

Buildings.—During the year additions were completed to the schools at Temuka, Waimataitai, Washdyke, and St. Andrews; new school buildings were opened at Timaunga and Timaru West; and new residences were built at Pleasant Point and Orari Gorge. The residence at Seadown, which was let to a tenant, was burned down owing to a defective chimney. The attendance at Four Peaks School is large enough to warrant the building of a school there, and application will be made for a grant as soon as an exchange of sites on the settlement has been completed. Owing to financial conditions, resulting from the outbreak of war, the Board has kept back applications for building grants to enable either new residences to be built or decaying old structures to be replaced.

Teachers.—On the 31st December there were in the Board's service 196 teachers, of whom 160 were adult teachers, twenty-three were pupil-teachers, and thirteen were probationers. Of the 160 adult teachers, twenty-six were head teachers, fifty-eight were sole teachers, and seventy-six were assistants. Of the adult teachers twenty were uncertificated, as against twenty-five for the previous year. And of these twenty the majority had to their credit partial success in one or other of the departmental examinations. This diminution in the number of uncertificated teachers is to the Board a very gratifying feature.

Scholarships.—For the Junior Scholarship Examination there were eighty-one candidates, seventeen more than in 1913. Of these eighty-one entrants only forty-one passed the examination, a fact which seems to indicate either insufficient preparation on the part of the candidates or bad judgment on the part of the teachers that sent them forward. In future the Board hopes to see a much smaller percentage of failures. For the Senior Scholarship Examination thirty-two competitors came up, seven fewer than in 1913. In this examination ten failed or were disqualified. Six Senior and eight Junior Board Scholarships were allotted, and Junior National Scholarships were won by two pupils of Sutherlands School. The Barclay Memorial Prizes were won by pupils of the Waimate, Sutherlands, and Glenavy Schools.

Attendance.—The yearly average attendance was 5,531, an increase of 279 for the year. The increase in roll number was 282. The mean average weekly roll was 6,159, hence the average attendance was 89·8 per cent. of this, a result excelled only once before, in 1911, when the figure stood at 90 per cent. A useful summary of important facts is given in the following table:—

Year.	School.	Teachers.	Roll at end of Year.	Mean of Average of Weekly Roll.	Yearly Average.		Total.	Per-centage.	
					Boys.	Girls.			
1879	..	29	77	3,203	2,819	1,103	953	2,056	72·9
1880	..	29	80	3,506	3,330	1,313	1,176	2,489	74·4
1890	..	56	126	4,930	4,906	1,999	1,889	3,888	79·2
1900	..	68	141	5,148	5,173	2,343	2,121	4,464	86·3
1910	..	83	176	5,684	5,525	2,578	2,297	4,875	88·2
1911	..	84	182	5,753	5,670	2,643	2,459	5,102	90·0
1912	..	84	188	5,927	5,741	2,661	2,452	5,113	89·9
1913	..	86	191	6,041	5,925	2,734	2,518	5,252	88·6
1914	..	85	196	6,323	6,159	2,878	2,653	5,531	89·8

Conveyance and Boarding of Pupils.—During the year the amount paid for this purpose increased to £778 19s., as compared with £562 9s. 3d. for 1913. For the December quarter of 1914, 153 children were conveyed to thirty-one different schools, and forty-four children were boarded out in order to attend school. During the year the Board strongly urged the Minister of Education to allow conveyance on horseback, but to no avail.

Visiting Schools.—During the year the Board continued its policy of visiting groups of schools, paying special attention to the southern part of the district. Hence it is now a fact that each member of the Board has visited most of the eighty-five schools in the district, greatly to the advantage of both Board and Committees. It is safe to say that our schools and our residences never were in a better state of repair, and this is largely due to the Board's personal knowledge of each locality and its needs.

Education Act, 1914.—This Act is the most important of the educational measures passed since 1877, and deserves more than a passing reference. It forms a fine summary of our educational law, and contains many admirable provisions. But this Board, having regard to all the educational needs of the district, or of any district, is emphatically of opinion that the proposal to reduce seriously the number of education districts in New Zealand is not a wise one. Surely a smaller Board can better attend to the needs of its schools and its Committees than can a larger one, which must contain the greater proportion of its buildings remote from the administrative centre, and therefore likely to be neglected. The Board is convinced that a serious reduction in the number of districts must sooner or later result in diminished interest amongst the rural population in the care of schools and in the progress of education generally. The Board also hopes that it will be afforded an opportunity of giving evidence before the Commission that is shortly to be set up to determine the number and the boundaries of the new education districts.

Regulations.—During the year the Board carefully considered a scheme for consolidating its regulations, and adopted a complete set for the guidance of all concerned. But these have not yet been printed and circulated, owing to the fear that if this district is abolished they will be rendered inoperative.