

The Rev. William Hewitson, B.A., and Rev. P. B. Fraser, M.A., were appointed members of the Board of Governors of the Otago Boys' and Girls' High Schools, and Mr. Donald Borrie was reappointed the Board's representative on the Waitaki High Schools Board. Mr. Donald Borrie continues to represent the Board as one of the Education Reserves Commissioners.

The Board held twenty-four meetings during the year.

**NUMBER OF SCHOOLS.**—At the close of 1901 there were 218 schools in operation in the district. New schools (household) were opened at Horse Flat and Tapui, and the schools at Bendigo, Kaihiku, and Glenledi were reopened. The Pomahaka Downs, Port Molyneux, Maungawera, Romareka, Tahora, Wanaka, Whare Flat, and Owaka Valley Schools were closed at the end of the year. The number of schools in operation at the end of the year was 215.

**TEACHERS.**—There were 522 teachers in the Board's service at the end of the year, of whom 191 (including 14 pupil-teachers) were males and 331 (including 77 pupil-teachers) were females.

The examination of candidates for employment as pupil-teachers was held in December, when 105 candidates (24 boys and 81 girls) presented themselves. Of this number 53 (14 boys and 39 girls) passed the examination, and 5 boys and 30 girls received appointments.

**SCHOOL ATTENDANCE.**—In the number of pupils who attended at all during the year (25,250) there was, as compared with the previous year, a decrease of 100 in the Dunedin Schools, and an increase of 27 in all the other schools, making a decrease of 73 for the whole district. The figures relative to the average attendance show the following changes for the year: Dunedin schools a decrease of 10; all other schools an increase of 251; for the whole district an increase of 241. The average for the Dunedin schools is the lowest since 1879. The average attendance expressed as a percentage of the mean of average weekly roll for the four quarters was—Dunedin schools, 90; all other schools, 87·6; the whole district, 88·1. In 1901 the average percentage was 86·7, so that 1·3 represents the increase in regularity of attendance for the past year.

**PRIMARY EDUCATION.**—The Board continues to look with confidence upon the ability and conscientiousness of its teachers and Inspectors. The "general results" given in the Inspectors' report strengthen this confidence. In spite of many drawbacks, there is a high percentage of efficiency. As a protest, however, against local overgiving of school holidays, which prevents thoroughness in any education, the Board has issued the following regulation: A school shall not be deemed to have done its duty unless it has been open 420 times during an examination year, and when the number falls below 420, the cause or causes shall be stated on the examination register.

**SCHOLARSHIPS.**—Twenty-three scholarships (12 senior and 11 junior) were awarded at the examinations in December. There were in all 121 competitors, 24 for the senior and 97 for the junior scholarships. In addition to the scholarships awarded, 6 of the senior competitors gained sufficient marks to entitle them to free education for three years at the Otago Boys' and Girls' High Schools. Free education at these schools for two years is conferred on all junior competitors who, though not gaining scholarships, yet obtain at least 60 per cent. of the attainable marks; and for this free education 12 of the junior competitors qualified. Twenty-eight junior competitors and 2 senior competitors were disqualified on account of failing to obtain at least 20 per cent. of the marks allotted to each subject.

The amount expended on scholarships for the year was—Paid to scholarship-holders, £1,335; examination expenses, £48 7s. 2d: total, £1,383 7s. 2d.

In December there were 37 pupils (18 boys and 19 girls) receiving free education at the high schools in Dunedin in connection with the scholarship scheme.

**DISTRICT HIGH SCHOOLS.**—Under the new regulations for district high schools, the Board was called upon to prepare a scheme for the distribution of the sums earned for secondary education, and it is pleasing to be able to state that the scheme adopted by the Board has given full satisfaction to those entitled to share. Last year the Board adverted to the insufficiency of the sums earnable by these schools, and this year the Board has to point out the inadequacy of the staffs provided by the regulations. In proof of this the Board would draw the attention of the Minister to the expert evidence of the Inspectors on this subject as given by them in their report.

The Board would again and specially point out to the Minister the want of completeness in the provisions for secondary education in those regulations that give it, at the Otago and Waitaki High Schools, to a limited number only of ex-Standard VI. pupils of Dunedin and Oamaru and their neighbourhoods. There are many of these pupils who cannot comply with the regulations referred to, and yet all have equal rights to have secondary education thrown open to them on the same unfettered conditions as prevail in district-high-school centres.

The number of scholars receiving instruction in secondary subjects in December, 1902, was 315. All of these pupils had passed Standard VI. (172 males and 143 females).

The amount paid during the year to the district high schools on account of secondary instruction was £1,417.\*

**TRUANCY.**—During the year the Board's Truant Officer resigned, not being able to attend to this work and the duties of another public office which he held. The Board at an increased cost engaged an officer whose whole time should be devoted to the work, which has since been carried on with much vigour and success. During the year 452 notices were posted to parents and guardians for infringements of "The School Attendance Act, 1901," 28 notices were served on parents whose children were not attending any school, and 356 penalty summonses were issued under section 7. Under the above 356 penalty summonses, 269 convictions were obtained, 48 cases were withdrawn owing to the production of exemption certificates, 10 cases were dismissed, and 29 cases were withdrawn owing to the presiding Magistrate convicting in only one case where there were a number of informations laid against the same defendant, and asking that the other informations be withdrawn. The total amount of fines for the year was £37 16s. 6d.

\* Details of the work of the various district high schools are given in a separate paper.