

where there is no female teacher on the staff instruction in needlework was given by a local instructress. Advanced handwork was taken by all pupils in the upper standards. About 3,400 boys received instruction in woodwork and drawing, and about 3,300 girls received instruction in cookery and domestic science.

*Agriculture.*—Agriculture, nature-study, and its allied subjects again received the prominence expected in an agricultural district. The different competitions conducted during the year by the Board and the different agricultural and horticultural societies increased the interest in the work by promoting healthy rivalry amongst pupils and teachers alike. About 260 pupils attended the rural course of instruction at the eleven district high schools in the district. The disestablishment of the Grey-mouth District High School at the beginning of the year somewhat reduced last year's numbers.

The Hon. the Minister of Education, Wellington. I have, &c.,  
H. J. BIGNELL, Chairman.

OTAGO.

SIR,—

Dunedin, 31st March, 1924.

In accordance with the requirements of the Education Act, 1914, I have the honour to present the following report of the Education Board of the District of Otago for the year 1923 :—

*Board.*—The constitution of the Board is as follows : Urban Area—Messrs. James Wallace, J. H. Wilkinson, R. H. S. Todd, and Leonard Sanderson ; North Ward—Messrs. George Livingstone and G. K. Graham ; Central Ward—Messrs. James Smith and James Horn, M.P. ; South Ward—Hon. D. T. Fleming, M.L.C., and Mr. George W. K. Wood. Mr. James Wallace continues to fill the office of Chairman. The following were the Board's representatives on various educational bodies : Council of Education—Hon. D. T. Fleming, M.L.C. ; Council of the University of Otago—Mr. J. Wallace ; Otago High Schools Board—Hon. D. T. Fleming, M.L.C., and Mr. W. R. Brugh ; Waitaki High Schools Board—Mr. George Livingstone. Boards of Management of Technical Schools : Dunedin—Messrs. J. Wallace, J. H. Wilkinson, and James Horn, M.P. ; Oamaru—Messrs. George Livingstone and W. F. Abel ; Milton—Mr. John Bowie, B.A. Thirty-seven meetings of the Board were held during the year, the average attendance being nine.

*Number of Schools.*—The number of schools open at the end of the year (including seven household schools) was 258, or one less than in 1922. Nineteen had an average below 9, seventy-five had an average from 9 to 20, fifty-nine from 21 to 35, forty-nine from 36 to 80, twenty from 81 to 120, nine from 121 to 160, two from 201 to 240, seven from 241 to 360, four from 361 to 440, and fourteen over 440.

*Attendance of Pupils.*—The average roll, average attendance, and percentage of average attendance for the respective quarters and for the year were as follows : Average roll, 21,804 ; average attendance, 19,927 ; percentage, 91·38. These figures show a decrease of 218 in the roll number, of 344 in the average attendance, and of 0·67 in the percentage of attendance.

The following table shows, for the terminal year of each decade since the institution of the Otago education scheme in 1856, and for the last three years, the number of schools, teachers, and pupils :—

Year.	Number of Schools.	Number of Teachers.	On the Roll.	Average Attendance.	Percentage of Attendance, Otago District.	Percentage of Attendance for Whole of Dominion.
1856-7 .. ..	5	7	..	236	..	..
1876 .. ..	165	329	13,537	11,210	..	..
1896 .. ..	218	554	22,091	19,502	85·9	81·4
1922 .. ..	259	812	22,022	20,271	92·0	90·8
1923 .. ..	258	823	21,803	19,926	91·4	90·0

*Teachers.*—On the 31st December there were in the Board's service 823 teachers, classified as under :—

	Males.	Females.	Total.
Head teachers .. ..	99	2	101
Sole teachers .. ..	37	121	158
Assistant teachers .. ..	71	288	359
Training College staff .. ..	5	4	9
Total of adult teachers .. ..	212	415	627
Pupil-teachers .. ..	17	36	53
Probationers .. ..	25	67	92
Teachers of needlework .. ..	..	36	36
Manual and technical (special teachers) .. ..	8	7	15
Total of all teachers for 1923 .. ..	262	561	823
Total of all teachers for 1922 .. ..	262	550	812