

In January, 1904, 157 teachers not previously certificated passed the examinations conducted by the Department. Full particulars are given in the report of the examinations (E.-1A).

#### SCHOOL BUILDINGS.

The Select Committee on Education set up by the House of Representatives last session took into consideration, amongst other matters, the subject of the allocation of the grants to Education Boards for school buildings, and recommended the adoption of a system very much on the lines of what has been suggested in the Education Reports of the last three years. The Committee laid down the principle that the ordinary maintenance of school buildings, the rebuilding of schools destroyed by fire, and the erection of new schools and substantial additions, and, if necessary, of teachers' residences, are separate departments of the work, so distinct in character as to require treatment upon separate lines. The report which the Committee presented to the House contained recommendations which may be summarised as follows:—

(a.) That the basis for the distribution of the amounts available for the ordinary repair and maintenance of schools and residences (including replacement of worn-out buildings) be the current cost of the construction of such buildings, which was then estimated to be £1,167,131 (£1,018,562 for wooden buildings and £148,569 for those of brick or stone).

(b.) That the rate for maintenance of wooden buildings be  $3\frac{1}{2}$  per cent.; for maintenance of brick or stone buildings, 2 per cent.; for replacing worn-out wooden buildings, 2, 5, or 10 per cent. according to age of buildings—twenty to twenty-five years, twenty-five to thirty years, or over thirty years, as the case may be.

(c.) That as to the reinstatement of buildings destroyed by fire, the full cost be allowed if the building be not over twenty years old, but a percentage only if older, seeing that at twenty years the Government will begin to pay for replacement.

(d.) That none of the money allotted for the maintenance (including replacement) of schools and residences be expended in building schools in new districts.

(e.) That new schools and substantial additions be provided for by special grants, to be awarded by the Government after investigation of the merits in each case.

(f.) That no grant for a teacher's residence be made if it be reasonably possible for the teacher to rent a house or obtain suitable residential accommodation otherwise.

Proceeding to an estimate of the amount required by the Boards for ordinary building purposes according to the rates set forth in paragraph (b) above, the Committee found it necessary, in view of the funds available for the year, to reduce the rate for maintenance of wooden buildings from  $3\frac{1}{2}$  to 3 per cent., and to omit any allowance for the replacement of worn-out residences. The result was finally summarised in a schedule in which the Committee set forth a proportionate distribution of a sum of £49,250. The recommendation was adopted by the Government, but as in the case of five districts the proposed payment would have been less than the grant of the previous year, and seeing that the greater part of the year had then elapsed, it was decided to make the grants in those five cases equal to those of last year, thus adding £3,207 to the total. The distribution made was as follows: Auckland, £12,917; Taranaki, £1,750; Wanganui, £4,200; Wellington, £5,300; Hawke's Bay, £2,862; Marlborough, £950; Nelson, £2,402; Grey, £850; Westland, £845; North Canterbury, £7,255; South Canterbury, £2,034; Otago, £7,523; Southland, £3,569; total, £52,457. In addition to this, £46 2s. 6d. was paid to Taranaki and £5 to Nelson for the rent of temporary premises.

For the purpose of replacing schools and school property destroyed by fire £230 11s. 2d. was paid to Wanganui, £61 7s. 8d. to Wellington, £30 8s. 3d. to Nelson, £275 to South Canterbury, £15 to Otago, and £30 15s. to Southland: total, £642 8s. 1d.

Special grants for school buildings in newly settled districts, and for additions to schools in other places at which increase of attendance rendered further accommodation necessary, were made as follows: Auckland, £3,188 13s. 6d.;