

The expenditure on manual and technical instruction was: Salaries, material, &c., for school classes, £4,126 2s. 8d.; and for special classes, £1,314 13s.; buildings, furniture, and fittings, £144 2s. 8d.; total, £5,584 17s. 4d., being an increase of £124 19s. 8d. over the previous year.

School classes were held throughout the year at the Municipal Baths in Dunedin, and during suitable weather at the Municipal Baths in Oamaru. Pupils from twenty-two schools participated in the instruction, the average attendance being 640 boys and 536 girls. The cost of the classes was £178 9s., while the amount of Government capitation earned was £147.

*Truancy.*—The Truant Officer served 353 notices on parents and guardians for infringements of the Act, while 262 cases of irregular attendance were investigated by him. Penalty summonses to the number of sixty-six were issued under section 66 of the Act, sixty-four convictions being obtained and two being withdrawn owing to the children concerned being committed to the industrial school. The fines inflicted and the costs awarded amounted to £24 2s. 3d. Of 108 pupils in classes below Standard VI in Dunedin and suburbs who terminated their school course in December, 1916, two were in Standard I, four were in S2, fourteen were in S3, forty-two were in S4, and forty-six were in S5. All the pupils in question had, however, reached the exemption age of fourteen years. Although the attendance suffered somewhat from epidemics of measles, whooping-cough, and mumps, which occurred in various parts, and from the severe snowfall in the month of August, the percentage of attendance (91·4) for the year is most satisfactory. The shortage of labour in the country districts compelled farmers and others to utilize the services of their older children to a greater extent than usual, but the Board has no reason to believe that children were kept away from school to an unwarranted degree. Very few concessions in attendance were asked, and nearly all the appeals when investigated appeared to be justified. Of the twenty-five city and suburban schools, two attained 96 per cent. of attendance for the year, four attained 95 per cent., twelve attained 94 per cent., four attained 93 per cent., one attained 92 per cent., one attained 91 per cent., and one attained 90 per cent.

*Training College.*—The total number of students enrolled was 127, comprising 22 men and 105 women. The education districts represented were: Otago, 77; Southland, 29; Canterbury, 20; Nelson, 1. The allowances paid to them or on their behalf were: Bursaries, lodging-allowances, and travelling-expenses, £6,176 15s.; College fees, £1,043 14s.: total, £7,220 9s., or £896 15s. 5d. more than in the previous year. The accommodation provided at the College for the women students is not adequate for more than half the number now attending, and some amelioration of the conditions is most desirable. The question of the boarding arrangements for the women is also a serious one. In connection with this matter the Principal in his report points out that last year sixty-nine women students had to board in Dunedin, and expresses the opinion that the most urgent need of the College at the present time is the provision of a College hostel. With this view the Board concurs, and trusts that the Government may be able at an early date to give this matter the attention it unquestionably deserves.

*Certificates.*—The number of pupils of the public schools examined for proficiency certificates was 1,658. Of these, 1,258 (or 75 per cent.) obtained the certificate, while 155 (or 9 per cent.) were granted certificates of competency in Standard VI. The number who gained proficiency certificates is about 4 per cent. lower than in 1915.

*Incidental Expenses of Schools.*—The Board continued during 1916 to pay School Committees according to its own scale instead of limiting the payments to the amounts provided by the statute for this special purpose. This entailed upon the Board the payment out of its General Fund of £365 10s. 9d., making the total payments the Board has made out of this fund to Committees for incidental expenses £950 17s. 4d.

*Inspection of Schools.*—The Inspectors' estimate of the efficiency of the schools is as follows: Excellent or very good, 20 per cent.; good, 46 per cent.; satisfactory, 24 per cent.; fair to inferior, 10 per cent. These figures indicate a fall of 4 per cent. as shown in the best group, an increase of 6 per cent. in the "good" group, and a fall of 2 per cent. in the two lowest groups. The Inspectors state that when it is remembered that nearly 20 per cent. of the teachers are untrained and uncertificated, the efficiency of the schools may be regarded as very satisfactory. The order, discipline, and tone of the schools are, the Board is pleased to know, being maintained at a very high level.

*Buildings.*—This year's operations, like those of the previous year, have been confined to works of an urgent nature, and therefore no progress in the way of improvements to either schools or residences can be reported. Care was taken to keep the buildings from suffering through lack of repairs or painting, but no unnecessary expenditure was incurred. New schools were erected at Waenga, Conical Hills, Wyllie's Crossing, and St. Clair; additions were made to the schools at Alexandra and Otekaieke; and alterations to the school at Glenomaru. The Pukema School was shifted to a new site, and a new residence was erected at Waipiata. Up-to-date furniture is being made for all new school buildings, and also where alterations are being carried out.

*Pupil-teachers, Probationers, and Training-college Students.*—The Board is of opinion that, compared with the salaries obtainable in civil life, the payments made to pupil-teachers, probationers, and training-college students are inadequate to entice in sufficient numbers to the important profession of teaching the youth (especially the lads) of intelligence, character, and energy. It is to be hoped that as soon as normal times return, if not sooner, the Minister may be able to make a decided increase in these salaries. There is also, the Board believes, too much disparity between the salaries of pupil-teachers and probationers. There does not seem any great reason why a pupil-teacher should receive £55 for each of the two years of his course, while a probationer who has passed the same examinations, who goes through almost the same course of training, and who assists almost equally in the teaching work of the school, should receive only £35. The scale of boarding-allowance for pupil-teachers requires amendment: either an equal amount for each year should be allowed as is done in the case of probationers, or the payment should be increased each year, not curtailed. It seems strange that a pupil-teacher should get a boarding fee of