

The average daily attendance for the last three years and the percentage of these attendances to the weekly roll numbers are shown below :—

						Average Attendance.	Percentage of Weekly Roll.
1913	..	..	..	..	..	19,233	91·7
1914	..	..	..	..	..	19,776	92·7
1915	..	..	..	..	..	20,016	91·8

As compared with the previous year the average attendance shows an increase of 240, and the percentage of attendance a decline of 0·9 per cent., the latter being no doubt due to the unsettled weather experienced during a considerable part of the year, and to the prevalence of infantile diseases.

Ages of the pupils: The average ages of the pupils were—Preparatory, 6 years 10 months; Standard I, 8 years 8 months; Standard II, 10 years 2 months; Standard III, 11 years 2 months; Standard IV, 12 years 1 month; Standard V, 12 years 10 months; Standard VI, 13 years 9 months; Standard VII, 16 years 2 months. A slight increase is noticeable in the ages for Standards II, III, IV, and VII, and a slight decrease in the others.

Scholarships.—In accordance with the new scheme of scholarships inaugurated by the Act of 1914, the standards of qualification for Junior and Senior National Scholarships were fixed so as to provide for the award of scholarships to all candidates who obtained not less than the following percentages of the possible maximum of marks: (a) Senior Scholarship candidates, 65 per cent.; (b) Junior Scholarship candidates who have not during the two preceding years attended for more than three months at a school or schools having more than one teacher, 53 per cent.; (c) all other Junior Scholarship candidates, 63 per cent.

The first examination for scholarships under the new scheme took place in December last. Of the 110 Senior Scholarships awarded for the whole Dominion eighteen were gained by Otago candidates, and of 181 Junior Scholarship candidates who qualified under clause (c) above—that is, who gained at least 63 per cent. of the marks—twenty-six belonged to this district. In addition to tuition fees (if any) paid by him, the holder of a Junior Scholarship receives £5 per annum, and the holder of a Senior Scholarship receives £10 per annum, with an additional sum of £35 per annum in the case of one who requires to live away from home in order to prosecute his studies. Of the eighty-one scholarships current at the end of the year, fourteen were Junior National, thirty-five were Junior Board, and thirty-two were Senior Board. Twenty-five of them were held by girls and fifty-six by lads. The periodical reports received from the Principals of the schools they attended showed that their conduct and diligence were on the whole very satisfactory.

Finance.—The following statement shows the main items of expenditure as compared with the figures for the previous year. The increased salaries payable to teachers under the Education Act of 1914 accounts for the increase of over £10,000 in that item of expenditure.

	1914.			1915.		
	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
Teachers' salaries and lodging-allowances ..	89,203	15	11	99,567	4	0
Payments to School Committees for incidental expenses ..	6,224	12	3	6,422	2	7
School buildings, purchase of sites, house allowances, manual and technical buildings, and apparatus ..	23,359	9	2	15,215	4	6

The expenditure on school buildings included—General maintenance (repairs, alterations, and small additions), £10,543 3s. 9d.; rebuilding, £758 11s. 9d.; new buildings, £2,241 2s. 5d.; purchase of sites, £300 0s. 6d.; house allowances, £1,181 11s. 4d.; manual and technical purposes, £98 14s. 1d.

Drill and Physical Exercises.—These exercises have been regularly practised during the year in all the schools under the control of the Board, and almost without exception the time devoted to the subject has in each school been at least equal to that recommended in the departmental regulations. The training of the teachers in the new exercises prescribed for primary schools was carried out in Dunedin during the months of April and May, the schools being closed for a fortnight in order to enable the teachers to attend the classes. The male teachers went into camp at Tahuna Park, while the classes for the female teachers were held at various halls in Dunedin. The members of the Board frequently visited the training classes while these were in progress, and formed a high opinion of the ability of the instructors, and of their courtesy and tact in dealing with the teachers. The management of the classes was excellent; the goodwill and hearty co-operation of the teachers was secured from the outset, and the general level of proficiency attained was, in the Board's judgment, quite satisfactory considering the short duration of the classes.

Manual and Technical Instruction.—The usual courses in rural instruction have been carried out at the district high schools situated in the country. The average attendances in the secondary departments of these schools were—Balclutha, 90; Lawrence, 32; Mosgiel, 29; Palmerston, 24; Alexandra, 18; Tokomairiro, 17; Tapanui, 13.

Wool-classing classes for adults were held at the following important wool-producing centres—Ngapara, Windsor, Enfield, Kauroo Hill, Oamaru, Milburn, and Moneymore; the total membership being 118. The students paid visits to the leading stud flocks of Otago, the studmasters making excellent provision for the holding of demonstrations on their sheep. Several requisitions for classes were received from Central Otago, but owing to the inability of the instructor to make the necessary arrangements, classes in that district had to be deferred.

Instruction in elementary handwork (paperwork, cardboard and plasticene modelling, &c.) was imparted in all the schools in the district. Cookery and woodwork instruction was given to the pupils