

held during the year. The Hon. Thomas Fergus and the Hon. Thomas Mackenzie, M.P., were re-appointed members of the Board of Governors of the Otago Boys' and Girls' High Schools, and Mr. A. McKerrow was reappointed the Board's representative on the Waitaki High Schools Board. Mr. Donald Borrie continues to represent the Board as one of the Education Reserves Commissioners. The Hon. Thomas Fergus, the Rev. P. B. Fraser, M.A., Messrs. G. C. Israel, William Scott, and James Mitchell were the Board's representatives on the Board of Management of the Dunedin Technical School.

NUMBER OF SCHOOLS.—At the close of 1907 there were 233 schools in operation in the district. During 1908 new schools were opened at Greenfield and Otekaike, while the household schools at Nugget Point, Tapui, and Timaru Station, and the half-time school at Tahakopa, were closed. The number of schools in operation at the end of the year was 231, a decrease of two for the year.

TEACHERS.—On the 31st December there were 561 teachers in the Board's service—222 men and 339 women. At the close of 1908 the number of uncertificated teachers in the Board's service was the same as in December, 1907—viz., 74. Of these, 18 were males and 56 were females; 17 males and 44 females were employed as sole teachers, and 1 male and 12 females as assistant teachers. There were, in addition, 11 teachers (6 males and 5 females) who held licenses to teach. A small proportion of the uncertificated teachers have been students of the Training College, and have secured a partial pass for a certificate of Class D or C, falling short of a full pass by one section or one subject. A fair proportion avail themselves of the opportunities within their reach of preparing for the certificate examination; but too large a proportion seem to be doing little or nothing to secure formal certification of their fitness for the position they occupy. In the dearth of certificated teachers the Board and School Committees felt constrained to accept their services, and many have rendered good service; but in another year the Training College should provide trained and certificated teachers sufficient for the Otago schools, and under a compulsory system of education, when teachers who have secured the Government certificate of fitness for duty are available, there can be no place for the uncertificated. The Board intends in the near future to replace all uncertificated teachers in its service by certificated teachers as they become available. On a previous occasion the Inspectors, with the Board's approval, arranged Saturday classes for teachers preparing for Classes D and C certificate examination, and should a sufficient number express the desire for such classes the Inspectors will be prepared to make the necessary arrangements.

SCHOLARSHIPS.—The annual examinations for the Junior National Scholarships and the Board's Junior and Senior Scholarships were held as formerly in the month of December. Of the 101 competitors for the five Junior National Scholarships 51 passed the examination and 50 failed. The scholarships were awarded to 2 girls and 3 boys. Of the 142 competitors for the Board's Junior Scholarships 83 passed the examination, and 59 failed; while of the 76 competitors for the Board's Senior Scholarships, 63 passed the examination and 13 failed. Nineteen Junior Board and 17 Senior Board Scholarships were awarded. Five of the Senior Scholarship winners had previously held Junior Board's Scholarships, and 1 had held a Junior National Scholarship. The amount expended on scholarships for the year was: Board Scholarships, £1,291 2s. 10d.; National Scholarships, £190: total, £1,481 2s. 10d. The scholarships current at the end of the year were: Board's Junior—13 males, 10 females; Board's Senior—24 males, 9 females; Junior National—9 males, 1 female: total, 46 males, 20 females.

The Inspectors report that of the pupils of Standard VI who were examined for the certificate of proficiency at their own schools only 50 per cent. were successful, and of those who were examined at the centres in December only 40 per cent. were successful. Of these results they say, "Even the higher of these percentages is below what it is fair to expect from schools in the majority of which the teaching is generally good. The chief cause is not, we think, far to seek; it has been mentioned again and again in our reports—namely, premature promotion from Standard IV to Standard V and from Standard V to Standard VI. The operation of this cause was felt more severely in 1908 than in preceding years from the circumstance that the new regulation prescribes for a pass in English a higher percentage of marks than did the old. It ought to be obvious to every one that even with the most efficient teaching in Standard VI the level of merit required for the certificate of proficiency cannot be reached if the teacher and the pupils of Standard VI have, in addition to the work prescribed for them, to do a large proportion of what is prescribed for lower classes; and this in many cases is what they have to do. In the majority of the larger schools the teaching in Standard VI is undoubtedly efficient, and yet the results of the examinations for the certificate of proficiency seem to point to inefficient teaching there. What they do point to is improper classification by head teachers, many of whom have not yet risen to the level of the responsibilities cast upon them by the change that removed the classification of the schools from Inspectors to head teachers." This is a matter demanding the serious consideration of head teachers. It may be difficult for young teachers of small isolated country schools to resist pressure from parents for premature promotion of their children; but in such difficulties they would do well to place each case before the visiting Inspector, who will gladly advise them, and share their responsibility. But the head teachers of the larger schools should have no such difficulty. The restriction of age for admission to free places in the high schools had doubtless much to do with the pressure for promotion, but now that the restriction is practically abolished the Inspectors should find less and less cause for complaint with regard to premature promotion. In their inspection reports the Inspectors have again and again reported that "Though staffed in accordance with the regulations, the school is understaffed"; or, "Though the school is staffed in accordance with the regulations, the Infant Department is understaffed." In reporting on the work of assistants they have frequently commented on the large number of pupils grouped in one class. In some cases, to secure relief, they have suggested amended organization, but in most cases no