

*School Libraries.*—During the past year the question of providing increased reading-matter for our pupils and of stimulating interest in school libraries received special consideration. The returns furnished at the request of the Board from different schools that have installed libraries show that the books are much appreciated and eagerly sought by the young people, especially in those schools where the teachers show enthusiasm for this branch of education. In order to secure increased facilities for our boys and girls obtaining a wider range of carefully selected books, and to augment those at present in our libraries, several conferences were held with the managers of the Dunedin Free Public Library. As a result they have generously agreed to inaugurate a system of travelling libraries in connection with their juvenile department, and, as an experiment, will next year loan fifty to sixty books per week to each standard from the Fourth to the Sixth in four of our city schools. The Board is assured that, if this scheme works out satisfactorily, it will subsequently be extended to all our city schools. The Board also hoped to arouse increased interest in libraries in country schools, and to do something more to meet the urgent needs of children in the backblocks, and extremely regrets that so few grants for libraries were applied for during the year.

*Pupil-teachers, Probationers, and Training College Students.*—The Board expresses its profound disappointment that the Minister has not yet been able to adopt the recommendation made with practical unanimity by the educational bodies throughout the Dominion, and systematically supported by this Board for some years past, for an increase in the salaries and allowances of pupil-teachers, probationers, and Training College students, so as to make them at least equal to the rates paid to other public servants with corresponding service. The whole scale of payments to these teachers requires to be recast forthwith on more liberal lines. This is a reform which brooks no delay.

*Grade 0 Schools.*—The Board notes with appreciation that the capitation grants for these schools have been increased to £8 per head. This will give much-needed relief to struggling schools, and help to secure for them more efficient teachers.

*Salaries of Temporary Teachers.*—The Board expresses its regret that the Minister, by powers conferred upon him by regulation, has seen fit to reduce the rates of salaries proposed by the Board to be paid to certain temporary teachers. The Board holds that all such teachers whose character and competency are attested are entitled to receive the rates of salary provided by statute for the grades of position they occupy, and that it is inequitable they should be obliged to agree to a decrease in their salaries, in some cases of £20 per annum, or forfeit the appointment. In apportioning salaries to temporary teachers the Board has not departed from the statutory scale, and the onus of reducing the salaries of these teachers must therefore rest upon the Minister.

*Certificates.*—The number of pupils of the public schools examined for proficiency certificates was 1,631, of whom 1,275 (or 78 per cent.) gained the certificate, while 212 (or 13 per cent.) were granted certificates of competency of Standard VI.

*Inspection of Schools.*—The Inspectors' estimate of the efficiency of the schools is as follows: Excellent or very good, 26 per cent.; good, 41 per cent.; satisfactory, 28 per cent.; fair to inferior, 5 per cent.

*Buildings.*—Considerable difficulty has been experienced during the past year in obtaining the necessary building-material, some lines being almost unprocurable, while the prices for all, as well as for labour, have been extremely high. Under such circumstances only necessary work could be undertaken. As a result the buildings have been allowed to stand a little longer before being repainted, but an honest attempt has been made to do all work where delay would be doubtful economy. A new school has been erected at Tawanui. An unused class-room was removed from Chaslands and erected to provide a school at Papatowai. The Tokarahi buildings were altered and added to, the additions providing an extra class-room for the school and two rooms for the residence. A room was removed from the old St. Clair building and erected as an additional class-room at the Macandrew Road School. A residence was erected for the teacher at Otekaieke, and a small cottage at Poolburn. An addition was made to the janitor's cottage at Kensington. During the year a good deal has also been done in the way of renewing outhouses, repairing and renewing fences, and asphaltting school-grounds.

*The War—Roll of Honour.*—Since the issue of the last report fifteen teachers and Training College students have proceeded on active service, the total number of the Board's employees who have joined the Expeditionary Forces to date being ninety-nine. (See Appendix to E.—1 for names and for casualties.)

The Hon. the Minister of Education, Wellington.

I have, &c.,

D. T. FLEMING, Chairman.

## SOUTHLAND.

SIR,—

Education Office, Invercargill, 21st March, 1918.

In compliance with the provisions of the Education Act, 1914, the Education Board of the District of Southland has the honour to submit the following report of its proceedings for the year ended 31st December, 1917:—

*Board.*—At the beginning of the year the membership of the Board was as follows: Invercargill Urban Area representatives—Messrs. D. Gilchrist (Chairman) and G. T. Stevens; West Ward representatives—Messrs. J. Findlay and J. C. Thomson, M.P.; East Ward representatives—Messrs. J. MacGibbon and H. E. Niven; Central Ward representative—Mr. P. A. de la Perrelle. In the month of January an election was held to fill the extraordinary vacancy caused by the