

school the quality of the work on the whole is much about the same as last year. There were a few papers of great merit; but the excellence of one or two of the pupils was marred by the mediocrity of some others, and the absolute failure of at least two of the pupils.

The Chairman of the South Canterbury  
Board of Education.

I have, &c.,

JAS. GIBSON GOW, M.A.,  
Inspector.

### OTAGO.

SIR,—

Education Office, 15th March, 1888.

In accordance with section 102 of "The Education Act, 1877," the Board of the Education District of Otago has the honour to submit the following report on the educational affairs of the district for the year 1887.

BOARD.—At the beginning of the year the Board consisted of the following members: Dr. William Brown, Michael Fraer, John F. M. Fraser, Hon. Thomas Dick, John McKenzie, Henry Clark, James Green, Alexander C. Begg, and Dr. Macgregor. Dr. Macgregor and Messrs. Begg and Green were the members who retired in terms of section 15 of the Act. Four candidates were nominated for the vacancies, and the voting resulted in the re-election of Mr. James Green, and the election of Dr. John Hislop and Mr. James Fulton. At the first meeting of the Board in April Dr. Brown was elected Chairman. Dr. Brown and Mr. James Fulton continue to represent the Board on the Board of Governors of the Dunedin Boys' and Girls' High Schools, and Mr. Neil Fleming has been reappointed the Board's representative on the Waitaki High School Board. Mr. James Green was appointed one of the Education Reserves Commissioners in the room of Mr. Alexander C. Begg.

During the year the Board held thirteen meetings. There were twelve meetings of the Finance Committee, and twelve meetings of the Appointments Committee.

NUMBER OF SCHOOLS.—At the end of 1886 there were 181 schools in operation. In the course of the year new schools were opened at Lee Stream, Table Hill, and Round Hill. The school in Stafford Street, Dunedin, and the half-time school which was carried on at Ida Valley, have been closed. The other half-time school (Poolburn) is now conducted as a full-time school. The number of schools in operation at the close of the year was 183, or 185 if the four half-time schools be counted as separate schools.

During the year no new schools were sanctioned, for the Board had no funds available for the erection of buildings, and could obtain from the Government no definite information as to the amount likely to be granted for that purpose. In the course of the year a great number of memorials for the establishment of schools had to be dealt with, but all had to be declined or postponed owing to want of funds. In the outlying parts of the district the demand for school accommodation is greater at the present time than it has been for some years, and it is earnestly hoped that Government will, during the ensuing session of Parliament, make such provision as will enable the Board to meet all urgent claims.

At the request of a number of householders, the old School District of Oamaru has been divided into three, so that each school will have a separate Committee. The Board expects that the change will prove as beneficial in this case as it has done in that of the City of Dunedin.

The following figures show the classification of the schools according to their average attendance (the four half-time schools of Wharekuri and Kurow, Eweburn and Kyeburn, being reckoned as two schools): Under 15 pupils, 6; 15 and under 20 pupils, 11; 20 and under 25 pupils, 22; 25 and under 50 pupils, 59; 50 and under 75 pupils, 30; 75 and under 100 pupils, 13; 100 and under 150 pupils, 11; 150 and under 300 pupils, 12; 300 and under 500 pupils, 9; 500 and upwards, 10: total, 183.

The number of half-time schools (each pair counted as one in the above) was 4, and of aided or subsidised schools 6.

TEACHERS.—At the end of the year there were 511 teachers employed by the Board, classed as follows: Male head teachers, 151; male assistants, 53; male pupil-teachers, 54; female head teachers and mistresses, 108; female assistant teachers, 35; female pupil-teachers, 95; female teachers of sewing, 15: total, 511.

For some years the Board has endeavoured to appoint teachers holding full certificates of competency to all vacant positions, and the few teachers in the service not fully certificated have been encouraged to qualify themselves by passing the requisite examination. At the present time there are in the Board's service fourteen teachers who do not hold full certificates, all of whom have passed the necessary examination for a certificate of Class D or Class E, except in one or, at most, in two subjects. Nearly all the teachers referred to have been some years in the service. They are in charge of small schools far removed from the centres of population, and have few facilities for study. As the schools under their control are satisfactorily conducted, the Board has hitherto allowed them to retain their positions; but, now that the supply of trained and certificated teachers is rather in excess of the demand, it becomes a question if the Board can consistently continue any teacher in the service who does not possess the full qualifications.

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE.—The following is an abstract of the attendance at the public schools of this district from the institution of the Otago education scheme, in the year 1856, to the present time. [Not reprinted.]

The above table shows that there was an increase of only 132 in the number of pupils who attended at all during the year. The increase in the average attendance was 575, and the increase in the number in attendance at the close of the year 425. In Dunedin there was a decrease of 197 in the whole number, while in the average attendance there was an increase of 134. The number in attendance at the close of the year shows an increase of only 59 on that of the preceding year.