

Teaching Staff.—There were on the 31st December 483 teachers, occupying positions as under :—

	Males.	Females.	Total.
Head teachers	66	11	77
Sole teachers	57	56	113
Assistant teachers	21	148	169
Organizing teachers	2	..	2
Total adult teachers	146	215	361
Pupil-teachers	13	16	29
Probationers	16	34	50
Manual and technical teachers	3	5	8
Teachers of needlework	35	35
Total of all teachers for 1923	178	305	483

Of the 361 adult primary-school teachers in the service of the Board, 251 held teachers' certificates, four held licenses to teach, while 106 were uncertificated.

The Board is pleased to note that the educational status of its teaching staff has improved slightly during the year. As in past years, the Board has reason to congratulate itself on the possession of an efficient staff of teachers. In most schools the work of educating the youth of the district is carried on with a due sense of the responsibility involved. For a large proportion of the less remunerative appointments the services of certificated teachers are not available, and these have to be filled by the appointment of young people, many of whom have had but limited experience. The uncertificated teacher will be replaced as soon as certificated teachers are available. While the Board deplores the fact that so many of our schools are staffed by untrained teachers, it must not be overlooked that several of these teachers are doing fairly satisfactory work. For the year 1923 the expenditure on teachers' salaries amounted to £99,340.

Organizing Teachers.—The two organizing teachers have carried out their duties to the entire satisfaction of the Board. Twenty-six schools were visited regularly by the organizing teachers, and as a result a marked improvement in the general management of the schools has to be recorded in the large majority of cases. The Board is convinced that the system has much to commend it.

Relieving Teachers.—At times great difficulty was experienced in obtaining a sufficient number of relieving teachers to fill vacancies, and in several instances small schools had to be closed and larger schools to carry on understaffed for short periods. At different times during the year a further difficulty arose owing to the lack of competent relieving teachers to fill some of the more responsible positions. The Board is of the opinion that the position would be met if provision were made for the appointment of a fully qualified relieving male teacher.

Instruction of Teachers.—As in previous years, Saturday classes for the training of pupil-teachers, probationers, and uncertificated teachers were held at Invercargill and at Gore. In addition a number of teachers attended evening classes in drawing at the Technical College. In accordance with the Department's regulations, the Invercargill classes were this year carried on under the control of the Director of the Technical College, the Board still retaining charge, however, of the Gore classes. The Board has previously protested against the change of control as regards the Invercargill classes, and the experience of the past year has but deepened the conviction that the Board alone should be in charge.

School Libraries.—The number of schools in which libraries for the use of pupils are being established is steadily increasing. During the year contributions amounting to £119 19s. 11d. were received from thirty-four schools. With pound-for-pound subsidy and additional grants from the Board amounting to £21 11s., this means that a sum of £261 10s. 10d. was made available during the year either for establishing new libraries or adding to those already in existence.

Subsidies on Voluntary Contributions.—During the year applications were received for subsidy on contributions amounting to £1,085 18s. 8d., the objects for which the money was raised being as follows: For improvements to school gardens and grounds, £717 14s. 10d.; for purchase of pianos, &c., £60 19s.; to supplement allowances for incidental expenses, £132 9s. 1d.; for equipment, &c., £22 14s. 6d.; for purchase of basketballs, £15 11s. 10d.; for flags and flagpoles, £16 9s. 6d.; for school libraries, £119 19s. 11d.

Conveyance and Board of Pupils.—The amount disbursed by the Board on the conveyance and board of children who live a long distance from the nearest public school was £1,952. Conveyance allowance was paid in respect of 380 children, and boarding-allowance in respect of seventeen children. In the opinion of the Board there is one aspect of this service which is not satisfactory. In some parts of this district the roads, especially in winter, are not fit for vehicular traffic, consequently the children are compelled to ride to school. In such cases the Board strongly recommends that the regulations be so amended as to allow of payment to children who journey to school on horseback.

Medical Inspection.—During the year the School Medical Inspector, accompanied by the school nurse, visited a majority of the schools in this district. The Board willingly testifies to the value of the work done by the Medical Officer and her assistant, and to the growing interest taken in it by the parents of the pupils.

Physical Training.—The Inspectors report favourably on the quality of the work in physical instruction as carried out in this district.

School Dental Clinic.—The Board is pleased to be able to report that a dental clinic has been established in Invercargill. A suitable room has been provided by the Board, and fitted up free of