

*Incidental Expenses of Schools.*—The sum paid to School Committees to meet incidental expenses was £6,224 12s. 3d., equal to 6s. 2½d. per unit of the average attendance, and 8½d. per unit more than the minimum the Board is required to pay. The total amount raised locally by School Committees for general school purposes during the eleven months ended 28th February, 1914, was £3,490 16s. 3d. Under the provisions of the new Act, the Board's revenue to meet payments to Committees for incidental expenses will be approximately £5,836, and its expenditure according to its existing scale of payments will be £6,282. If, therefore, the Board were to pay the Committees only the amount provided by the Legislature for this special purpose a shrinkage in the Committees' annual revenue by the sum of £446 would result. As the Board knows that many Committees, of the smaller schools especially, find their present revenue inadequate, and feels sure that any decrease in the amount placed at their disposal would seriously embarrass them, it has decided to continue to pay the allowances for the current year on the present scale, but it has intimated to School Committees that at the end of the year it will review the position and will, if necessary, modify its scale. This deficiency of £446 the Board must of course provide out of its General Fund. The Board believes that the gradations of its own scale are better suited to the requirements of the schools than is the scale adopted by Parliament, in that the former provides a considerably increased amount where there is an increase in the number of rooms in the school. When a one-roomed school through increase of attendance becomes a two-roomed school, the cost of cleaning and warming it rises at once very considerably. In such a case the Board's scale provides an increase in the allowance of about £6 per annum, whereas Parliament's scale, which is framed purely on the *per capita* system, provides an increase of only 5s. per annum.

*Secondary Classes at District High Schools.*—For the December quarter the averages of the secondary classes at these schools were as follows: Balclutha, 67; Normal, 54; Tokomariri, 23; Lawrence, 31; Palmerston, 19; Tapanui, 13; Mosgiel, 20; Port Chalmers, 17; Alexandra, 17; total, 261, or 26 less than in the previous year.

*School Libraries.*—Fifty-three School Committees participated in the grants given by way of subsidy by the Department and by the Board for providing books for school libraries. The amounts ranged from £10 to 5s. 6d., totalling £175 18s. 11d., the Department's contribution being £104 6s. 10d. and the Board's £71 12s. 1d.

*The War: Roll of Honour.*—Twenty-four members of the teaching profession and of the Board's office staff have answered the Empire's call by enlisting for military service, and are now serving with the main body or are in the reinforcements for the front. Their positions are being kept open for them. [Names not printed.]

*Relieving Teachers.*—For the past two years the average annual cost to the Board of providing relieving teachers as substitutes for those requiring sick-leave exceeded by £150 the capitation payment of 6d. per unit of the average attendance granted by the Government for this purpose. The necessity for a more liberal capitation grant or for the refund to the Board of the actual amount expended is manifest.

*Inspection of Schools.*—The report of the Inspectors of Schools will be found in Appendix C of E.—2. Their estimate of the efficiency of the schools is as follows: Excellent or very good, 27 per cent.; good, 40 per cent.; satisfactory, 26 per cent.; fair to inferior, 7 per cent. As these officers have, by the provisions of the new Act, been removed from the control of the Board this is the last annual report they will present to the Board. At its December meeting the Board adopted a resolution regretting the termination of the official relations hitherto subsisting between it and these officers, and expressing its high appreciation of their ability, enthusiasm, and conscientiousness, and its sincere hope that the services of all of them would be retained for the Otago District.

*Buildings.*—The building operations for the year may be summarized as follows: New schools have been erected at Concord, Nevis, Matea, and Sutton. The Balruddery School buildings were shifted to Elderslie, and the school at Waipiata to a new site. Additions to schools were erected at Macandrew Road and Anderson's Bay. Teachers' residences were erected at Karitane, Galloway, Wharetoa, Ettrick, Lauder Railway, Kauroo Hills, Port Chalmers, Hillend, and Te Houka. Additions to residences were made at Waiwera and Ranfurly, and the combined building (school and residence) at Sutton was altered and added to. Two rooms, the timber of which was almost completely destroyed by the borer, were removed from the residence at Evan's Flat. Repair work, which in some cases included the erection of new outhouses, was carried out at thirty-nine schools. Nine schools have been painted inside. The residences repaired and improved during the year number thirty-one. In several cases conveniences in the way of baths, tubs, boilers, &c., have been provided, and twenty of the residences have been wholly or partly painted and papered inside. Fencing-work has been done at twenty-two school properties, and drainage-work at fourteen. Furniture has been made and forwarded to twenty schools, not including new ones. The gymnasium buildings at Mornington and George Street have been lighted and otherwise improved. Stoves, grates, and tanks have been supplied in a large number of cases to meet requirements. The Dunback residence was destroyed by fire during the year. A fire also occurred in the Galloway school, but, fortunately, very little damage was done.

*Swimming.*—During the year a course of twenty lessons in swimming was given at the Municipal Baths in Dunedin to the boys of Standard IV in twenty of the city and suburban schools. Some five hundred boys of an average age of twelve years took part, and tests at the conclusion of the course showed that at least half had learned to swim over thirty yards, about one-fourth over twelve yards, and all the others could swim a little or had mastered the rudiments of the art. It is intended this year to instruct similarly both the girls and the boys of Standard IV in the city and suburban schools.

*School Committees.*—The Board recognizes the interest which Committees continue to take in their schools, and desires to thank them for their cordial co-operation during the past year.

I am, &c.,

The Hon. the Minister of Education, Wellington.

GEORGE C. ISRAEL, Chairman.