

Scholarships.—There were seventy-nine entries for the Junior and forty-five for the Senior National Scholarship Examinations. Ten junior and four senior candidates were successful in winning scholarships. Under the new regulations no special number of scholarships is allotted to each education district; consequently our candidates entered into competition with those from all over the Dominion. It is gratifying to note that South Canterbury obtained more than its fair proportion of scholarships. The Barclay Memorial Prizes were won by pupils of the Waimate, Cricklewood, and Sutherland's schools, and the Timaru Boys' High School.

Attendance.—The yearly average attendance was 5,693, an increase of 162 for the year. The number on the roll at the end of 1915 was 6,403, being an increase of eighty. The mean average weekly roll was 6,318, hence the average attendance was 90·1 per cent. of this, a result apparently not previously excelled. A useful summary of important facts is given in this table:—

Year.	School.	Teachers.	Roll at End of Year.	Mean of Average of Weekly Roll.	Yearly Average.		Total.	Percentage.	
					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
1914	..	85	196	6,323	6,159	2,878	2,653	5,531	89·8
1915	..	85	207	6,403	6,318	2,974	2,719	5,693	90·1

Conveyance and Boarding of Pupils.—During the year the amount paid for this purpose increased to £889 9s. 6d., as compared with £778 19s. for 1914. For the December quarter 148 children were conveyed to thirty-two different schools, and forty-six children were boarded out in order to attend school.

The War.—Nine of our teachers have answered the Empire's call by joining the Expeditionary Forces. The Board regrets to report the death on active service of Lieutenant F. D. Maurice, a promising young teacher, who held the position of third assistant in the Waimate District High School.

Subsidies on Voluntary Contributions.—The Education Act, 1914, made a very acceptable concession to School Committees in providing subsidies on voluntary contributions. Eleven Committees took advantage of this provision, and claims were received totalling £272 3s. 3d.

Physical Training.—During the month of March the Department's instructors conducted teachers' physical-training classes in Timaru. Practically every teacher in the district attended, and there is no doubt that the course of instruction was of great benefit. The members of the Board twice visited the classes, and expressed themselves well pleased with the excellent methods adopted, as well as with the enthusiasm displayed by the teachers in carrying out the various exercises.

Medical Inspection.—The Medical Inspector of Schools, Dr. Baker, visited nineteen schools, at which 787 children were medically examined. Dr. Baker reported that on the whole there was a decided improvement over the conditions as found on her previous visit, and that the increased keenness of the teachers in physical drill, and the improvements in the teaching of it, were already affecting the children and lessening the number of physical deformities.

Abolition of South Canterbury Education District.—In last year's report the Board expressed the hope that the Commission set up to fix the boundaries of the education districts would sit in Timaru. This wish has been fulfilled, as the Commission sat in Timaru on the 5th and 6th May when some eighteen representatives of various public bodies throughout South Canterbury personally gave evidence in favour of the retention of the district and Board. Numerous resolutions were received from School Committees and other bodies unable to be present. The Board was ably represented by Mr. W. M. Hamilton, who brought forward strong and convincing reasons why this Board should be allowed to remain. In its report, the Commission recommended that the number of Boards be reduced to seven, but Parliament altered this number to nine. The final arrangement of the districts and alteration of boundaries were left to the Council of Education. The decision of that body was that the districts should be reduced by the cutting-out of Westland, Grey, Marlborough, and South Canterbury. This Board is at a loss to understand why the South Canterbury district should be abolished while other districts of no greater importance have been retained. It is desirable in each education district to have a fair proportion of large schools to small schools, in order to provide a satisfactory ladder of promotion for teachers. From the tables attached to the Commission's report it will be seen that South Canterbury has a larger percentage of schools in the higher grades than have some of the districts retained. This district has always endeavoured to keep abreast of the times in educational matters and the Board was highly gratified to hear in the evidence given before the Commission so many appreciative references to its administration. Consequently, the Board feels that an injustice has been done to South Canterbury in abolishing the district, and feels strongly that the number of Boards should have been increased to ten, so as to include South Canterbury.

Finance.—It will be seen from the Board's statement of receipts and expenditure that the financial position of the Board is very sound. Notwithstanding the extra strain on the finances during the year, the credit balance at the 31st December was £3,230 10s. 11d. The capitation, &c., earned by classes in manual instruction amounted to £1,874 11s., none of which had been received at the end of the year.