

Howell, J.P. (Chairman). Messrs. Campbell, McCaskill, and Howell retired in August in accordance with section 15 of "The Education Act, 1877," and section 21 of "The Education Boards' Election Act, 1900," and were all re-elected unopposed. In June there was an extraordinary vacancy caused by the resignation of Mr. Farnie, and out of the six candidates nominated to fill his place Mr. J. S. Rutherford of Albury was elected by the members of the School Committees. In August Mr. W. B. Howell for the seventh time was elected Chairman of the Board.

The Board held one special and twelve ordinary meetings during the year, the average attendance of members being seven.

**THE SCHOOLS.**—At the beginning of the year there were seventy schools in operation in the district. During the year new schools were opened at Waihaorunga and Waikakihi, and the school at Greenhills was closed, so that the number of schools at the end of the year was seventy-one.

**SECONDARY SCHOOLS.**—The District High Schools at Waimate and Temuka continue to attract an increasing number of secondary pupils, and are found a great benefit to the children in their neighbourhood. Geraldine, which was raised to the status of a district high school at the end of 1901, has a much greater roll-number of secondary pupils than was anticipated, there being twenty-seven at the end of the year.\*

After much delay, the Government at the end of the year issued its regulations for free places in secondary schools, and the conditions contained therein have been accepted, and the free places granted by the Timaru High School Board; but these regulations are considered too exclusive, and so many deserving scholars are by them debarred from gaining free secondary education, that more concessions will be needed before the new regulations will meet with general approval.

**SCHOLARSHIPS.**—As usual the Scholarship Examination was held in December. The number of candidates showed an increase over that of last year, there being forty-six for junior and fourteen for senior scholarships. Six junior and four senior scholarships were awarded, besides which two candidates gained Waimate High School Board scholarships and a number gained Timaru High School exhibitions.

**TEACHERS.**—The past year has been remarkable for the unusual number of changes that have taken place in the staffs of our schools. Besides the employment of temporary teachers on numerous occasions, the Board has made no less than fifty appointments to fill vacancies during the year. It will be seen from the report of the Inspectors, that these changes have to a considerable extent interfered with the progress of the children in many of the schools affected. Although the number of vacancies has been great, the Board has generally been able to recommend competent teachers to fill them. There has, however, been a difficulty in finding teachers for small out-of-the-way country schools and for positions of junior male assistants in the larger schools; and when the time comes for revising the scale of salaries, an effort should be made to increase the pay of teachers in these positions. Perhaps the house allowance now given to teachers of schools over twenty in average attendance could be given also to teachers of schools under twenty.

**PUPIL-TEACHERS.**—At the end of the year the Board employed twenty-four pupil-teachers classified as follows: First year—1 male, 3 females; second year—no males, 7 females; third year—3 males, 1 female; fourth year—4 males, 3 females; fifth year—no males, 2 females: total, 8 males, 16 females. The usual examination of pupil-teachers took place in July, when eighteen pupil-teachers and nineteen candidates for pupil-teacherships presented themselves for examination. Seventeen pupil-teachers and fourteen candidates passed, while one pupil-teacher and five candidates failed.

**ATTENDANCE.**—The average attendance for the year shows a small increase of seventeen when compared with last year, while the roll-number at the end of the year is greater by fifty-four than it was in 1901.

**BUILDINGS.**—The total expenditure on school buildings during the year was £2,884 15s.—for 1901 the corresponding amount was £2,490 18s. This expenditure may be classified as follows: New buildings, £1,795 12s. 3d.; repairs and improvements, £515 19s. 4d.; furniture and appliances, £197 13s. 11d.; sites, surveys, &c., £91 17s. 6d.; plans, supervision, exchanges, and bank charges, £283 12s. The amounts received from the Government during the year were £1,800 ordinary building grant and £250 special grant for a school at Waihao Downs, so that the expenditure for the year exceeded the receipts by £834 15s.

Among the more important works undertaken during the year there were a new school at Waihao Downs, additions to schools at Waimataitai, Waituna Creek, and Geraldine, a new residence at Winchester, and additions to residences at Timaru South, Hazelburn, Glenavy, and Waimate. Besides these there has been the usual expenditure on painting, fencing, reflooring, renewal of plaster, and other numerous repairs.

**FINANCE.**—At the end of the year there was a credit balance on the General or Maintenance Account of £1,458 3s. 5d. After providing for all liabilities, however, this credit balance was reduced to £312 12s. 11d., which cannot be considered more than a fair working amount. The balance-sheet will show the receipts and expenditure under the various heads.

**GENERAL.**—The year 1902 saw the coming into force of the Public-school Teachers' Salaries Act, which provides for the payment of teachers' salaries by the Government. This innovation, while it has been welcomed by the great majority of our teachers, has given a great deal of extra clerical work to the office staff; but now that the initial stages are over, the necessary regulations issued, and the general working of the scheme understood, it is hoped that there will be less trouble in future.

Another Act, the carrying-out of the provisions of which has given a good deal of office work, is the Manual and Technical Instruction Act. But the experience of the past two years has led the Department to make changes in both the regulations and returns that are calculated to simplify and lighten the work of both the Board's officers and teachers, and it is hoped that further simplification will be made whenever opportunity offers.

\* Details of the work, attendance, &c., at these schools are given in a separate paper.