

Buildings.—During 1912 new schools were built at Clandeboyne, Douglas, and Monavale, a new teacher's residence was built at Lyalldale, and Fairlie School and the Temuka Technical School were enlarged. The following school buildings were repaired and painted: Belfield, Clandeboyne, Glen-iti, Gray's Corner, Hazelburn, Opihi, Redcliff, Rosewill, Seadown, Sutherlands, Timaru South, Totara Valley, Tycho, and Waikakahi; and the following residences were improved by adding bathrooms or other rooms: Ashwick Flat, Cave, Chamberlain, Cricklewood, Glenavy, Springbrook, Te Ngawai, and Waihaorunga.

The Board, by way of experiment, has installed a hot-water heating-system in the Fairlie School. The initial cost is much greater than that of the building of chimneys, but it is hoped that the rooms will be heated more efficiently and at much less cost by the hot-water radiators than by coal fires. Slow-combustion stoves have been tried in the Timaru South School, but so far they have not been a success.

Finance.—A statement of the receipts and expenditure for the year is appended. In April the Board adopted the system of payment of salaries to the credit of teachers, free of exchange, into banks at the different centres of the district, instead of the previous system of payment by cheque. The change, which has meant a considerable saving of clerical work to the office staff, has worked without difficulty of any kind.

Education Commission.—Reference has already been made to the Education Commission's report. There is much in that report with which the Board entirely agrees; but the Board must enter its emphatic protest against the proposal to reduce the number of education districts to five. There would be no saving in the cost of administration if South Canterbury were added to North Canterbury, and there would be a distinct loss in efficiency, because in a large district the same attention cannot be paid to detail as in a small one. The desire to create large districts in order to provide more comprehensive schemes of promotion for teachers seems to be the only reason for the abolition of the smaller districts; and it has not been shown that a fairer system of promotion cannot be provided without interfering with the present districts.

Free School-books.—The Board is pleased that the Government has practically abolished the free-book system, and has substituted subsidies for school libraries. Though so far no School Committee has applied for a subsidy, it is hoped that school authorities will take advantage of the money now offered to assist a worthy object.

I have, &c.,

J. S. RUTHERFORD, Acting-Chairman.

The Hon. the Minister of Education, Wellington.

OTAGO.

SIR,—

Education Office, Dunedin, 31st March, 1913.

In accordance with the provisions of section 174 of the Education Act, 1908, the Education Board of the District of Otago has the honour to present the following report of its proceedings for the year 1912:—

Board.—There has been no change in the *personnel* of the Board during the year, the retiring members, Messrs. Borrie, Israel, and Fleming, having been re-elected unopposed. The following are the names of the members: Northern Ward—Messrs. Donald Borrie, James Mitchell, and Andrew McKerrow; Central Ward—Hon. Thomas Fergus, Messrs. William Scott and George C. Israel; Southern Ward—Messrs. D. T. Fleming, Parker McKinlay, M.A., and James Smith. Mr. James Mitchell, who has been a member of the Board for the past fourteen years, was elected Chairman in the month of August. Forty-two meetings of the Board were held, the average attendance of members being eight. The following were the Board's representatives on various educational bodies: Council of University of Otago—Hon. Thomas Fergus; Otago High Schools' Board—Hon. Thomas Fergus and Mr. G. C. Israel; Waitaki High Schools' Board—Mr. James Mitchell; Boards of Management of Associated (Technical) Classes—Dunedin, Messrs. William Scott (to 30th September), G. C. Israel, P. McKinlay, M.A. (from 1st November), and C. R. D. Richardson; Oamaru, Messrs. James Mitchell and F. S. Aldred; Balclutha, Messrs. D. T. Fleming and William McElrea; Milton, Messrs. Parker McKinlay, M.A., and W. B. Graham.

Number of Schools.—The schools at Springvale and Stoneburn were closed; the schools at Glenledi, Kuriwao, and Nugget Point were reopened; and new schools were opened at Big Hill, Conical Hills, Galloway, Hinahina, Maruakoa, Papatowai, and Pounawea. The number of schools in operation at the 31st December, 1912, was 247, the net increase for the year being eight. Eleven Roman Catholic schools, with a total attendance of 954 pupils, were visited and reported upon by the Board's Inspectors. The following table shows the classification of the schools in grades on their average attendance for the year 1912, in accordance with the Act and regulations thereunder:—

Grade of Schools.				Range of Attendance.	Number of Schools.	Aggregate of the Average Attendance.
Grade	0	..	..	..	1 to 8	12 65
"	I	..	..	..	9 " 15	37 377
"	II	..	..	..	16 " 25	56 1,061
"	III	..	..	..	26 " 35	34 938
"	IV	..	..	..	36 " 80	57 2,735
"	V	..	..	..	81 " 120	14 1,333
"	VI	..	..	..	121 " 200	11 1,689
"	VII	..	..	..	201 " 300	6 1,516
"	VIII	..	..	..	301 " 450	8 2,757
"	IX	..	..	..	451 " 600	9 4,573
"	X	..	..	..	Over 600	3 1,987
					247*	19,031

* Two half-time schools reckoned as one school in Grade II. Normal School and Model School reckoned as one school in Grade IX.