

D, three got partial E, and one failed to get any promotion. The two science prizes offered by the Education Department were awarded to students of this college—a result that testifies to the efficiency of the training given in our science laboratory and science lessons. Out of several hundred candidates from all parts of the colony only five were placed in the honour list in the subject of the art and method of teaching. Two of our students were placed in the honour list, and both of them, I may say, took a very high place in this subject at our College examinations. One was placed in the credit list, gaining special marks for history. Eight of our students attended classes at the Otago University.

D. R. WHITE, M.A., Principal.

SOUTHLAND

SIR,—

Education Office, Invercargill, 17th March, 1902.

In compliance with the provisions of "The Education Act, 1877," I have the honour to present the following report of the proceedings of the Southland Board of Education for the year ended 31st December, 1901:—

THE BOARD.—At the beginning of the year the following gentlemen constituted the membership of the Board: Mr. John Cowie (Chairman), and Messrs. Alfred Baldey, George R. George, J. A. Hanan, William Macalister, Thomas MacGibbon, George McLeod, J. W. Raymond, and John C. Thomson. Messrs. George R. George, J. A. Hanan, and Thomas MacGibbon were the retiring members, of whom the two first mentioned did not offer themselves for re-election. To fill the vacancies on the Board seven candidates were nominated, and Mr. Thomas MacGibbon, of Mataura, Dr. James Copland, of Gore, and Mr. W. B. Scandrett, of Invercargill, were elected. On the retirement of members who did not offer themselves for re-election the Board made special reference to the valuable services rendered to the cause of education in this district by Mr. G. R. George, and a resolution expressive of the Board's appreciation of his active and useful membership, as also of regret at his retirement, was unanimously adopted.

There is diversity of opinion as to whether the conduct of Boards' elections under the new Act is or is not an improvement on the method previously in operation; one thing is certain, that here is a very considerable increase both in labour and expense. It is, however, premature to judge of the merits of a new system after a first trial, and a definite expression of opinion may very properly be deferred in the meantime. In this district 128 out of a possible 147 Committees took part in the election. The number of individual members of Committees who recorded their votes was 686, and of these 676 exercised the full privilege of voting for three members. The total number of valid votes recorded was 2,044. An unusually high percentage of informal votes was received, no less than 53 voting-papers being rejected as invalid on account of their not being posted on or before the date of the election, while 23 voting-papers were either not signed at all or improperly signed. Every detail in connection with this, the first election under the new order of things, was carried out without a hitch.

At the ordinary meeting of the Board held on the 6th September Mr. J. W. Raymond was elected Chairman of the Board for the ensuing year. Messrs. J. A. Hanan, of Invercargill, and J. C. Thomson, of Riverton, were appointed to represent the Board on the Board of Governors of the Southland Boys' and Girls' High Schools, and Mr. Thomas MacGibbon continued his services during the year as representative of the Board's interests on the Trust of the Education Reserves Commissioners of Otago and Southland.

The Board held twelve ordinary and three special meetings, and its executive committee met twenty-five times during the course of the year. The attendance of members was very creditable, the average for meetings of the Board being 7.5, and for the executive committee 6.6. It is almost needless to say that a very large amount of business was dealt with, many of the sittings of the executive being continued till a late hour in the evening. The consideration of the changes brought about by the Teachers' Salaries Act, and the introduction of the work of technical education throughout the district, necessitated a very considerable amount of extra work during the year, both to members and officials of the Board.

SCHOOLS AND ATTENDANCE.—Under this heading there is comparatively little to report. For many years this Board was barely able to cope with the demand for new schools in various parts of its widely extended district, but for this and the year immediately preceding this demand has in great measure ceased. At the close of the year 1900 there were 147 schools in operation; now there are 149. Two full-time schools—the one at Waimahaka, and the other at Lake Manapouri—and one half-time school at Lower Hedgehope (worked in conjunction with that at Springhills) were opened during the year; while one at Te Oneroa, owing to a collapse of the mining industry and the consequent exodus of the population, was closed. Of the total number of schools in the district, 118 had an average attendance of less than 70; 24 had an average between 90 and 330; while only 2 had an average of over 550 pupils. There are only three schools in the district which might be classed as "household" schools, in which the average attendance does not exceed eight.

The attendance during the period to which this report has reference shows a slight decrease as compared with the numbers for the previous year, as follows: Average weekly roll—1900, 9,562; 1901, 9,521: decrease, 41. Working-average—1900, 7,924; 1901, 7,910: decrease, 14. This decrease may be ascribed to a variety of causes, but it is not easy to point out definitely any one reason to which it is due. The fact that so few new schools have been opened plainly indicates that the progress of settlement in Southland has been temporarily arrested. There is one hopeful feature discovered in making the foregoing calculations—that is that the average attendance for the last quarter of 1901 is larger than for any of the six quarters immediately preceding, and, indeed, except for one quarter in 1899, constitutes the record for the district. The percentage of working-