

OTAGO.

SIR,—

Education Office, Dunedin, 31st March, 1891.

In accordance with section 102 of "The Education Act, 1877," the Education Board of the District of Otago has the honour to submit, for the year 1890, the following report on educational matters in the district under its control :—

BOARD.—At the beginning of the year the Board was composed of the following members: Dr. Hislop, Messrs. James Green, James Fulton, M. Fraer, John W. Jago, James Macgregor, Henry Clark, John McKenzie, and the Hon. Thomas Dick. Dr. Hislop, Messrs. Green, and Fulton were the members who retired in terms of section 15 of the Education Act. Seven candidates were nominated for the vacancies, and the voting, in February, resulted in the re-election of Mr. Green and Dr. Hislop, and the election of Dr. W. M. Stenhouse in the room of Mr. James Fulton. At the first meeting of the Board, in April, Mr. Macgregor was appointed Chairman. The Board held twenty-seven meetings during the year. The Hon. Thomas Dick and the Hon. John McKenzie represented the Board on the High School Board of Governors, and Mr. Neil Fleming was the Board's representative on the Waitaki High School Board for the year.

NUMBER OF SCHOOLS.—At the close of 1889 there were 190 schools in operation. In the course of the year new schools were opened at Nenthorn, Windsor, and Port Moeraki; the number of schools, therefore, in operation at the end of the year was 193. A new school was sanctioned, and buildings were in course of erection, at Henley when the year closed. A large number of applications for the establishment of schools, chiefly in newly- and sparsely-settled districts, are still under consideration. The claims of the settlers in several of these districts are entitled to every consideration, but, however willing the Board may be to assist, the small sum at its disposal for the erection of buildings will, it is feared, prevent the Board from providing the means of education in any but one or two of the most pressing cases. The following statement shows the classification of schools according to average attendance: Under 15 pupils, ten; 15 and under 20 pupils, thirteen; 20 and under 25 pupils, seventeen; 25 and under 50 pupils, sixty-nine; 50 and under 75 pupils, twenty-eight; 75 and under 100 pupils, thirteen; 100 and under 150 pupils, fourteen; 150 and under 300 pupils, ten; 300 and under 500 pupils, eight; 500 and upwards, eleven.

TEACHERS.—At the end of the year there were 531 teachers in the Board's service, classed as under: Male head teachers, 143; male assistant teachers, 54; male pupil-teachers, 63; female head teachers and mistresses, 128; female assistant teachers, 43; female pupil-teachers, 88; female teachers of sewing, 12. This shows an increase of seven teachers for the year, nearly all of whom are female head teachers or assistants.

PUPIL-TEACHERS.—There were 151 pupil-teachers in the Board's service at the end of the year. The annual examination took place as usual in December. The following statement shows the number that sat at the examination, the number that passed, and the number that failed: First class—thirty-nine presented, thirty-five passed, four failed, one absent; second class—thirty-one presented, twenty-six passed, five failed; third class—thirty-five presented, thirty-four passed, one failed, two absent; fourth class—forty-two presented, thirty-eight passed, four failed, one absent. It will be seen that fourteen failed to pass the annual examination, a number considerably larger than that for some years previous. The services of two pupil-teachers were dispensed with for failing twice to pass the requisite examination.

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. At the beginning of 1878 the new education district of Southland was created, and thirty-seven schools were handed over to the newly-formed Board :—

| Year.          | Number of Schools. | Number of Teachers. | Number of Pupils who attended at all in the Course of the Year. |                    |         | Average Daily Attendance for the Year. |                    |         | Attendance at the Close of the Year. |                    |         |
|----------------|--------------------|---------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|---------|----------------------------------------|--------------------|---------|--------------------------------------|--------------------|---------|
|                |                    |                     | Dunedin.                                                        | All other Schools. | Totals. | Dunedin.                               | All other Schools. | Totals. | Dunedin.                             | All other Schools. | Totals. |
| 1856-57 ... .. | 5                  | 7                   | ...                                                             | ...                | ...     | 115                                    | 121                | 236     | ...                                  | ...                | ...     |
| 1867 ... ..    | 56                 | 85                  | 1,216                                                           | 3,151              | 4,367   | 897                                    | 2,045              | 2,942   | 919                                  | 2,436              | 3,355   |
| 1877 ... ..    | 173                | 356                 | 3,191                                                           | 16,422             | 19,613  | 2,176                                  | 9,573              | 11,749  | 2,585                                | 11,943             | 14,528  |
| 1887 ... ..    | 183                | 511                 | 6,136                                                           | 22,742             | 28,878  | 4,148                                  | 15,110             | 19,258  | 4,648                                | 18,032             | 22,680  |
| 1890 ... ..    | 193                | 531                 | 5,966                                                           | 23,279             | 29,245  | 3,891                                  | 15,440             | 19,331  | 4,341                                | 18,441             | 22,782  |

From the foregoing table it would appear that 314 more pupils were enrolled in the Dunedin schools last year than during the previous year, while the average attendance at the same schools was forty-seven less than for the year 1889. The total enrolments in the whole district show an increase of 661, while the average attendance is 242 less than for the previous year. The decline in the average attendance was altogether in the first two quarters of the year, when the attendance fell in the March quarter 491, and in the June quarter 532, under that of the last quarter of the previous year. This falling-off was due to the prevalence of *la grippe* in the district during the first half of the year.

It is impossible to tell with any degree of accuracy the number of children who are growing up in this education district without receiving the benefits of an elementary education. Nowhere is there any regular system of enforcing the compulsory clauses of the Act, though fitful efforts are here and there made to deal with cases of gross neglect on the part of parents and guardians to