

of forty-four and thirty-nine schools respectively, the average attendance at the former being 1,112 girls, and at the latter 1,059 boys. Special classes for adults in English, book-keeping, and painting were held at Milton.

In addition to the rural science course in operation in the district high schools, elementary agricultural instruction has been carried on in 189 schools under the supervision of the Board's instructors the average attendance being 2,401. The work in these schools has generally been of a very satisfactory character. In view of the opportunity which the school-garden offers for developing an intelligent and sympathetic interest in nature and the elementary principles of agriculture, it is gratifying to record that it is now rather the exception to find a rural school without its adjoining cultivated plot. Further generous donations by the Agricultural and Pastoral Association, Messrs. McSkimming and Son, and Messrs. Skene and Fleming enabled the Board to continue last year the competitions previously inaugurated. These competitions have undoubtedly proved a stimulating factor, which in itself amply justifies their continuance. During the year approximately five thousand trees and native shrubs, raised by the training college agriculture class, were distributed to some fifty schools. With a similar number available each succeeding year it is confidently anticipated that a material improvement will be effected in the appearance of the school-grounds throughout the district.

The total number of students receiving instruction at the Dunedin School of Art was 535, including 88 day students, 162 evening students, 110 training-college students, 108 pupil-teachers and probationers, and 67 adult teachers.

The report of the Director of the School of Art will be found in E.-5, Report on Technical Instruction.

The expenditure on manual and technical instruction was—Salaries, material, &c., for school classes, £4,090 10s. 2d., and for special classes, £1,270 13s. 5d.; buildings, furniture, and fittings, £98 14s. 1d.; total, £5,459 17s. 8d., being a decrease of £226 18s. 4d. from the previous year.

*Swimming.*—The pupils of Standard IV belonging to twenty-three schools in the city and suburbs received a course of twenty lessons in swimming at the Dunedin Municipal Baths. The average attendance at the classes was—Boys, 592; girls, 536.

*Truancy.*—378 notices were served on parents and guardians for infringements of the Education Act, 1914 (section 62); five notices were served on parents whose children were not on the roll of any school (section 61); 215 cases of irregular attendance were investigated; fifty-seven penalty summonses were issued under section 62. Under the above fifty-seven summonses, fifty-four convictions were obtained, three being withdrawn owing to the children in question being committed to the industrial school. The total fines for the year amounted to £22 12s. The Board regrets to report that the taking of Court proceedings has had little effect in rousing some parents to a proper sense of their responsibilities in the matter of the education of their children. They continue to ignore the Board and the Court, with the result that the children have suffered a loss of education which can never be repaired. The Board feels called upon to suggest that in any such cases legislative authority should be given to Magistrates to order the withdrawal of the children from the custody of the obdurate parents.

*Attendance.*—Owing to the great amount of illness (measles, whooping-cough, and influenza) during the June and September quarters, the attendance was very much affected. Notwithstanding, six of the large schools in Dunedin and suburbs attained an attendance of 95 per cent. for the year, five attained 94 per cent., five attained 93 per cent., four attained 92 per cent., and two attained 90 per cent. When the schools resumed after the Christmas vacation returns from the head teachers of the twenty-two schools in Dunedin and suburbs showed that 342 children in Standards II, III, IV, and V had not returned to the schools they were attending in the previous December. From investigations made by the Truant Officer it was found that of these, 253 had been transferred to other schools and eighty-nine had left school. Of these eighty-nine whose primary-school course was thus terminated, seven left at the end of their S2 course, thirteen left at the end of their S3 course, forty-two left at the end of their S4 course, and twenty-seven left at the end of their S5 course. The eighty-nine pupils in question had all reached the exemption age—viz., fourteen years.

*Training College.*—The total number of students enrolled was 109, twenty-three being males and eighty-six females. Of these, seventy-three were from Otago, twenty-three from Southland, nine from South Canterbury, two from North Canterbury, one from Hawke's Bay, and one from Auckland. The allowances paid to them or on their behalf were: Bursaries, lodging-allowances, and travelling-expenses, £5,451 17s. 4.; college fees, £871 15s. 3d.; total, £6,323 13s. 7d.; or £83 4s. 4d. more than in 1914.

The report of the Principal will be found in Appendix D of E.-2.

*Certificates.*—Pupils of the public schools to the number of 1,501 presented themselves for the proficiency examination; 1,200 were successful, while 137 gained certificates of competency in S6.

*Incidental Expenses of Schools.*—Instead of paying to School Committees for incidental expenses only the amount provided by the Legislature for this special purpose, the Board continued to pay the allowances on its own more liberal scale. To do so it had to allocate to the School Committee's incidental funds £585 6s. 7d. out of its general fund. The Board has decided to continue the allowances according to the present scale for the year 1916.

*Inspection of Schools.*—The report of the Inspectors of Schools will be found in Appendix B. Their estimate of the efficiency of the schools is as follows: Excellent or very good, 24 per cent.; good, 40 per cent.; satisfactory, 28 per cent.; fair to inferior, 8 per cent.

*Buildings.*—Building operations have been strictly confined to work regarded as urgent or necessary. New schools were erected at Cromwell, Papatowai, Airedale, and Otanomomo. The Board was fortunate in securing at Cromwell an excellent site, and a substantial stone building has been erected. The Roxburgh School was added to and in two cases gymnasias have been improved to provide accommodation for the pupils of overcrowded rooms. Wherever new permanent class-