

—First class, 1. Constitutional history—Second class, 1. Most of the students took a very high place in their classes, a result which is all the more creditable considering that they had to give so much of their time to the work of the Training College.

I have, &c.,
D. R. WHITE, M.A., Principal.

The Chairman, Otago Education Board.

SOUTHLAND.

SIR,—

Education Office, Invercargill, 16th March, 1899.

I have the honour to present the report of the Education Board of the District of Southland for the year ended the 31st December, 1898.

THE BOARD.—At the beginning of the year the Board was composed of the following members: Messrs. George McLeod (Chairman), J. W. Bain, A. Baldey, John Cowie, George Froggatt, George R. George, Thomas MacGibbon, W. Macalister, and D. L. Matheson. The three retiring members of the Board were Messrs. George Froggatt, George R. George, and Thomas MacGibbon. Mr. George Froggatt had previously announced his intention not to seek re-election, and the voting of the School Committees resulted in the re-election of Messrs. George and MacGibbon, and the election of Mr. J. A. Hanan. The Board, at a special meeting held on the 18th March, unanimously adopted the following resolution relative to Mr. Froggatt's retirement from his position as one of its most energetic and attentive members: "That this Board records its high appreciation of the faithful services rendered to the cause of education in this district by Mr. George Froggatt during the past twelve years, and regrets that he has found it his duty to retire from active service as one of its members." At the usual monthly meeting held in April Mr. Alfred Baldey was elected unopposed to the position of Chairman of the Board for the ensuing year. During the year the Board held twelve ordinary and two special meetings, and the Executive Committee met twenty-five times.

The Venerable Archdeacon Stocker (re-elected), of Invercargill, and Rev. J. A. Asher, of Gore, were chosen to represent the Board's interests on the Board of Governors of the Southland High Schools, and Mr. J. Walker Bain continued to act as its representative on the Trust of the School Commissioners of Otago, and these gentlemen discharged their respective duties with zeal and fidelity.

SCHOOLS AND ATTENDANCE.—At the close of the year 1897 there were 145 schools under the control of the Board. During the year to which this report has reference new schools were opened in the districts of Merivale, Benio, Otakau, Te Tua, and Hamilton Burn. The small school in existence at Kingston (owing to a further decrease in the attendance) and the temporary school at Waianiwa Village were closed in the early part of the year; and the aided school in the new settlement of Papatotara was reopened, the prospects of that district having justified such a course. There were, consequent on these changes, 149 schools in operation as on the 31st December last. None of the newly opened schools will for a time be self-supporting, so that their existence, while a great boon to the districts in which they have been established, will be a source of weakness rather than of strength to the Board. This remark could, however, be appropriately made respecting at least three-fourths of all the schools under the Board's jurisdiction. Of the schools open at the end of the year, fifteen registered an average attendance of less than fifteen pupils, fourteen of over fifteen and under twenty pupils, eighteen of over twenty and under twenty-five pupils, and fifty-seven schools had over twenty-five but under fifty pupils in attendance. It will thus be seen that more than 70 per cent. of the schools in this district may be classified as either below or just over the self-supporting limit. The attendance for the year has shown, both in average attendance and in roll-number, a slight decrease. The exact figures are as follows:—

				Average Weekly Roll.	Strict Average.	Working Average.
1897	...	...	...	9,846	7,943	8,260
1898	...	...	...	9,785	7,873	8,036
				61	70	224
	Decrease	...	...			

With an increase of four in the number of schools, it is difficult to account for the falling-off in the attendance, seeing that the decrease in strict average almost corresponds with the decrease in roll-number. The larger falling-off in the working average is probably attributable to the prevalence of epidemics, which, unfortunately, prevailed to a greater or less degree in many places during a part of the year. The percentage of strict average attendance to roll-number was also slightly less, being 80.4, as against 80.6 for the preceding year.

TEACHING STAFF.—Under this heading but little has to be recorded. The staff (including pupil-teachers) now numbers 124 males and 120 females, a decrease of one as compared with last year. Owing to the vigorous action of the Board during the past few years, there is now but one teacher in the service in charge of a school with an average of over twenty pupils who is uncertificated, and that one is under notice to vacate his position should his efforts to gain a certificate at the January examination be recorded as unsuccessful.

APPOINTMENT OF TEACHERS: NEW REGULATIONS.—In June last the Board, by a majority, after much deliberation, adopted a set of regulations under which all appointments of teachers (not including pupil-teachers) should be made. The regulations in question involve a very material alteration in the past practice of the Board, and so far have worked satisfactorily. In only two or three instances have Committees failed to acquiesce in the appointment of a candidate nominated by the Board. It is safe to say that the operation of these regulations will in great measure, if not altogether, prevent anomalies in the appointment of teachers such as must necessarily occur when