

I pointed out in a previous report, we cannot arrange to give the students more time for kindergarten without cutting down the subjects that are compulsory in their examinations for certificates. The same holds good with regard to some other subjects that I should like to see included in the students' curriculum of studies; as, for instance, manual training and elementary agricultural knowledge. Of the former of these two subjects there is no need for me to speak; of the latter, I believe that in a few years' time, judging by the present indications of advance in education, it will be looked for as a subject in country schools. If, however, our students are taken through a reasonably good general course in science, and if that course is not one of mere book-work, but one that associates theory with experiment, and, in the case of the male students, with actual practical experimental work, we may hope that those of them who go to the country districts will be capable, later on, of acquiring, by reading and observation, such knowledge of the elementary principles of agriculture as will enable them to teach this subject to the upper standards in their schools.

I should like to add that for years I have been fully aware of the deficiencies in the work of this Normal School, and of steps that might be taken towards practical improvement. I know, too, how desirous the Board is of forwarding the efficient preparation of the young teachers for their professional duties. But improvement is mainly a question of funds, and I have accordingly refrained from urging changes when it was clear that these would necessarily entail such increased expenditure as the Board could not be expected to face with the inadequate funds at its disposal.

EDWIN WATKINS, B.A., Principal.

SOUTH CANTERBURY.

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Education Office, Timaru, 31st March, 1901.

In accordance with the provisions of section 102 of "The Education Act, 1877," the Education Board of the District of South Canterbury has the honour to submit the following report of its proceedings for the year ending with the 31st of December, 1900:—

BOARD.—At the beginning of the year the Board consisted of the following members: Mr. William Barker Howell, J.P. (Chairman), the Rev. George Barclay, J.P., Mr. John Talbot, J.P., Mr. George J. Hamilton, Mr. Peter Keddie, J.P., Mr. John Jackson, J.P., Mr. Daniel Newman Inwood, J.P., and Lieutenant-Colonel Walter M. Moore, J.P.; Mr. James Stevens Keith having resigned in December, 1899. The three members retiring in terms of section 15 of the Education Act were Messrs. Talbot, Moore, and Keith. Six candidates were nominated by the School Committees for the vacancies, and the voting in February resulted in the re-election of Messrs. Talbot and Moore, and the election of Mr. Thomas Cheyne Farnie, M.A. At the meeting of the Board in April, Mr. William Barker Howell was re-elected Chairman. Mr. William B. Howell also represents the Board as one of the Education Reserve Commissioners. The Board held twelve ordinary meetings during the year, the average of attendance being 6·91.

SCHOOLS.—At the close of 1900 there were sixty-eight full-time schools in the district, the classification of which was as follows: Under 15 pupils, four schools; 15 and under 20, six schools; 20 and under 25, eleven schools; 25 and under 50, twenty-six schools; 50 and under 75, nine schools; 75 and under 100, four schools; 100 and under 150, one school; 150 and under 300, three schools; 300 and under 500, three schools; 500 and upwards, 1 school. The number of aided schools included in the above is three. The number of schools open at the end of last year or during part of this year, but permanently closed before the end of this year, was one. There are ten Maoris or half-castes attending at three schools—viz., Morven, Albury, and Glenavy.

PUPIL-TEACHERS.—There were twenty-four pupil-teachers—eleven male and thirteen female—in the Board's service at the end of 1900. At the examination in June twenty-two pupil-teachers sat for examination. They were classed as follows: Fourth year—2 males, 2 females; third year—3 males, 7 females; second year—2 males, 1 female; first year—4 males, 1 female. Twenty pupil-teachers passed and two failed.

SCHOLARSHIPS.—The annual scholarship examination took place on the 19th December, and extended to the 22nd December, 1900. The candidates were as follows: Seniors—Boys, 9; girls, 6. Juniors—Boys, 13; girls, 16.

DISTRICT HIGH SCHOOLS.—A special report on the secondary work of the district high schools was submitted by the Board's Inspectors. From this report it appears that thirty-two scholars took part in the examination at Waimate, and twenty-three at Temuka. The subjects taken were English, French, Latin, Euclid, algebra, heat, botany, and book-keeping. The Waimate High School Board of Governors continues its grant of £100 per annum towards the teaching of the higher subjects in the Waimate District High School, and encourages attendance by awarding scholarships and exhibitions to successful pupils.

FINANCE.—The Maintenance Account at the end of 1900 showed a credit balance of £19 2s. 6d., the Board having commenced the year with a debit balance of £176. The Building Account for the same period showed a credit balance of £458 9s. 3d., but although this was unexpended at the end of the year it was fully pledged. In fact, the Building Account was really overdrawn by upwards of £100.

The Board has to thank the School Committees generally for the interest and attention they have given to the work and welfare of education in their respective districts. Two or three schools have had to be temporarily closed for short periods only, through a slight outbreak of diphtheria, but, as a whole, the children have been very healthy.

The Board can congratulate itself on the cordial relations existing between the School Committees, the teachers, and the Board.

The Hon. the Minister of Education.

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WM. B. HOWELL, Chairman.