

throughout the district has been good. The increased cost of living, together with the high wages paid to boys and girls, has unfortunately induced many to leave school earlier than under normal conditions.

*Manual and Technical Instruction.*—These two important branches of education again received due attention during the year. Some form of elementary handwork was taken by about 28,000 pupils. The difficulty of supplying material and apparatus has again proved a serious drawback in the progress of the work, and to obviate this for the future the Board has decided to indent all the material it requires, and make provision for having a good supply always on hand. The interest in advanced handwork was well maintained, and several new centres for woodwork and cookery were opened during the year. Although there has been increased interest in technical and continuation classes during the year, yet this branch of education does not receive the support it deserves. The reason is not far to seek. Technical Associations are all suffering from lack of funds, and lack of funds means lack of teachers. The increased value of boy-labour is also an important factor against attendance. Teachers' classes have again been conducted at Timaru, Greymouth, and Christchurch. Generally speaking, these have been well attended and the instruction has proved beneficial. A retrospect of the work done since the amalgamation of Boards gives distinct evidence of steady and solid advance; more classes are carried on all round, better facilities are offered, and there is very much keener interest in the work.

*Agriculture.*—About 240 schools took up the subject of elementary agriculture, and there is ample evidence to show that some good experimental work has been done. The competitions in connection with the McFarlane Shield, the Hurdley Shield, and the Board's potato competitions were the means of arousing a great deal of enthusiasm and promoting healthy rivalry. The appointment of Mr. Ridley has given a great fillip to the work on the Coast; and the results of the experimental work that is being done there must have a beneficial effect on the economic life of the community. The rural courses at the district high schools were attended by about 214 pupils; the girls receive an excellent training in housecraft and homekeeping, and the boys are taught agricultural science.

*General.*—Most of the Board's teachers who were on active service have now returned and have been reabsorbed into the Board's employ. The shortage of teachers, however, is still acute. The influenza epidemic has been responsible for the necessity of employing a considerable number of relieving teachers, and there has consequently been much difficulty in filling all the vacancies, especially in the country districts. Until some satisfactory plan has been devised to provide suitable board and lodgings for teachers in the more isolated localities, the Board will continue to experience the greatest difficulty in securing certificated teachers for these positions. With the return to normal conditions and the better remuneration now offered to pupil-teachers, probationers, and training-college students, it is hoped that in the future the supply of qualified teachers will be more satisfactory.

I have, &c.,

The Hon. the Minister of Education, Wellington.

ERNEST H. ANDREWS, Chairman.

OTAGO.

SIR,—

Dunedin, 31st March, 1920.

I have the honour to submit the following report of the Education Board of the District of Otago for the year 1919 :—

*Board.*—The membership of the Board remained the same as in the previous year, viz. : Urban Area—Messrs. W. R. Brugh, Robert H. S. Todd, James Wallace, and James H. Wilkinson; North Ward—Messrs. Donald Borrie and George Livingstone; Central Ward—Messrs. James Horn and James Smith; South Ward—Hon. D. T. Fleming and Mr. Parker McKinlay, M.A. Mr. James Wallace continued to fill the office of Chairman. Thirty-eight meetings of the Board have been held, the average attendance being eight. The following were the Board's representatives on various educational bodies :—Council of the University of Otago—Mr. P. McKinlay, M.A.; Otago High Schools' Board—Hon. D. T. Fleming and Mr. W. R. Brugh; Waitaki High Schools Board—Mr. James Mitchell; Boards of Management of Associated (Technical) Classes : Dunedin—Messrs. James Wallace, W. R. Brugh, and P. McKinlay, M.A.; Oamaru—Mr. James Mitchell; Milton—Messrs. P. McKinlay, M.A., and W. B. Graham.

*Number of Schools.*—The number of schools in operation at the end of the year was 253, four less than in the previous year. Seven of these were household schools. Thirteen had an average below 9; seventy-five from 9 to 20; fifty-nine from 21 to 35; fifty-five from 36 to 80; twelve from 81 to 120; nine from 121 to 160; four from 161 to 200; seven from 201 to 360; eight from 361 to 500; and eleven over 500. The average roll, average attendance, and percentage of average attendance were 22,230, 20,463, and 92.03 respectively. The roll number shows an increase of 75 for the year, the average attendance an increase of 233, and the percentage of attendance an increase of 0.72. The following table shows for the terminal year of each decade since the institution of the Otago education scheme in 1856, and for the year just closed, the number of schools, teachers, and pupils :—

Year.	Schools.	Teachers.	On the Roll.	Average Attendance.	Percentage of Attendance, Otago District.	Percentage of Attendance for Whole of Dominion.
1856-57 .. ..	5	7	..	236	..	..
1876 .. ..	165	329	13,537	11,210	..	..
1896 .. ..	218	554	22,091	19,502	85.9	81.4
1916 .. ..	261	754	21,880	20,237	92.4	88.6
1919 .. ..	253	752	22,230	20,463	92.03	..