

fore the teacher's manner counts a great deal. In proportion as she displays sympathy and tact so will she obtain the willing co-operation of her charges. The teacher's tact plays a great part in the success which she gains in inducing country children to discuss freely and in good style the subjects taught."

In closing these notes we must give our teachers their need of praise for their honest efforts on behalf of the moral, physical, and mental welfare of the children, and for their earnest desire to attain to the best in method and in aim. But few fall short in the rendering of faithful service, often amid difficult conditions and with nothing in the environment to help movement onward and upward towards the best.

We have, &c.,

WM. BROCK,  
S. C. OWEN,  
J. B. MAYNE,  
J. A. VALENTINE,  
F. I. EVANS,  
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The Director of Education.

### OTAGO.

SIR,—

Dunedin, 15th March, 1920.

We have the honour to submit our report on the work of the schools of this district for the year 1919.

The following table shows the number of pupils on the roll and the number present at the annual examination:—

Classes.	Public Schools.		Private Schools (19).	
	Number on Roll.	Present at Annual Examination.	Number on Roll.	Present at Annual Examination.
Standard VII .. ..	288	270	347	346
"   VI .. ..	1,674	1,632	142	136
"   V .. ..	2,314	2,258	222	213
"   IV .. ..	2,639	2,592	258	249
"   III .. ..	2,782	2,743	238	229
"   II .. ..	2,701	2,666	245	230
"   I .. ..	3,051	2,984	213	208
Preparatory .. ..	7,153	6,796	490	468
Totals .. ..	22,602	21,941	2,155	2,079

During the year 254 schools were in operation. Of these three were household schools. All the schools were inspected, and in most cases two visits were paid. In addition all the registered private schools in the Otago District were inspected.

*Efficiency of Schools.*—An analysis of the Inspectors' annual return gives the following results with regard to efficiency: Excellent or very good, 28 per cent.; good, 40 per cent.; satisfactory, 27 per cent.; fair to inferior, 5 per cent. The results of the inspection of our schools disclose a slight diminution in efficiency; this, in view of the long period during which the pupils were absent owing to the influenza epidemic, was not unexpected; that the effect was not more marked is due to the fact that our teachers put forth greater efforts, without which the results, compared with those of former years, would inevitably have been much worse. Most of the schools marked below "satisfactory" are country schools with one teacher, and in two-thirds of these schools changes of teachers will, in the main, account for their inferiority. The general condition of schools has been adversely affected by the frequent changes due to the conditions prevailing since the war began, as is shown by the fact that the Board, during the twelve months from December, 1918, advertised for 209 vacancies.

We have again to draw attention to the fact that there is a great leakage of children from school before S6 is reached. In 1914 the roll for S1 in Otago was 3,050: of these only 1,674 reached S6 in 1919. Even if we allow for a certain number of children being held back in various classes during their progress through the standards, these figures show that every year a large number of children leave school before entering S6. Physical incapacity, mental backwardness, migration from school to school, irregular attendance, and delay in beginning school life are responsible for many cases of retardation, but not for all. An examination of the figures for each standard during a number of years shows that the largest decrease lies between S6 and S5. There are many causes for this, such as children leaving school on reaching the age of fourteen, but one contributing cause is the fact that a number of children are held back in S5 because some headmasters are too exacting in making promotions to S6. In some cases this is due to the false notion that a teacher's work is judged mainly by the percentage of passes obtained in the examination for proficiency certificates. In our last report we referred to this matter at some length, and we desire again to call attention to the remarks made then. Another cause of retardation is the holding-back of children in S1. The syllabus states, "The preparatory division will, in general, include those children who have been under instruction at school or elsewhere for not more than two years." The words "in general" mean that allowance is made for exceptions where good reasons (such as those mentioned above) can be given for retention in this division for more than two years, but the aim of the teachers should be to promote the normal child to S1 after two years' instruction in the infant classes. In schools where S1 is too large for one assistant the class is divided into two, and the lower division is sometimes