surrendered their scholarships during the year as compared with former years. This may be accounted for by the fact that fewer eligible openings have presented themselves than formerly for the pupils.

SEWING.—The Board has much pleasure in reporting that sewing has been very carefully taught in all the schools during the year. The ladies of the district, who have for many years given their time and attention to this branch of school work, have reported most favourably on the results for the year. The examination by these ladies has the advantage of stirring up a healthy rivalry among both pupils and teachers.

TECHNICAL EDUCATION.—Nothing has been done in this direction during the past year, chiefly because the Board has had no funds for the purpose. The Board has provided £1,430 17s. 1d. out of the school fund for school buildings and repairs, and has considered such claims to have a prior claim, as without this contribution the schools started in the out-districts could not have been provided for. As settlement progresses, the claims for small isolated districts increase, and are a rowing charge on the school fund.

PUPIL-TEACHERS.—The reversion to the old regulations has been found to work satisfactorily. It is worthy of note that a number of third- and fourth-year pupil-teachers, and even a few second-year, have gone up for certificate examination, and in most cases have obtained their certificates or a partial pass.

The account of the Board's income and expenditure for the year, duly audited by the Government Auditor, is appended hereto. The amount paid for teachers' salaries, bonuses on results, and instruction of pupil-teachers, was £20,061 5s. 3d.; the amount paid to School Committees, £2,221 8s. 5d.; and the amount expended on school buildings, repairs, &c., £3,549 15s. 5d.

I have, &c.,

The Hon. the Minister of Education.

J. D. ORMOND, Chairman.

GENERAL STATEMENT of RECEIPTS and EXPENDITURE for the Year ending 31st December, 1897.

Receipts.			Expenditure.		
£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
To Balance—					
Dr. On Building Account	469	1 9			
Cr. On General Account	4,553	0 9			
			4,083	19 0	
Government grant for buildings			3,060	0 0	
Subscriptions and donations for buildings			12	0 0	
Other receipts for buildings—Transfer from School Fund			1,430	17 1	
Government statutory capitation			21,064	2 0	
Scholarship grant			521	5 2	
Inspection subsidy			300	0 0	
Payments by School Commissioners			2,717	13 0	
District High School fees			383	14 6	
Contribution, teacher's salary			36	4 2	
Rent of reserve			3	0 0	
			£33,612	14 11	
By Office staff—Salaries					360 0 0
Departmental contingencies					289 7 1
Inspector's salary					520 0 0
Inspector's travelling-expenses					175 0 0
Examination of pupil-teachers					73 10 3
Teachers' salaries and allowances (including rent, bonus, &c.)					20,061 5 3
Incidental expenses of schools					2,221 8 5
Scholarships—					
Paid to scholars					511 2 0
Examination expenses					36 12 0
School buildings—					
New buildings					1,960 2 1
Improvements of buildings					935 11 1
Furniture and appliances					407 17 3
Plans, supervision, and fees					246 5 0
Transfer to Building Fund					1,430 17 1
Exchange on cheques					28 3 6
Balance—					
On Building Account					483 19 11
On General Account					3,871 14 0
			£33,612	14 11	

E. T. FANNIN, Treasurer and Secretary.

Examined and found correct—J. K. WARBURTON, Controller and Auditor-General.