

OTAGO.

SIR,—

Education Office, Dunedin, 30th April, 1906.

In accordance with the provisions of section 166 of "The Education Act, 1904," the Education Board of the District of Otago has the honour to submit the following report of its proceedings for the year 1905.

BOARD.—At the beginning of the year the Board was composed of the following members: Hon. Thomas Fergus, Messrs. James Sim, Alexander Marshall, Thomas Mackenzie, M.H.R., James Mitchell, Andrew McKerrow, Donald Borrie, William Nicolson, and William Snow. Messrs. Borrie, Nicolson, and Snow were the members who retired. Five candidates were nominated by the School Committees for the vacancies occurring in the month of August. The result was the re-election of the three retiring members. At the first meeting of the Board in September, Mr. Donald Borrie was re-elected Chairman. The Board held thirty-one meetings during the year.

The Hon. Thomas Fergus and Mr. Thomas Mackenzie, M.H.R., were reappointed members of the Board of Governors of the Otago Boys' and Girls' High Schools, and Mr. Donald Borrie was reappointed the Board's representative on the Waitaki High School Board. Mr. Donald Borrie continues to represent the Board as one of the Education Reserves Commissioners.

NUMBER OF SCHOOLS.—At the close of 1904 there were 221 schools in operation in the district. New schools were opened at Musselburgh, Inch Valley, and Tawanui. The schools at Purakauiti and Bendigo were reopened. The Beaumont Station, Deep Stream, Hukinga, Lee Stream, Moutere, and Tarras Schools were closed. The number of schools in operation at the end of the year was 220. The Normal School and the Model School in connection with it are now reckoned as two schools. The following table shows the classification of the schools according to their average attendance for the year 1905 :—

Grade of Schools.			Number of Schools.	Aggregate of the Average Attendance.	Grade of Schools.			Number of Schools.	Aggregate of the Average Attendance.
Grade 0—	1 to	15	34	340	Brought forward	..	196	7,949	
" 1—	16 "	20	23	420	Grade 12—	201 to	250	3	700
" 2—	21 "	25	30	651	" 13—	251 "	280	3	783
" 3—	26 "	32	24	685	" 14—	281 "	330	4	1,225
" 4—	33 "	40	18	653	" 15—	331 "	390	1	341
" 5—	41 "	50	13	582	" 16—	391 "	420	4	1,618
" 6—	51 "	60	16	871	" 17—	421 "	480	1	462
" 7—	61 "	75	11	726	" 18—	481 "	510	1	499
" 8—	76 "	90	8	654	" 19—	511 "	570	4	2,121
" 9—	91 "	120	9	935	" 20—	571 "	600	1	584
" 10—	121 "	150	6	762	" 21—	601 "	660	1	606
" 11—	151 "	200	4	670	" 22—	661 "	690	1	670
Carried forward	..		196	7,949	Total	..	220	117,558	

TEACHERS.—On the 31st December there were 556 teachers in the Board's service, classed as under: Head teacher, 96 males; sole teacher, 35 males, 88 females; mistress, 96 females; assistant, 48 males, 85 females; relieving-teacher, 1; pupil-teacher, 27 males, 57 females; teachers of needlework, 23 females; total, 207 males, 349 females. The above shows an increase of 17 teachers for the year.

In December, 1905, there were 39 uncertificated teachers in the Board's service, a decrease of 11 for the year. Of this number 9 were males and 30 were females. Fourteen were employed as sole teachers in schools with an average attendance below 11, eleven in schools from 11 to 20, seven in schools from 21 to 25, and seven were mistresses in schools from 41 to 50. It will be noted that of the 39 uncertificated teachers in the service at the end of last year, 14 were employed in schools the greater number of which would not now be carried on under the conditions existing prior to the passing of "The Public-School Teachers' Salaries Act, 1901." There are indications that in a year or two the supply of trained and certificated teachers will again equal the demand; but even when this takes place it will probably be found that the majority of schools in grade 0 (average attendance under 11) will, owing to the smallness of the salaries earned by the attendance at these schools, be taught by uncertificated or partially certificated teachers. Trained and fully certificated teachers will not be found willing to teach in schools in isolated districts for salaries the maximum of which is £60 per annum. On the whole, the number of trained and certificated teachers now available very nearly meets the demand, but there is a very serious lack of competent male teachers. Whatever may have been the cause, the number of suitable young men desiring of late years to enter the profession has been very small, only four male students having passed through the Dunedin Training College during the past two years. Lately there have been for male teachers quite a number of good appointments that have had to be filled by female teachers. It is satisfactory to note that there were in the Board's service last year 27 male pupil-teachers, an increase of 11 for the year. The number of female pupil-teachers has decreased by 8.

ATTENDANCE.—The following is an abstract of the attendance at the public schools of this district from the institution of the Otago Education scheme in the year 1856 to the present time. At the beginning of 1878 the new Education District of Southland was created, and 37 schools were handed over to the newly formed Board :—[Not reprinted.] The table shows an increase of 109 in the number of pupils who attended the schools during the year. The number of pupils who attended the Dunedin schools shows a falling-off of 32. The number of pupils in attendance at all the schools at the end of the year was 166 less than at the end of the previous year, the Dunedin schools accounting for 75 of this decrease. The figures relating to average attendance show an increase of only 42 pupils for the year.