

average attendance to average weekly roll-number now stands at 83, also a record for this district, though even this record falls short of that for the colony by about one per cent. It is creditable to Southland that, where in many of the more remote settlements the roads—where roads exist—are, especially during the winter months, but barely passable, such a high percentage of possible attendances should be attained.

BOARDS' TEACHING STAFF.—There were at the close of the year 240 teachers in the Board's service, both sexes being about equally represented. These numbers show an increase of three as compared with the year preceding. The number of boys and girls employed as pupil-teachers—twelve and thirty-three respectively—shows an undue preponderance in favour of the latter, though the disparity is less by about fifty per cent. than it was several years ago. Now that a uniform system of payment has been introduced, the inducement of monetary advantage to be gained by removal to other districts where better salaries have hitherto been paid has been removed, and it may therefore be reasonably hoped that the various education districts of the colony will now be able to compete on something like equal terms for the best teaching talent available.

TEACHERS' SALARIES.—The temporary provision for increasing teachers' salaries made by "The Public-School Teachers' Salaries Act, 1900," under which a parliamentary special vote for this purpose was distributed, afforded much-needed relief to the teachers of certain classes of schools, though, in the opinion of this Board, the distribution was not made on an entirely equitable basis. By virtue of this Act a sum of £991 10s. was added to the salaries of teachers in this district in respect of the first three quarters of the year, a fourth payment falling due and being paid along with the January (1902) salary. The schools in this district which received the most substantial advantage under the Act referred to were those at which the average attendance was less than twenty. It is yet too soon to express any decided opinion as to the merits of "The Public-School Teachers' Salaries Act, 1901," under which a scale of salaries applicable to the whole colony is provided for. Very serious exception, however, may be taken to the totally inadequate salaries set down for the first (and only) assistant teachers of schools having an average of 150 to 200, and also to the salaries provided for male assistants generally of the second and lower grades in all other schools. There seems not the slightest justification for the payment of £80 per annum to the assistant in a school of 150 to 200 average attendance, and in the grade of school immediately above (200 to 250) that the salary should be £155—almost double. Such a striking anomaly does not appear to exist in any other part of the scale, and this anomaly—along with others of a less noticeable character—should be at once removed. That a young man, after serving a four-years apprenticeship as a pupil-teacher, and qualifying for a teacher's certificate, should receive a mere pittance of £80 per annum is manifestly unjust. The "equal pay for equal work" principle which has guided the framers of the Act in fixing the salaries of male and female pupil-teachers at the same rates is also, in the opinion of this Board, fallacious. The difficulty hitherto experienced by Boards in obtaining the services of suitable young men as pupil-teachers will be seriously enhanced by the low—altogether inadequate—rates of salary now offered. There is no provision in the Act for the teaching of needlework to the girls in schools having an average attendance of less than forty. This is a most serious omission, and should be remedied at once—at least, so far as concerns schools having an attendance of, say, from twenty-five to forty, in which cases a small bonus of £5 to £10 might very properly be paid for instruction in such a useful accomplishment. Neither is there any provision for the payment of relieving-teachers, whose services will be required when leave of absence on account of sickness is granted to members of the regular teaching staff. Till provision is made by amendment of the Act, or by regulation made thereunder, some temporary expedient will require to be adopted to meet such expenditure. Other defects in the Act of a less serious nature undoubtedly exist, but reference to these may be reserved till some experience of its working is obtained.

TRAINING OF TEACHERS.—The Board desires to acknowledge, with pleasure, the receipt from the Department of a special grant of £150 for the training of teachers. A sum of £86 17s. 4d. of this amount has been spent in the organization of classes for instruction in the various branches of kindergarten, hand-work, cookery, &c. To enable teachers the more easily to attend these classes, arrangements were made for the issue of free passes on the railways, for which service a further special grant of £28 16s. was made by the Department. A balance of £91 18s. 8d. is still in hand as an asset for expenditure during the coming year.

PUPIL-TEACHERS.—The annual examination of pupil-teachers employed under the Board was held on Tuesday, the 9th July, and following days, when seventeen candidates presented themselves. Of this number, eleven were examined in all the subjects contained in the syllabus, and six in the subjects of drawing and school-management only, these latter having qualified for exemption in the other subjects by having passed the Matriculation or Civil Service Examination. As there were at that time forty-six pupil-teachers in the Board's service, twenty-nine who were not examined remain to be accounted for, and may, along with those who were examined, be grouped as follows: 11 pupil-teachers taking the full examination, 6 pupil-teachers taking drawing and school-management, 15 pupil-teachers are holders of teachers' certificates, 3 pupil-teachers not eligible for examination this year owing to recent appointment, 1 pupil-teacher failed to present herself, 10 pupil-teachers passed the first-class (final) examination: total, 46. The comparatively small number of pupil-teachers now requiring to undergo the annual test of scholarship indicates a very satisfactory improvement in the literary status, at least, of this department of the service.

SCHOLARSHIPS.—The usual examination for scholarships was held simultaneously at three centres, thirty-six candidates presenting themselves at Invercargill, eleven at Gore, and seven at Queenstown. Of the fifty-four candidates who entered the lists sixteen gained over 60 per cent. of the total marks obtainable. To the first ten were awarded five scholarships of the value of £35 each, tenable for two years, and five of the value of £15 each, also tenable for two years, the first two on the latter list being also granted train or coach fare in addition to the amount of the scholarships. The Inspectors report that the best of the candidates have done work that