

increased grant for the training of teachers, and urged upon the Minister the claims of the Christchurch Normal School. It is understood that the matter is still under consideration by the Government, and that the Board will obtain a proportionate amount of the increased vote passed by Parliament during last session.

**INSPECTION.**—The Inspectors' annual report gives information as to the number of children examined and their general proficiency in the several subjects; it also comments favourably on the use the teachers have made of the amended regulations respecting the classification of pupils. The Inspectors are of opinion that the standard of proficiency adopted in individual subjects has been essentially honest, as well as sound, in the main. In one important respect, however, the alteration has not worked out satisfactorily. In its annual report for 1899 the Board questioned the wisdom of reducing the "pass" subjects to five, and of accepting work of the next lower standard in two out of that number. In determining the status of pupils the absence of definiteness in the standard specified by the regulations has been a source of embarrassment to the Inspectors, whose illustration of what may be termed the uncertain value of a Fifth Standard certificate serves to add weight to the representations already made to the Minister on the subject.

**SCHOLARSHIPS.**—The annual examination for scholarships was held on the 10th December, 1900, and three following days. The number of candidates examined for the junior scholarships was 125 (seventy boys and fifty-five girls); for the senior scholarships the number was twenty-one (thirteen boys and eight girls). Of the 125 candidates, sixty came from schools defined in the regulations as town schools, and sixty-five from schools defined as country schools. The sixty town candidates gained three of the thirteen junior scholarships awarded; while, of the ten successful country competitors, five did not require the year's advantage in age. There were ten entries for the two Gammack scholarships offered by the Board.

**TRUANCY AND IRREGULAR ATTENDANCE.**—During the year, 241 parents or guardians were proceeded against for persistent contravention of the School Attendance Act. In 180 cases fines were inflicted, and in four cases the Court made orders to compel attendance. Of the remainder, forty-seven cases were dismissed and ten withdrawn. The Board, in its report of 1899, brought under the notice of the Minister several points in which improvement is desirable to insure the successful working of the Act. A reluctance on the part of a few Justices of the Peace to enter up convictions where a breach of the law has been committed has increased the difficulties under which the Truant Officer's duties are performed. Such interpretation of the law, however well-intentioned, can scarcely fail to encourage parents to neglect their children's welfare and to insure in the future a plentiful harvest of ignorance and crime.

**MILITARY DRILL.**—In order to have section 85 of the Education Act more generally complied with, during the year the Board arranged with the Defence Department to hold teachers' military drill classes at Ashburton and Christchurch. The term commenced on Saturday, the 15th September, and, with some slight intermission, terminated on the 15th December. Twenty-two teachers attended the Ashburton class under Sergeant-Major Jones, which met twelve times, the number in average attendance being 14.75. The Christchurch class, with Sergeant-Major Coleman as instructor, met thirteen times, the average being 82.54 of the 106 teachers whose names appeared on the roll. Both instructors have reported favourably on the attention given and the aptitude shown by the teachers. The Board is convinced that nothing but good can result to teachers and children alike from its endeavour to carry out the Act, both in the letter and spirit, an endeavour which has been so well and so cheerfully supported by a large majority of the teachers who were thus called upon to qualify themselves in the subject. The Board has applied to the Defence Department for the services of the sergeants-major for another term, to commence on the 2nd March.

**TEACHERS' SALARIES.**—The Board's new scale regulating teachers' salaries came into force on the 1st May, 1900. The continued decline in the attendance at the Board's schools makes it abundantly clear that the decision to reduce expenditure was not arrived at a moment too soon. At the end of the year 1900 the debit balance on the Maintenance Account stood at £2,158 14s. 5d., which, in view of the still falling attendance, will be difficult for the Board to wipe off, even with the most careful and economical management. The Board has always desired for its teachers a fair remuneration for their services; in recent years its efforts in this direction have, however, been quite frustrated, owing to the limited means placed at the Board's disposal. The prominent part taken by the North Canterbury Board in the general endeavour to have the capitation grant raised to £4 has worked for good, inasmuch as during last session Parliament voted an additional 5s. for teachers' salaries in respect of recent service. The Board, after anxious consideration, could not, however, support the method suggested by the Department for the distribution amongst the teachers of that special grant, and so the matter remains in abeyance. As regards the future, the Board will welcome any scheme which in its opinion will place the salaries of public school teachers on a satisfactory footing, and insure to Education Boards a sufficient sum to meet all other necessary expenditure. Fair salaries and sufficient incidental allowances are essentially necessary for the maintenance of the existing system of primary education, a system which undoubtedly has the support of a large majority of the people of New Zealand.

**MANUAL AND TECHNICAL INSTRUCTION.**—The manual-training classes at the Normal School and at Leeston have continued in operation during the year. The instructor reports that the quality of the work during 1900 was not below that of previous years. The classes were very successful in their competitions at the Canterbury and Ellesmere Agricultural and Pastoral Shows, also in the "workers' section" at the Jubilee Industrial Exhibition. The Board now has under its consideration the question of making further provision for manual and technical education in its district, rendered possible by the advantages offered under the Act passed during 1900.

I have, &c.,

The Hon. the Minister of Education, Wellington.

T. S. WESTON, Chairman.