

(or 16 per cent.) qualified for scholarships. The total number awarded in the Dominion was 205, so that 14·6 per cent. was gained by the pupils from this district. For the Senior Scholarships there were 96 competitors, of whom 12 (or 12·5 per cent.) were successful. There were 126 scholarships current at the end of the year: 90 were Junior Nationals and 36 were Senior Nationals, 34 of them were held by girls and 92 by boys. The conduct, diligence, and progress of all of them were reported favourably upon by the Principals of the secondary schools they attended.

*Agricultural Instruction.*—The school-garden is a valuable aid to the study of the life, growth, and habits of living things, and, apart from its utilitarian aspect, offers excellent opportunities for increasing the child's faculty for accurate observation, thinking and deduction, and of creating an intelligent interest in his environment. The results of work along these lines reflect the skill and enthusiasm of the teacher, and in a number of schools a high standard has been attained. There remain a few schools, however, at which the treatment of the subject has failed to realize its possibilities, but with the additional instructor in agriculture which the Board has decided to appoint it is anticipated that the increased assistance that will in future be available will contribute towards effecting an improvement in these cases in method and results. Elementary agriculture has during the past year formed an integral part of the curriculum in 202 schools, while the rural-science course has been followed in seven of the district high schools. The expenditure on manual and technical training was: Salaries, material, &c., £4,628 2s. 1d. for school classes and £1,253 8s. 10d. for special classes; buildings, equipment, rent, &c., £511 9s. 1d.: total, £6,393, being an increase of £773 9s. 4d. over the previous year. The excess of expenditure over receipts for the year was £310 19s. 4d. As the departmental capitation rates remain stationary at what they were many years ago, while the cost of all material has increased and the prevailing economic conditions have rendered necessary the augmentation of salaries, the Board anticipates having to face a larger deficit for the current year. It believes that a change in the method of financing the manual and technical instruction of the primary schools is long overdue, and that Boards should no longer be obliged to depend upon the precarious *per capita* payments. It trusts that the Department will, at an early date, fix the salaries to be paid for all agriculture, woodwork, cookery, and dressmaking instructors, and provide the amounts necessary for salaries and material.

*Swimming and Life-saving.*—Classes were held in connection with twenty-nine schools, 646 boys and 703 girls of S4 receiving instruction. The expenditure on the instruction amounted to £172 6s. 5d., and the Government capitation received was £180 2s. 6d. A weekly lesson of about half an hour's duration was given to each class, the course extending over a period of five months. Most of the pupils have in that time learned to swim, many of them attaining a fair degree of proficiency. The Board is impressed with the necessity for giving every facility for the practice of our young people in this important and beneficial exercise, and regrets that the time for which the baths can be used permits of only one standard being taken.

*Training College.*—The enrolment for the year was 89 women and 21 men, total 110, comprising 70 students from Otago, 26 from Southland, 12 from Canterbury, and 1 each from Hawke's Bay and Wanganui. Bursaries, lodging-allowances, and travelling-expenses amounted to £6,278 6s. 7d., college fees to £818 15s. 3d.; total, £7,097 1s. 10d. The Principal reports that of the men students who entered the College since 1913 (the year before the war) fifty-six have gone to the front or to camp. Of these, eleven have been killed, and many wounded more or less severely. The provision of a hostel is the salient need of the College at the present time, and in view of the fact that sixty-six of last year's women students had to live away from home to attend the College, the urgency for taking immediate steps in this matter is again impressed upon the attention of the Government. The accommodation provided at the Training College is quite inadequate for the number now enrolled, and if, as the Department evidently contemplates, the number of trainees is to be increased, a considerable extension of the college buildings is absolutely necessary and must be undertaken at an early date.

*Truancy.*—The Board's Truant Officer served 360 notices on parents or guardians for infringements of the Act; 217 cases of irregular attendance were investigated; 20 penalty summonses were issued under section 62 of the Act (the lowest number since 1901). Convictions were obtained in all the cases brought before the Court, the fines amounting to £6 11s. Of 141 pupils in classes below S6 in the city and suburbs who, having reached the age of fourteen years, terminated their school course in December, 1918, three had passed S2, fourteen had passed S3, forty-six had passed S4, and seventy-eight had passed S5.

*Buildings.*—War conditions, with building-material at extremely high prices and labour difficult to procure, have had the effect during the past year of circumscribing and lessening the Board's activities in the direction of carrying out desirable improvements. The condition of the buildings has, however, been carefully watched, and renovations, repairs, and painting-work necessary for their preservation have been attended to as circumstances permitted. New schools have been erected at Tuapeka Flat, Puketū, and Tawhiti; while at Five Forks a schoolroom was provided by the removal of an unused room from Waianakarua, and an additional class-room was provided at Moa Creek by the removal of an unused one from Naseby. New infant-rooms were erected at Maori Hill, also open-fronted sheds in which classes are taught during the fine weather, thus making it possible to carry out, to a considerable extent, the injunction to teach as much as possible in the open air. At Kensington School a teacher's retiring-room was erected and the office enlarged, and at Mosgiel a teacher's room and office were provided. Elderslie School was also enlarged. Small additions were erected to the residences at Ratanui and Roxburgh, and new outhouses and conveniences of an up-to-date character have been provided for several schools and residences throughout the district. Special attention has been given to the provision of drinking-fountains, with the result that quite a number of our schools are now equipped with an approved system. At Arthur Street School new out-offices with up-to-date drainage were constructed, and improvements effected in the lighting and ventilation of two of the class-rooms.