

PUPIL-TEACHERS.—On the 31st December last there were fifty-nine young persons employed under the Board as pupil-teachers—viz., eight males and fifty-one females. Though in this education district the scale of payment made to boys is on a much more liberal basis than that paid to girls in the same class, this branch of the service, for some reason not clearly understood, does not possess such attractions to the former as might reasonably be expected. The proportion of males to females is year by year becoming more unequal—now it is as 6·3 to 1—which seems to indicate that the teaching staff of the future will consist chiefly of women, to whom the profession appears to offer inducements equal, if not superior, to most others open to them. The usual annual examination of pupil-teachers was held in June last, the result being as follows :—

Class	I.	Presented.	Passed.	Failed.	Total.
..	..	11	10	1	11
"	II.	8	8	0	8
"	III.	15	13	2	15
"	IV	15	12	3	15
	Totals	49	43	6	49

Of the forty-nine candidates who presented themselves, it will be seen that forty-three passed, and six failed. Of the latter, one failed for the second consecutive year, and has since retired from her position in the service. The Inspectors report that the great bulk of the candidates did uniformly satisfactory work, of the rest, some excelled, while others hardly reached the dead level of mediocrity. The style of the papers with respect to neatness, arrangement, and handwriting was for the most part commendable. During the year an important alteration in the Board's regulations affecting pupil-teachers was made. Hitherto all applicants for admission to the ranks of pupil-teachers, independent of their scholastic attainments, were required to enter at the lowest grade, and proceed to examination year by year ere they could secure promotion to the next highest class. This rule, it was found, acted with undue harshness towards some who, by qualifying themselves for a higher-class examination, yet derived no advantage therefrom. The regulations as they now stand, however, make provision for the due acknowledgment of greater literary attainments on the part of pupil-teacher applicants. If candidates for employment now possess evidence of having passed the matriculation or teachers' D examination they are allowed to enter the service at the rank and pay of second-class pupil-teachers, and, in like manner those who have succeeded in passing the Junior Civil Service or teachers' E examination are accepted as third-class pupil-teachers, and paid accordingly. It is further provided that all such candidates are exempted from attendance at the pupil-teachers' annual examinations, unless in the case of matriculated students or successful Civil Service candidates, who are required to present themselves only in the subjects of school management and drawing included in the pupil-teachers' syllabus, but which form no part of the matriculation or Civil Service examinations. Pupil-teachers already in the service may secure similar advantages and concessions by passing the higher-class examinations before referred to at any time during the currency of their apprenticeship. The effect of these amendments to the regulations will, it is felt, have a tendency to raise the literary status of this branch of the service and the extra expenditure involved, if any will be amply justified by the increased efficiency of the services rendered.

SCHOLARSHIPS.—In the Board's scholarship regulations it is stipulated that successful candidates shall attend the Southland High Schools during the currency of their scholarships. The first term of the Southland High School commences in February, and, with the view of facilitating a proper classification of pupils in that institution, it was deemed expedient to alter the date of the scholarship examination from June to December in each year. Successful scholarship candidates are thus enabled to enter on their advanced studies under more favourable auspices than formerly, and the organization at the High School is not interfered with by an influx of scholarship pupils in the middle of its year's work. Under these altered conditions, the Board, with the consent and approval of the Education Department, was able to extend for a period of six months the term of all scholarships current on the 31st December last. The annual examination was held on the 19th December and following days, when no fewer than eighty-three candidates presented themselves. This is almost double the number that has been present at any previous examination, and is in part accounted for by the Board having this year increased the number of examination centres. Now candidates may present themselves at Invercargill, Riverton, Gore, or Queenstown. An additional reason for the unprecedented increase in the number of candidates this year is to be found in the fact that the Board of Governors of the Southland High Schools had announced their intention to offer free education for a period of three years to a number, not exceeding twenty, of the most successful candidates under a specified age other than those who may be successful in obtaining scholarships. The Inspectors' report shows that twenty-seven candidates gained over 60 per cent. of the maximum number of marks, while the soundness of the work generally is attested by the fact that the great bulk of the candidates were credited with 50 per cent. and over.

In this district the application of the scholarship scheme has been attended with results of a most satisfactory nature. Great interest in its success is manifested both by teachers and parents. The Board's balance-sheet for the year shows a total expenditure on scholarships of £481 5s. The item "examination expenses" will appear in next year's accounts.

SCHOOL COMMITTEES.—It is with great satisfaction that the Board has to report the continuance of the amicable relationship and hearty feeling of co-operation which has since the inception of the present system of education characterized its dealings with the local representatives of the parents and householders. The Board is ever ready to acknowledge that Committees, possessing as they do a full and intimate knowledge of local requirements, as well as a desire to promote the best interests of the schools in their respective districts, are, in consequence, well able to counsel the