

his resignation, and appreciation of the valuable services he had rendered during the considerable number of years that he was a member of the Board. This vacancy was filled in December by the election of Mr. H. A. Archdall. In the month of September, Mr. Thomas MacGibbon, who had acted as Chairman of the Board for some months during the absence of Mr. J. Crosby Smith on a visit to Great Britain, was appointed to that position for the ensuing period of twelve months. Messrs. W. Macalister and J. Crosby Smith continue to act as the Board's representatives on the Southland High Schools' Board; and Messrs. Thomas MacGibbon, George James Anderson, and D. Gilchrist were appointed to represent the Board on the newly constituted Board of Governors of the Gore High School. Mr. Thomas MacGibbon also continues his services as a member of the Otago School Commissioners and of the Otago Training College Board of Advice. The meetings of the Board (fourteen) and executive committee (twenty-two) held during the year have been attended with commendable regularity, especially in view of the fact that nearly all of the members hold other public positions which absorb much of their spare time.

SCHOOLS AND ATTENDANCE.—The schools in operation at the close of the year numbered 166, as compared with 167 at the close of the preceding year, the household school at Waikawa Valley being closed during the year. The attendance has, in comparison with previous years, been well maintained. The average weekly roll-number has now risen to 10,049, and the average attendance to 8,778; the corresponding figures for the preceding year were 9,910 and 8,679 respectively. The percentage of average attendance to average weekly roll is thus 87.3, approximately the same as for the previous year. The operation of the School Attendance Act continues a most important factor in securing a more regular attendance than would otherwise be possible. The prevalence of sickness during the year in many school districts has in some measure militated against a perfect attendance of pupils.

TEACHERS.—There were at the close of the year 262 adult teachers of all grades in the service of the Board. These were classified according to the positions held as follows:—

	Male.	Female.	Total.
Head of schools	46	12	58
Sole teachers	37	71	108
Assistant teachers	13	83	96
	96	166	262

In addition to the foregoing, there were on the Board's teaching staff the following numbers of pupil-teachers and probationers:—

	Male.	Female.	Total.
Pupil-teachers	16	28	44
Probationers	3	13	16
	19	41	60

The total number of adult teachers, pupil-teachers, and probationers was thus 322. The average number of pupils to one teacher is 27.26. In view of past experience, it is interesting to note that of the adult teachers in the Board's service only 151 were certificated, five held licenses to teach, and no fewer than 106 were uncertificated. It is, of course, to be deplored that so many of our schools are staffed by uncertificated teachers, many of whom are, however, doing very creditable work; but until the results of the reorganization of our training colleges are more directly felt, it is, of course, quite impracticable by any rigid application of arbitrary rules and regulations to secure an effective remedy. However, by an exchange of positions, where such exchange is practicable, it is possible to reward more adequately those who by diligence in study and strenuous effort have qualified themselves by examination for more efficient service; and in this direction the Board will probably soon take decided action. The law of supply and demand operates in this as in other professions. Just so long as the supply is unequal to the demand, just so long will Boards have to face the inevitable, and continue to avail themselves of the services of young people of good character, though not otherwise technically qualified for the work of teaching.

TRAINING OF TEACHERS.—In view of the reference made to the question of the qualifications of teachers, the Board would reiterate the opinion previously expressed that the Department should initiate some scheme whereby uncertificated teachers might be assisted in their endeavours to pass the prescribed examinations. To facilitate such a desirable end, it was suggested that the lower grade (D) examination might be taken in two or three sections, a section once passed to be placed to the individual's credit, and so on in successive years till the full certificate could be claimed. The Board is aware that many otherwise eligible persons are prevented from attempting the examination when confronted with the multiplicity of subjects for which preparation has to be made, and in each of which by one supreme effort they are expected to pass. There seems to be no valid reason why the lower-class examinations should not, as in the case of the higher examinations, be taken in sections. Much has been accomplished in recent years to render the teaching profession more attractive to men and women of ability. The institution of a beneficent superannuation scheme alone should prove a potent factor in popularizing the profession. It may be, indeed, that the recently improved condition of the teacher's lot is one of several reasons why the scarcity of fully qualified teachers is so keenly felt. The possibility of retirement at a moderate age, under superannuation conditions, has doubtless led many to give up their life-work when, under less favourable circumstances, they would have continued in the service for years to come. The teacher who retires on pension is usually certificated, his successor not necessarily so.