

TEACHERS.—At the close of the year there were in the service of the Board twenty-nine male teachers, eighty-six female teachers, three female pupil-teachers, and three female probationers, making a total of 121. Of the 115 teachers, seventeen males and twenty-two females are certificated, and one other holds a license to teach.

TRAINING OF TEACHERS.—Last year's programme of Saturday classes for the teachers in this district embraced the following subjects: Woodwork, cookery, dairy-work, vocal music, physical measurements, drawing. At the end of the year the Board arranged to hold a summer school in Blenheim during the summer vacation. The school was attended by nearly one hundred teachers, and it proved a great success from an educational point of view. The Inspector in his annual report gives full particulars of the programme of work undertaken. The Board is grateful to the Education Department for having granted free passes to those teachers who were obliged to travel by rail in order to reach the school.

PHYSICAL INSTRUCTION.—The Inspector of Schools in his report to the Board says that in fifty-six schools drill was considered efficient, and in nineteen others passable. The teachers assembled at the summer school received a thorough course of training under Sergeant-major Routledge, of the Junior Cadets' Department.

SCHOLARSHIPS.—There were in force at the close of the year seventeen Board Scholarships, three National Scholarships, and two private scholarships of £6 5s. each (tenable for two years) given by Mr. John Duncan. On the results of the Junior National Scholarship Examination, held in December, twelve Board Scholarships and one Junior National Scholarship were awarded.

FREE BOOKS.—The general opinion of School Committees and teachers in this district is that the Government's scheme for the supply of free text-books to school-children has not proved successful. In many instances the grant has been reluctantly accepted, while in a number of others it was declined. It is certain that the scheme has done little to relieve parents of expense, as the Board learns that in most cases the children are provided with a private set of readers. If the intention of the Government is to assist parents, it would be better to provide the cost of material used in school. The grants could be paid over to School Committees on the understanding that, with the exception of text-books, they must provide all material required for the use of the school-children.

MANUAL AND TECHNICAL.—Recognized classes were conducted at fifty-nine schools, the following subjects being taught: Elementary agriculture, swimming and life-saving, elementary physical measurements, and various branches of handwork. School classes in woodwork, cookery, and advanced plain needlework were conducted at the Blenheim Technical School, and were attended by pupils from the following schools: Blenheim, Picton, Springlands, Grovetown, Renwick, Fairhall, Tuamarina, Koromiko, Marlborough High School, and Convent.

BUILDINGS.—The total expenditure during the year was £1,798 4s. 8d., comprising £825 6s. 4d. for new works, £952 8s. 4d. for maintenance, £5 10s. for rent, and £15 for rebuilding. The last amount is in connection with the school at Kaituna, which the Board is rebuilding out of its own funds in accordance with the requirements of the Education Department. A similar work is also being undertaken in connection with one of the class-rooms at Marlboroughtown. New schools were completed at Nopera Bay and Onahuku, a new class-room was added to the school at Ward, and the schoolrooms at Marama and Flat Creek were enlarged. A new schoolroom was provided at Mirza by the Public Works Department, and another at Opouri Valley by the Marlborough Timber Company.

FINANCE.—The credit balance on all accounts at the 31st December was £61 1s. 11d. Details of the receipts and expenditure for the year are appended.

THANKS.—The Board desires to again place on record its appreciation of the good work being done by the School Committees and teachers in this district.

The Hon. the Minister of Education, Wellington.

I have, &c.,

R. McCALLUM, Chairman.

NELSON.

SIR,—

Education Office, Nelson, May, 1912.

In accordance with the provisions of the Education Act, 1908, the Nelson Board of Education has the honour to submit the following report of its proceedings for the year 1911:—

THE BOARD.—The members of the Board are: Messrs. W. Lock, F. W. O. Smith, and A. T. Maginnity (East Ward); W. N. Franklyn (Chairman), J. D. Beuke, and L. D. Easton (Middle Ward); J. L. Munson, G. B. Shepherd, and J. W. Fair (West Ward). Mr. Shepherd handed in his resignation as member in the early part of the year, but offered himself and was re-elected to fill the extraordinary vacancy. In July the three retiring members—Messrs. Smith, Franklyn, and Fair—were again returned. At the annual meeting Major Franklyn was elected Chairman of the Board. Twenty-four meetings were held during the year, and were well attended. The meetings in May were held at Reefton and Westport.

PRIMARY SCHOOLS.—At the end of the year 118 schools were in operation; this number, however, including eighteen schools each having an average attendance of under nine. The difficulty in securing competent teachers—especially for the household and aided schools—has not been quite so marked during the year, though the proportion of uncertificated teachers is still too large.

DISTRICT HIGH SCHOOLS.—The number attending the secondary departments at the district high schools in Motueka, Reefton, and Takaka may be regarded as satisfactory, but the attendance at Westport (average for year thirty-two) is not commensurate with the size of the town and surrounding district. The instructor in agriculture continues to devote a good deal of time in giving instruction in agricultural science, horticulture, and dairy-work to the students at Motueka and Takaka. At Westport the majority of students are taking a commercial course.