

vacancies, which, by the operation of "The Education Boards Election Act, 1900," did not occur till the month of August. The result was the re-election of Mr. Sim and the election of Messrs. Alexander Marshall and Robert Peattie. Messrs. Harraway and Kyle did not offer themselves for re-election. At the first meeting of the Board in September the Rev. P. B. Fraser was elected Chairman.

The Rev. William Hewitson, B.A., and Mr. Thomas Mackenzie, M.H.R., were appointed members of the Board of Governors of the Otago Boys' and Girls' High Schools, and Mr. Donald Borrie was reappointed the Board's representative on the Waitaki High School Board. Mr. Donald Borrie continues to represent the Board as one of the Education Reserves Commissioners.

The Board held twenty-seven meetings during the year.

NUMBER OF SCHOOLS.—At the close of 1900 there were 222 schools in operation in the district. New schools were opened at Ahuriri Flat and Maungawera. The Bendigo, Wanaka Road, Glenledi, Nenthorn, Catlins, and Kaihiku Schools were closed at the end of the year 1901. The number of schools in operation when the year closed was 218.

TEACHERS.—On the 31st December there were 484 teachers in the Board's service (190 males and 294 females). There were 76 pupil-teachers (15 males and 61 females).

The examination of candidates for employment as pupil-teachers was held in December, when 83 candidates (14 boys and 69 girls) presented themselves. Out of this number, 54 (8 boys and 46 girls) passed the examination, and 5 boys and 30 girls received appointments.

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE.—The number of pupils who attended at all in the course of the year was 25,323; the average daily attendance for the year, 17,544; and the attendance at the close of the year, 19,933. In the number of pupils who attended at all during the year there was, as compared with the previous year, a decrease in the Dunedin schools of 61, and in all the other schools of 467, or 528 over the whole district. The figures relative to average attendance show the following decreases for the year: Dunedin schools, 65; all other schools, 181: total for the district, 246. The average for the Dunedin schools is the lowest since 1879, while that for the whole district is the lowest since 1883. The average attendance expressed as a percentage of the mean of average weekly roll for the four quarters was 86·7—that is to say, that of the 20,235 children on the school rolls 2,691 (or over 13 per cent.) were absent every school-day throughout the year. In 1900 the average percentage was 86·9, so that 0·2 per cent. represents the decrease in regularity of attendance for the year just closed.

TRUANCY.—The following gives the work of the Truant Officer for the year: Cases investigated, 295; notices served on parents or guardians under section 5 of "The School Attendance Act, 1894," 251; penalty summonses issued under section 7 of "The School Attendance Act, 1894" (dealing with parents or guardians whose children have not attended school the number of times required by the Act), 20. Under the above twenty penalty summonses there were twelve convictions, five cases were withdrawn on account of the production by the defendants of exemption certificates, and three cases were dismissed. The total amount of fines for the year was £1 6s. In accordance with section 7 of the Act, the fine inflicted in each case of conviction was 2s.

SCHOLARSHIPS.—Twenty-three scholarships (10 junior and 13 senior) were awarded at the examinations in December. There were in all 138 competitors, 109 for the junior and 29 for the senior scholarships. In addition to the scholarships awarded, thirteen of the senior competitors gained sufficient marks to entitle them to free education at the Otago Boys' and Girls' High Schools for three years. Free education is conferred at these schools on the ten junior competitors who stand next on the list to those who gain scholarships, provided that they obtain at least 60 per cent. of the attainable marks. Fifteen of the junior competitors gained at least 60 per cent. of the marks, and to the ten highest of these was awarded free education by the High Schools Board. Twenty-three junior competitors were disqualified on account of failing to obtain at least 20 per cent. of the marks allotted to each subject. There are at present 34 pupils (18 boys and 16 girls) receiving free education at the high schools in Dunedin in connection with the scholarship scheme.

TECHNICAL INSTRUCTION.—With the view to the introduction of hand-work into the schools, the Board, as soon as it was furnished with the means, organized classes for the training of the teachers in kindergarten work, and in plasticine and cardboard modelling. Afternoon classes, evening classes, Saturday classes, and summer classes were held in Dunedin, and Saturday classes in Oamaru, all of them being in every way most successful. Teachers are now awaiting the necessary modification of the syllabus to enable them to introduce these subjects as an integral part of the school-work. The question of cookery for the girls of Standards VI. and VII. also occupied the Board's attention, and arrangements are now completed for a regular course of instructions in this subject.

DISTRICT HIGH SCHOOLS.—During the year the Port Chalmers School was re-established as a district high school, and the Hampden, Mosgiel, and Tapanui Schools were created district high schools, and steps were taken to establish one at Naseby. The number of such schools in this district is eight.

The Board would point out that the Department's grant is insufficient to provide an adequate staff for this class of school. A district high school with a secondary department of twelve pupils in average attendance receives a grant of only £102 per annum, a sum that is very inadequate payment for a teacher of high scholastic attainments.

The following is a statement of the aim and work of these schools:—1. To deepen and extend the work begun in the primary schools, and to teach such other branches of knowledge as have a direct bearing on the probable life-work of the pupils whose school-life is limited to the age of fifteen or sixteen. 2. To prepare pupils for the following: (a) The Board's senior scholarship examination; (b) the Civil Service Examination; (c) the Matriculation Examination. In the first case the aim should be to provide for children a good general education bearing directly upon the