

Much of this might easily be amended if the department would only do what is (logically) a part of its duty—viz., take upon itself the examination and classification of the pupil-teachers, as it does in the case of all other teachers. This would place pupil-teachers in all parts of the colony on absolutely the same footing as regards eligibility for appointment at the end of their apprenticeship, to say nothing of other advantages, which will readily suggest themselves to those acquainted with the varying systems of instruction and training now obtaining in different parts of the colony. This is one of the reforms that have been recommended time after time for the last twenty years by Boards, teachers, Institute, and others, but it has never (apparently) met with the approbation of the department.

SCHOLARSHIPS.—There are now five scholarships current, two of these being mainly supported by the School Commissioners, who have undertaken to contribute four-fifths of the (present) cost of one scholarship annually. The number of scholarships will probably be increased and their value (in money) reduced when the arrangements now pending for the establishment of a high school in Blenheim are completed.

HIGH SCHOOL.—The Legislature having granted £400 to the Marlborough School Commissioners as an endowment for a high school in Marlborough, and that body having agreed with the Board as to the best means of utilising the grant, it has been resolved to convert the Blenheim School into a district high school, under section 55 of the Act. This, however, is only a temporary expedient, and it is hoped that the Legislature will take the peculiar circumstances of Marlborough into consideration, and grant a permanent provision, by endowment, for the maintenance of a high school proper, to compensate—though late in the day—for the injustice suffered by the Marlborough District with regard to educational endowments at the separation from Nelson in 1859.

COMMITTEES.—The relations between the Board and the School Committees have been throughout the year of a most cordial description, and, as it is the constant endeavour of the Board to meet their wishes in everything that comes within the scope of their duties, there is no reason to expect that any serious conflict of authority is likely to arise. The Board is pleased to notice in the Inspector's report that the Committees have endeavoured to increase the attractiveness of the school grounds by the planting of trees, and, with the assistance of the teachers, have encouraged the cultivation of little garden-plots by the children. In these and in other ways much good has been done by the Committees, to whom the Board offers its hearty thanks for their invaluable co-operation in the interest of education.

THE LATE INSPECTOR-GENERAL.—The Board cannot conclude this report without some reference to the great loss the cause of education has suffered in the lamented decease of the late William James Habens. The deceased gentleman may really be described as the foster-father of the education system of New Zealand, as the Hon. C. C. Bowen may be styled its father. Although the experience of more than twenty years and the onward march of educational improvement have rendered necessary some amendments of the system, the colony is none the less indebted to him who has gone for the many excellencies which distinguished and still do distinguish it. His unremitting devotion to his duty, his invariable impartiality, and his constant courtesy to all, even to the very humblest, who had occasion to approach him officially, are universally acknowledged and affectionately remembered, and the Board is of opinion that some permanent record of the appreciation of his labours in the great cause of education should be set up amongst us. The 3,600 teachers of New Zealand would doubtless be glad to contribute, say, on the average, 2s. 6d. each, to supplement other subscriptions from the general public for the same object, and a small vote from Parliament might increase the amount to a sum sufficient to endow a scholarship, which should perpetuate the memory of the first administrator of the system which, with all its faults, has obtained so firm a hold on the affections of the people. The Board commends this suggestion to the consideration of the Minister.

I have, &c.,

The Hon. the Minister of Education.

A. P. SEYMOUR, Chairman.

GENERAL STATEMENT OF RECEIPTS AND EXPENDITURE for the Year ending 31st December, 1898.

<i>Receipts.</i>			<i>Expenditure.</i>		
	£	s. d.	£	s. d.	£ s. d.
To Balance—					By Office staff—salaries 469 11 0
Dr. on Building Account	1,406	14 8			Departmental contingencies 152 3 1
Cr. on General Account	1,442	9 10			Teachers' salaries and allowances (in-
			35	15 2	cluding rent, bonus, &c.) 5,895 11 9
Government grant for buildings			575	0 0	Incidental expenses of schools 485 18 4
Special grant, fire, Canvastown			13	12 0	Scholarships 160 0 0
Government statutory capitation			6,506	17 6	School buildings—
Scholarship grant			156	0 0	New buildings 362 17 1
Inspection subsidy			200	0 0	Improvements of buildings 212 4 6
Shorthand classes			22	8 10	Furniture and appliances 27 15 3
Payments by School Commissioners—					Sites 197 11 0
For primary education			300	0 0	Plans, supervision, and fees 4 16 5
For secondary education			32	0 0	Books 436 11 4
Books			426	6 3	Shorthand instructor 15 0 0
School libraries			12	14 3	
Shorthand fees			32	16 2	
Miscellaneous receipts			29	17 9	
Balance			76	11 10	
			<u>£8,419</u>	<u>19 9</u>	
					<u>£8,419 19 9</u>

JOHN SMITH, Secretary.

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