

for inclusion in the authorized schedule. For the purpose of assisting parents, and also of bringing the books up to date, a special committee, consisting of the Otago Inspectors, members of the Board, and representatives of the Headmasters' Association and Teachers' Institute, has been set up to go into the matter, and the Board feels sure that in this work it will have the cordial support and co-operation of the Education Department.

Public-school Certificates.—Of the 1,941 candidates from the public schools for proficiency certificates, 1,475, or 76 per cent., were successful, and 240, or 12 per cent., gained certificates of competency. The proficiency results were lower by 4 per cent. than those of the preceding year.

School Libraries.—Subsidies were granted to eighty schools for the purchase of books, pictures, and book-cases. The total amount paid by the Board for these supplies was £279 3s. 3d.

Free School-books.—Books costing £75 2s. 7d. were supplied in necessitous cases and in the case of pupils coming to Otago from other education districts where different books were used.

Training College.—At the close of the year there were in the College 265 students, comprising 200 women and 65 men. Of these 110 were in their second year and 155 in their first year; 192 belonged to Otago, 57 came from Southland, 7 from Canterbury, 5 from Hawke's Bay, and 1 each from Wanganui and Nelson. Bursaries, lodging-allowances, and travelling-expenses paid to students amounted to £27,710 17s.; college fees to £2,060 4s.; total, £29,771 1s., being an increase of £9,595 10s. 11d. over the previous year. The erection of a third story on the Training College was completed early in the year; while additional provision was made at the George Street, Albany Street, and Moray Place Schools for demonstration work. There is now at the College and the three schools mentioned adequate and suitable class-room accommodation for the training of 300 students.

Truancy and Irregular Attendance.—The Attendance Officer reports that 146 notices were served on parents or guardians for infringements of the Act; also that he found it necessary to investigate 217 other cases of absence for which satisfactory reasons had not been shown. Penalty summonses to the number of twenty-five were issued, convictions being obtained in all cases. The fines and costs amounted to £14 13s. 10d.

Organizing Teachers.—The Board regrets the Department, through financial stress, has found it necessary to order the reduction at the earliest opportunity of the staff of organizing teachers (three) who for the past few years have been working in this district with most beneficial results. While accepting the Department's dictum that the Otago district is less in need of the organizing teachers' services than are several other districts of the Dominion, it trusts that the curtailment of the staff to one teacher now decided upon may be found to be only temporarily necessary.

School Committees.—The Board records its appreciation of the valuable assistance rendered by the various School Committees in the administration of educational matters during the past year. It fears, however, that there is a waning of interest in school matters noticeable in a number of districts, attributable, it believes, to the curtailment of the powers and responsibilities of School Committees. As evidence of this it may be pointed out that the number of districts that failed to elect Committees at the first election shows, over the past five years, a decided tendency to increase.

I have, &c.,

The Hon. the Minister of Education, Wellington.

J. WALLACE, Chairman.

SOUTHLAND.

SIR,—

Education Office, Invercargill, 30th March, 1922.

I have the honour to submit the following report of the proceedings of the Education Board of the District of Southland for the year 1921.

The Board.—The personnel of the Board at the end of the year was as follows: Invercargill Urban Area—Messrs. F. G. Blake and F. W. Preddy; Central Ward—Messrs. P. de la Perrelle (Chairman) and J. D. Trotter; West Ward—Messrs. J. C. Thomson and G. F. Johnson; East Ward—Messrs. H. E. Niven and H. Smith. The Board's representation on the various educational bodies was as follows: Southland Boys' and Girls' High Schools Board—Messrs. J. C. Thomson and P. de la Perrelle; Gore High School Board—Messrs. H. E. Niven, H. Smith, and J. D. Trotter; Southland Technical College Board—Messrs. H. E. Niven and J. D. Trotter; Otago University Council—Mr. J. C. Thomson; Dunedin Training College Committee of Advice—Mr. J. C. Thomson. During the year the Board held twelve ordinary and one special meeting, and the Executive Committee, which consists of all the members of the Board, met twenty-three times.

Schools.—At the close of the preceding year the schools in this education district numbered 186. This number was increased during the year by the establishment of new schools at Pukemaori, Glenaray, Paradise, Ruahine, Walter Peak, Key of the Lakes (reopened), Croydon Siding (reopened); while the school at Arthur's Point was closed during the year owing to lack of attendance, thus leaving the number in operation at the end of the year as 192.

Instruction of Backblocks Children.—The Board was gratified to learn that, if a sufficient number of applications was received, the Department was prepared to arrange for correspondence classes in primary-school subjects for children who were living in districts where no primary school was accessible. Seven applications were received from parents in this district, who were prepared to take advantage of the Department's offer. It is hoped that the scheme will be in full operation early in the new year.