

*Schools.*—New schools were established during the year in the Districts of North Makarewa, North Chatton, Five Rivers Siding, Raymond's Gap, Ferndunlaw, Granity, Kapuka South, and Dog Island, the last mentioned being a household school. Schools previously in operation at Benmore, Forest Vale, and Ruapuke were closed during the same period owing to decreased attendance. There were at the close of the year 180 schools in operation. In the case of the schools closed at Benmore and Forest Vale no sacrifice in buildings expenditure required to be made, as the schools were originally established as an experiment, the residents interested providing suitable buildings in which the work was for the time being carried on. As new settlement progresses in the western portion of this education district it is expected that increased school facilities will require to be provided in the immediate future.

*School Attendance.*—During the year there has been an increase in the attendance. The average weekly roll number for 1911 was 10,556, and for 1912 it has risen to 10,792; while the mean average attendance for corresponding years was 9,449 and 9,552—an increase of 234 in roll number and 103 in average attendance not accounted for altogether by the opening of the new schools referred to in the preceding paragraph, but partly due to closer settlement in districts where schools had previously been established. It may be of interest to note that the average attendance of 9,552 was composed of 5,010 boys and 4,542 girls—that is, in the ratio, roughly, of 52·4 and 47·6 per cent. for the respective sexes. The percentage of average attendance to average weekly roll number is thus 88·5, a decrease of 1 per cent. on that recorded in the previous year, and doubtless due to a greater prevalence of the usual ailments which periodically afflict our juvenile population.

To check truancy the measures adopted for some years past were continued, and but for the operation of the truancy clauses of the Act it is safe to say that the average attendance would not be maintained at so high a level.

*Junior Scholarships.*—Of the eighty-two candidates who presented themselves for the Junior National and Educational Board's Junior Scholarships, fifty obtained sufficient marks to qualify. The successful competitors held their own with the other education districts throughout the Dominion, as evidenced by the published official lists.

It is interesting to note that the three National Scholarship winners stood first, thirteenth, and fourteenth on the list, the disparity in attainments being caused by the grades of the schools from which the respective candidates, in terms of the Department's regulations, had to be selected. The parents of the successful pupils were able to make the statutory declaration as to compliance with the regulations governing the award of National Scholarships; and non-resident scholarships of the value of £10 per annum, tenable for three years (with £30 lodging-allowance added), were awarded to Robert George Stevens, of Riverton; Patrick D. Cody, of Heddon Bush; and Ina B. Romans, of Arrowtown. Nine non-resident Board Scholarships of the value of £30 each, and fifteen resident scholarships of the value of £5 each, all tenable for two years, were awarded in terms of the Board's regulations, which provide, *inter alia*, that "in each year two Junior Scholarships shall be awarded to qualified candidates from schools not having more than thirty-five pupils in average attendance; and, further, two Junior Scholarships to qualified candidates from schools having more than thirty-five, but not more than 200, in average attendance. The remaining scholarships available shall be awarded to candidates from all classes of schools in order of merit."

*Senior Scholarships.*—For the Senior Scholarships twenty-eight competitors presented themselves, all of whom gained the necessary marks to qualify. One non-resident and four resident scholarships, of value equal to the Junior Scholarships, but tenable for three years instead of for two years, were awarded to Edna I. J. Sutherland, Wyndham; Eric Marshall, Geoffrey Wild, William H. Jackson, all of Invercargill; and Hughina McLean, of Gore: these being first in order of merit. Every holder of a scholarship is required by the regulations to "attend an approved secondary school or its equivalent" during the tenure thereof.

*Free Class-books.*—The Board, as indicated in previous reports, has, ever since its introduction, disapproved of the principle of free text-books being supplied by the State to pupils of public schools. The intimation that the grants for such supplies had been discontinued was consequently received with satisfaction. The proposal to devote the money thus set free to aid in the establishment of school libraries meets with the Board's approval, and steps have already been taken to create an interest in this matter by enlisting the sympathy of School Committees and teachers throughout the district in the Department's proposals. By this means it is hoped to encourage the study of good and wholesome literature among the young people.

*Conveyance and Board of Pupils.*—The Board welcomes the new and simplified regulations controlling the conveyance and board of pupils attending its schools. The system of facilitating the conveyance of children living in localities remote from public schools has much to commend it. From the point of view of economy, it would be advantageous to encourage the system of conveyance by a more liberal allowance for such service than is now paid. It is quite safe to assert that with more encouraging conditions the conveyance and board of pupils attending central and efficiently conducted schools will obviate the undue multiplication of small schools, for which the services of efficient teachers cannot possibly be secured. The recently issued regulations are an improvement on those they superseded, if only for the greater freedom which Boards may now exercise in dealing with this service. Parents interested have experienced considerable difficulty in organizing this service, more especially in localities where the number of children to be conveyed (and the payment) has not been sufficient to secure the services of a competent and responsible person as driver.

The general practice is for the oldest boy or girl to take charge of the conveyance, and it is difficult to suggest a more efficient arrangement, having in view the small remuneration which is offered. Now that the age-limit of those eligible for conveyance has been increased to seven years the hardship is accentuated, inasmuch as the younger children (five to seven years of age) must either remain at home or be conveyed free of charge. Another aspect of this service is not yet, in the opinion of this Board,