

Anama and Horsley Downs, and the Newland School was removed to Fairton. Additions to school buildings, rendered necessary owing to increase in attendance, were made at Mayfield, Rabbit Island, and Kaikoura Suburban: and in the case of Richmond a caretaker's house was provided. Substantial repairs and improvements were effected at Irwell, Hurunui, Willowby, Dromore, Greenpark, Lakeside, Woodend, Kaikoura Town, Southbridge, Kaiapoi Normal School, and Tinwald; while considerable expenditure was incurred in a number of districts on the maintenance and repair of schools and teachers' houses. In previous years the Board has emphasized the need of a larger grant in order to enable it to maintain in good condition the school buildings in North Canterbury, which, being built of wood, require in the aggregate a heavy annual expenditure. The increased cost of material and the higher price of labour within the last two or three years, in many cases equal to an advance of 25 per cent., have accentuated the Board's difficulties in this direction, clearly showing that, unless the Minister is prepared to augment the Board's share of the parliamentary vote, the requirements of the district generally, and more particularly as regards the rebuilding of teachers' houses, cannot be adequately met.

MAINTENANCE.—The expenditure on teachers' salaries and allowances amounted to £57,117 16s. 2d., and the grants to School Committees, with other incidental expenses, to £6,141 7s. 8d., making a total of £63,259 3s. 10d. On the basis of an average attendance of 16,580, the mean of the average on which payment was made, the cost per head of teachers' salaries was £3 9s. as compared with £3 6s. 10d. for the previous year; and the cost of maintaining the schools, inclusive of incidental expenses, £3 16s. 4d. per head. Adding the 11s. 3d. capitation received from the Government, and the annual grant of £250, the total cost of primary instruction during the year was approximately £4 0s. 7d. for each child in average attendance, exclusive of expenditure on buildings.

The total number of teachers in the Board's service at the end of 1902 was 505. Of these 207 (128 males and 79 females) were heads of schools or departments, or in sole charge; 194 (37 males and 157 females) were assistants; and 104 (22 males and 82 females) were pupil-teachers. Owing to the introduction of the Public-School Teachers' Salaries Act a number of new positions in other education districts have been created, some of which have been filled by teachers trained in North Canterbury. This has added to the difficulty of finding teachers for the smaller country schools, a matter giving rise to some anxiety, in which connection the above-mentioned Act, so far at least as the reduction in the number of pupil-teachers is concerned, must be regarded as an experiment, the success of which is by no means assured.

As compared with the previous year the roll-number on the 31st December, 1902, shows a decrease of 187. Though it would have been more satisfactory had an increase taken place, yet so small a variation surely justifies the hope that the decline which has been so marked a feature since the year 1896 has at length been arrested, and that in the near future an increasing roll-number may be recorded.

NORMAL SCHOOL.—In the appended report of the Principal, information upon the work of the training department is given. The number in training during the year was 32; of these, 28 were first-year students (6 males and 22 females), and 4 were of the second year (1 male and 3 females). On the Public-School Teachers' Salaries Act coming into operation, the Board was left without the means of continuing the work of training teachers, the cost of which had previously been met out of the capitation grant provided for the maintenance of schools generally. It therefore became necessary to make an application for a special grant to meet the expenditure. It is understood that the arrangement made by the Minister—namely, a refund of the salaries and allowances actually paid—is to be continued until the end of 1903. In any scheme the Department may be preparing for the future it may confidently be expected that the good work hitherto done in the training of teachers in North Canterbury will be recognised.

Though more a matter for recording in next year's report, it may be stated that, in view of the small number of students entering as ex-pupil-teachers, the Board has recently decided to admit a limited number of matriculated University students into the Normal School for a two-years course of training. Nine of such non-pupil-teacher students have been admitted since the commencement of the year. During the year there have been several important changes in the school staff, which are severally referred to in the Principal's report. The retirement of Mr. J. C. Adams, for the last ten years headmaster of the boys' department, is a distinct loss to the school; in which connection it is a matter for congratulation that, as the teachers' representative on the Board of Governors of Canterbury College, his services in the cause of education have not been lost.

SCHOLARSHIPS.—Some slight alterations in the scholarship regulations have been agreed upon, though these did not come into operation until the present year. The advantage of a year as regards age, until now shared by all children attending schools having not more than two certificated teachers, will in its entirety be retained by pupils of sole-charge schools only; those from the other schools hitherto classed as country schools receiving six months' concession; while children attending schools in charge of their parents will be required to compete on the same footing as do those from town schools. It appeared to the Board that some such modification was necessary, so as to insure a more even distribution of scholarships.

At the annual examination for scholarships, held on the 15th December and four following days, there were 113 candidates for the junior scholarships (57 boys and 56 girls) and 25 for those of the senior class (16 boys and 9 girls). Of the 113 candidates, 54 came from town schools and 59 from country schools. The town candidates secured four of the junior scholarships awarded, eight being gained by the country competitors, of whom seven would not have been eligible to compete but for the concession of one year as regards age. There were 11 candidates for the two Gammack Scholarships, open to candidates that obtain credit in the examination for New Zealand University Scholarships but who are not successful in obtaining one of such scholarships.