

Physical Instruction.—The physical instruction of the junior teachers and of the Training College students is carried on by the Department's physical instructor with manifest zeal and efficiency. As far as time permits he visits the various schools of the district, and the Board has every reason to believe that these visits are welcomed by the teachers and are productive of much physical benefit to the pupils.

School Committees.—Harmonious relations continue to exist between the Board and the School Committees of the district. As in former years, the Board has endeavoured to meet the wishes and requests of School Committees in a reasonable manner, and it cordially recognizes the interest and enthusiasm the majority of them evince in the carrying-out of their useful work. The practical withdrawal from the Committees of any choice in the selection of teachers by the system of appointment now in operation has in some districts, the Board believes, been responsible for the waning of local interest in school affairs. In the majority of cases the School Committees accept without demur the Board's selection of the teacher, but in many cases they reply curtly that they have no recommendation to make; and in not a few they do not reply at all, or ask that a teacher other than the one selected by the Board receive the appointment. In only two or three cases last year did it happen that the Committee had any choice.

Department.—The Board accords its thanks to the Minister and his officers for the careful consideration given by them to its various applications. It desires also to express its appreciation of the ability and tactfulness with which the departmental Inspectors carry out their onerous duties. The death of Mr. J. M. Nicolson, one of the Inspectors, which occurred during the year, was sincerely regretted by the Board. Mr. T. R. Fleming, M.A., who has occupied the position of Senior Inspector in this district for the past eight years, has now retired on superannuation. Throughout his connection with this Board he has proved himself to be an able, just, and wise administrator, and the Board parts with him with much regret.

I have, &c.,

JAMES WALLACE, Chairman.

The Hon. the Minister of Education, Wellington.

SOUTHLAND.

SIR,—

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, 1925 :—

The Board.—During the year the constitution of the Board's membership underwent no change. The personnel of the Board at the end of the year was as follows: Invercargill Urban Area—Messrs. A. Bain and A. W. Jones; Central Ward—Messrs. P. A. de la Perrelle and J. D. Trotter; East Ward—Messrs. H. Smith (Chairman) and S. Rice; West Ward—Messrs. G. Johnson and J. C. Thomson.

Board Meetings.—During the year to which this report refers the Board held twelve ordinary and one special meeting, and the Executive Committee, which consists of all the members of the Board, met twenty-two times.

Schools.—At the close of the previous year there were 196 schools in operation. This number was added to by the reopening of the schools at Arthur's Point and Te Tipua. There were thus on 31st December, 1925, 198 schools under the jurisdiction of the Board.

Model School.—The Model School at Charlton, which has been in operation since 1923, has justified its establishment. During the year to which this report refers several young people inexperienced in the art of teaching have been sent to this school to gain an insight into school method and management before taking charge of small household schools, or acting as relieving teachers.

District High Schools.—There are in this district two district high schools, one at Riverton and one at Wyndham, and, judging from reports submitted by the Board, they are doing good work. During the year the Department made a grant for (1) the erection of a class-room and a science room at Wyndham, and (2) a more up-to-date equipment for the teaching of science in the Riverton School. That the residents of the above-named districts fully appreciate the value of their district high schools is evidenced by the fact that the attendance has increased considerably during the year. The attendance in the secondary department of the Riverton and Wyndham Schools for 1925 was fifty and twenty-eight respectively, as compared with forty-three and eighteen for 1924.

Efficiency of Schools.—The report of the Inspectors shows that 192 schools were inspected during the year. Notwithstanding the fact that the schools were not reopened until the end of April on account of the epidemic of infantile paralysis, the Board is pleased to know that the schools under its control have fully maintained the efficiency of previous years. The schools were graded as follows: Very good, 10; good, 53; very fair or satisfactory, 113; fair, 13; weak, 3.

Teaching Staff.—While the Board regrets that the uncertificated teachers still remain with it in considerable force, it is gratifying to be able to report that the educational status of its teaching staff is steadily improving. This is due mainly to the fact that the efforts of the Department through its training colleges are beginning to bear fruit by the production of fully trained teachers.

Organizing Teachers.—The Board desires to record its appreciation of the valuable work done by its two organizing teachers, Messrs. D. Brown and H. Romans. These officers have under their supervision twenty schools staffed by partially trained teachers, and evidence is not wanting that the teachers and pupils under their supervision have made sound progress throughout the year.