

## SOUTHLAND.

SIR,—

Education Office, Invercargill, 1st March, 1915.

In compliance with the provisions of section 39 (1) of the Education Act, 1914, the Education Board of the District of Southland has the honour to present the following report for the year 1914 :—

*The Board.*—In August Messrs. John MacGibbon, W. N. Stirling, and John Fisher retired, and in the annual election Messrs. John MacGibbon, G. T. Stevens, and John Findlay were elected, the first-named unopposed. Mr. William Macalister, B.A., L.L.B., resigned his membership in March, and Mr. Gavin Amos was elected to fill the vacancy. On the retirement of Mr. Macalister after seventeen years' service, of Mr. Fisher after eight years', and of Mr. Stirling after seven years', resolutions were passed appreciative of their work in the cause of education in the district. Mr. H. A. Archdall was elected Chairman of the Board in September. The Board's representatives on the Southland High Schools Board are Messrs. G. T. Stevens and Gavin Amos; on the Gore High School Board, Messrs. D. Gilchrist, J. MacGibbon, and H. E. Niven; while Mr. T. MacGibben, M.L.C., is its representative on the Otago University Council. The Board members at the end of the year were Messrs. H. A. Archdall, Gavin Amos, John Findlay, Duncan Gilchrist, Alexander Lowrie, John MacGibbon, H. E. Niven, George T. Stevens, and J. C. Thomson, M.P. The Board held twelve ordinary and four special meetings during the year, and the Executive Committee met twenty-three times.

*The Inspectors.*—Mr. James Hendry, B.A., Senior Inspector, retired at the end of the year, being granted six months' leave on full pay, in recognition of his arduous services faithfully rendered in the cause of education for a period of twenty-eight years. On his retirement, Board members, office staff, and teachers all joined in doing honour to an officer known throughout the district for his unflinching courtesy, good judgement, and just dealing in all his relationships. His name will long be remembered with the greatest respect not only by the teachers, but also by the pupils of Southland. In July Mr. A. L. Wyllie, M.A., was promoted to the position of Senior Inspector, and Messrs. Alexander Inglis, M.A., M.Sc., and Angus McNeil, M.A., two teachers with exceptionally successful records in the district, were appointed Inspectors. The work has long been found excessive for two men, and it is hoped that by increasing the staff more attention can be devoted to the oversight of inexperienced teachers in country schools. The Board has every reason to be more than satisfied with the work of the new staff of Inspectors. At the end of the year, however, in accordance with the provisions of the Education Act, 1914, the control of the Inspectors passed from the Board to the Education Department. In this change the Board deprecated the tendency towards centralization and felt that its powers were being greatly reduced thereby, and a vigorous, though unavailing, protest was made against the proposal while the Bill was before Parliament.

*Schools.*—One hundred and eighty-four schools were in operation at the end of the year, four more than for the previous year. New schools were opened at Brown's, Fortification, Whitehead, Halfway Bay, and Te Anau, while the Ruapuke and Sunnyside Schools, after being closed for some time, were reopened. The small schools at Avondale and Puysegur Point were closed during the year, and the Neck School at the end of the year, while the Park School was converted into a side school attached to Queen's Park (Waibopai) in July, and the last-named school was opened in a new building on the site previously occupied by the infant school.

The question of providing school accommodation for the growing suburban areas of Invercargill has been continually before the Board for some years. The new St. George School was nearing completion in December, and the building was so far advanced that it was opened at the beginning of the new school year. This new school, however, only partially meets the difficulties that the Board has to face, because while St. George School will relieve the overcrowding of the South School, the want of more class-room at the Middle and North Schools has yet to be dealt with.

*School Attendance.*—The Board has again to report an increase in both the roll number and the average attendance. The following are the figures for the four quarters :—

Quarter ending	Average Roll.	Average Attendance.
March .. .. .	11,171	10,161
June .. .. .	11,233	9,836
September .. .. .	11,269	10,019
December .. .. .	11,615	10,345

The following table shows the increases in five years :—

	Average Roll.	Average Attendance.	Percentage.
1910 .. .. .	10,228	8,901	87.0
1911 .. .. .	10,556	9,449	89.5
1912 .. .. .	10,792	9,552	88.5
1913 .. .. .	10,968	9,671	88.2
1914 .. .. .	11,322	10,090	89.1

These figures show a gratifying increase of 419 in the average attendance, and, what is still more gratifying, a great improvement in the regularity of the attendance, though the latter did not quite reach the standard of 1911.

*Teachers.*—The number of teachers employed at the end of the year was 380, of whom 326 were adults and fifty-four were pupil-teachers and probationers. The following table classifies the teachers