

Correspondence Classes for Uncertificated Teachers.—Instead of holding week-end training-classes in various subjects of the curriculum for the Class D certificate the Board gave its support last year to a scheme of instruction by correspondence, contributing out of the departmental grant for this purpose half the fees of all teachers whose diligence and progress were favourably reported upon by the correspondence tutors. The results appear to have justified the Board in its adoption of this course, and it proposes to continue the scheme for the current year.

The War: Roll of Honour.—Since the issue of the last report twenty-five teachers and Training College students have joined the Expeditionary Forces. The total number of the Board's employees who have proceeded on active service or to camp is 124. Of these, eighteen have fallen and twenty-five have been wounded.

The Hon. the Minister of Education, Wellington.

I have, &c.,

J. WALLACE, Chairman.

SOUTHLAND.

SIR,—

Education Office, Invercargill, 27th March, 1919.

In compliance with the requirements 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 ending 31st December, 1918:—

The Board.—The members in office at the beginning of the year were Messrs. D. Gilchrist (Chairman), J. Findlay, J. MacGibbon, H. E. Niven, P. A. de la Perrelle, G. T. Stevens, J. C. Thomson, M.P., and J. D. Trotter. In conformity with the provisions of section 15 (4) of the Education Act, 1914, the Secretary drew lots as to which members should retire, with the following results, viz.: Invercargill Urban Area representative—Mr. G. T. Stevens; East Ward representative—Mr. H. E. Niven; Central Ward representative—Mr. P. A. de la Perrelle; West Ward representative—Mr. J. Findlay. At the election held in July Messrs. Findlay and Perrelle were re-elected unopposed for the West and Central Wards respectively; while Messrs. F. W. Gresham and A. J. Nichol were elected for the Invercargill Urban Area and East Ward respectively. At the ordinary meeting of the Board held on the 23rd August Mr. J. C. Thomson, M.P., was unanimously elected Chairman for the ensuing two years. Messrs. J. C. Thomson and G. T. Stevens continue to act as the Board's representatives on the Southland Boys' and Girls' High Schools Board; Messrs. H. E. Niven, F. W. Gresham, J. C. Thomson, J. D. Trotter, and A. L. Wyllie, M.A., were appointed to represent the Board on the Southland Technical College Board; Messrs. D. Gilchrist, J. MacGibbon, and H. E. Niven are the Board's representatives on the Gore High School Board; while the Hon. T. MacGibbon, M.L.C., and Mr. G. T. Stevens represent the Board on the Otago University Council and the Training College Committee of Advice respectively. During the year eleven ordinary and two special meetings of the Board were held, while the Executive Committee, which consists of all the members of the Board, met twenty-one times.

Schools.—The schools in operation at the close of the year numbered 191, as compared with 187 at the close of the preceding year. The 191 schools were graded as follows: Grade 0, 15; Grade I, 51; Grade II, 44; Grade IIIA, 55; Grade IIIB, 7; Grade IVA, 4; Grade IVB, 6; Grade IVc, 1; Grade VB, 2; Grade Vc, 1; Grade Vd, 1; Grade VIB, 1; Grade VIIA, 2; Grade VIIC, 1. New schools were opened in the districts of Waimatua, Titipua (reopened), Beaumont (reopened), Waikana (reopened), Nine-mile, Lynwood, Mount Alfred, and Cainard, the four last named being household schools, while the schools at Glenham Sawmill, Longridge North, Raymonds Gap, and Lillburn were closed during the year owing to lack of attendance. In some of the localities where schools in Grade 0 have been opened the residents have been called upon to guarantee the salary of the teacher up to £100 per annum. This is a tax which the settlers in some cases are not able to bear. The Board is of the opinion that, instead of establishing household schools and paying capitation at the rate of £9 per pupil in average attendance, the Department should grant an allowance sufficient to cover the cost of boarding a child away from home in order that he might attend an efficient school. In the great majority of cases the teachers of household schools are inexperienced, consequently it would be more advantageous for the child to receive instruction from an efficient teacher.

Grade 0 Schools.—The Board heartily endorses the Department's action in increasing the capitation allowance to aided schools from £8 to £9 per pupil.

Demonstration Schools.—The need for the establishment in this district of at least one demonstration school is greater than ever. Owing to the absence of qualified or even partially trained applicants, the Board has been compelled during the last three years to appoint to several of its schools, especially those situated some distance from railway facilities, applicants who have had no previous experience in the management of schools. In the Education Act provision is made whereby the Board, with the approval previously obtained of the Minister, may establish any public school as a model school for the observation of and practice in the methods of teaching and of school management. The Board sincerely trusts that this appeal for the establishment of such a school will receive the Department's favourable consideration.

Attendance of Pupils.—On the 31st December, 1918, there were 12,080 children on the rolls of the schools in this district—6,269 boys and 5,811 girls—a record for this education district. These figures, as compared with those of the year preceding, show an increase of 251 pupils. The average attendance for the year was 10,475, a result slightly lower than for the year preceding. The prevalence of influenza during the last months of the year has no doubt militated against what would otherwise have been a record average attendance for this district. The Truant Officer in his annual report to the Board states that he sent out 403 notices to defaulters, issued sixty-two summonses, and secured forty convictions. The amount of fines inflicted was £11 12s.