

The Schools.—There were eighty-four schools in operation at the end of the year, the same as for the previous year. The Little Roderick School was closed and Douglas School was opened.

Teachers.—On the 31st December there were 188 teachers in the Board's service, 156 adult teachers, 23 pupil-teachers, and 9 probationers. Of the adult teachers, twenty-four were uncertificated and three held licenses to teach, but eleven of these have since passed their certificate examinations, and some others have gained partial success, so that the number of inefficient teachers in this district is gradually diminishing. It is gratifying to find that the Department and Boards are succeeding in improving the educational status of the teachers, and no doubt the quality of the instruction will be greatly improved at the same time. It remains only for the Government to devise some means of securing to teachers who perform their duties satisfactorily assured promotion and increase of pay. The opinion is gradually gaining ground that the solution of the difficulty will be found in abolishing the present system of making appointments, except for the very highest positions when special merit is required, and in substituting a system similar to that in force in other branches of the Public Service, under which teachers' salaries will commence at a minimum, and will rise by regular increments to a maximum. One thing that was made very plain by witnesses before the Education Commission was that the pay of probationers and pupil-teachers is absurdly inadequate. Another point that affects the interests of South Canterbury district high schools is that it is impossible to get suitable teachers to remain on the staffs of the secondary departments at the present absurdly low salaries.

Scholarships.—The usual scholarship examinations were held in November and December, the numbers of candidates being fifty-eight for Junior Scholarships and twenty-seven for Senior Scholarships. Five Senior and eight Junior Board Scholarships were awarded, and the Junior National Scholarships were won by Herrick Borrell, of Belfield School, and Ronald Shackleton, of Waimate District High School. The Barclay Prizes, which are open to pupils from public and primary schools only, were awarded as follows: First prizes, of £3 each—Herrick Borrell and Ronald Shackleton; second prizes, of £1 10s. each—Ronald McMillan and William Bennett.

Physical Drill.—Generally this subject receives due attention from the teachers. In most of the larger schools, military drill, physical and breathing exercises, are very well taught, and satisfactory attention is given to organized school games under the encouraging supervision of the teachers.

Attendance.—The following were the attendances, &c., for the year :—

Quarter.	Schools.	Teachers.	Roll.	Average Attendance.		
				Males.	Females.	Total.
March	84	189	5,649	2,616	2,452	5,068
June	84	188	5,666	2,680	2,466	5,146
September .. .	84	188	5,795	2,646	2,420	5,066
December .. .	84	188	5,927	2,701	2,470	5,171

Yearly average attendance, 5,113.

The roll number at the end of the year was 174 higher than at the end of 1911, and the yearly average attendance was eleven higher. The mean average weekly roll was 5,741, and the average attendance was 89.06 per cent. of this. This is the measure of the regularity of attendance, and it is lower by 1 per cent. than that of the previous year. The falling-off in regularity, however, can easily be accounted for by the prevalence of epidemics throughout the district during the year and by the larger number of wet days than usual.

The following table shows the attendance at the schools of the district since the Board was established at the beginning of 1878 :—

Year.	Number of Schools.	Number of Teachers.	Roll Numbers.					Yearly Average Attendance.			Average for Year as Percentage of Mean of Average Roll.
			Beginning of Year.	Admitted during Year.	Left during Year.	End of Year.	Mean of Average Weekly Roll for Year.	Boys.	Girls.	Total.	
1878	17	56	2,666	..	941	813	1,754	..
1883	39	95	3,644	1,797	1,521	3,920	3,907	1,535	1,417	2,952	75.0
1888	50	125	4,375	1,696	1,368	4,703	4,726	1,902	1,773	3,675	77.7
1893	60	143	4,096	1,755	684	5,167	5,169	2,120	1,996	4,116*	79.6
1898	67	144	4,914	1,493	1,210	5,197	5,182	2,351	2,141	4,492	86.7
1903	71	144	4,899	1,468	1,372	4,995	5,054	2,244	2,036	4,280	84.7
1908	76	156	4,888	1,741	1,241	5,388	5,350	2,475	2,181	4,656	87.0
1909	80	175	4,960	1,758	1,178	5,540	5,462	2,522	2,245	4,767	87.3
1910	83	176	5,068	1,886	1,270	5,684	5,525	2,578	2,297	4,875	88.2
1911	84	182	5,180	1,764	1,191	5,753	5,670	2,643	2,459	5,102	90.0
1912	84	188	5,259	1,947	1,279	5,927	5,741	2,661	2,452	5,113	89.1

* Strict average.