

NUMBER OF SCHOOLS.—At the end of 1908 there were 230 schools in operation in the district. During 1909 the household school at Puketoi was closed, and new schools were opened at Hindon, Waitaki Bridge, and Benhar; a household school was opened at Springfield; and the small school at Nugget Point and the household school at Timaru Station were reopened. The number of schools in operation in December, 1909, was 235, an increase of five for the year.

SCHOLARSHIPS.—The annual examinations for the Junior National Scholarships and the Board's Junior and Senior Scholarships were held as formerly in the month of December. Of the 181 competitors for the five Junior National Scholarships and the ten Junior Scholarships offered by the Board, 133 passed the examination and forty-eight failed. The funds at the disposal of the Board warranted the award of sixteen Junior and fourteen Senior Board Scholarships. Five of the Senior Scholarship winners had previously held Junior National Scholarships, and two had held Junior Board Scholarships.

DRILL AND PHYSICAL EXERCISES.—These exercises have been regularly practised during the year in all the schools under the control of the Board.

TEACHERS.—On the 31st December there were 590 teachers in the Board's service, classed as under :—

					Males.	Females.	Total.
Head teachers	..	..	..	..	98	..	98
Sole teachers	..	..	..	..	32	104	136
Assistants	..	..	..	..	47	180	227
Assistants (secondary departments, district high schools)	..	..	..	..	3	7	10
Pupil-teachers	..	..	..	..	19	31	50
Probationers	..	..	..	..	6	22	28
Teachers of needlework	..	..	..	..	..	15	15
Training college, normal, and model schools	..	..	..	..	7	8	15
Manual and technical (special teachers)	..	..	..	..	7	3	10
Teacher of gymnastics	..	..	..	..	1	..	1
					220	370	590

At the close of the previous year there were in the service of the Board 222 male and 339 female teachers: total, 561. The figures for 1909 therefore show a decrease of two male teachers, an increase of thirty-one female teachers, and a total increase of twenty-nine teachers.

The following table shows the number of certificated and uncertificated teachers in the Board's service for the years 1908 and 1909 respectively :—

				Certificated.			Uncertificated.					
							Holders of Licenses.			Other Teachers.		
				M.	F.	Total.	M.	F.	Total.	M.	F.	Total.
1908	..	..	..	164	225	389	6	5	11	18	56	74
1909	..	..	..	160	233	393	4	6	10	21	58	79
Difference	..	..	..	- 4	8	4	- 2	1	- 1	3	2	5

Owing to the increased staffing introduced by recent legislation, the number of uncertificated teachers in the Board's service has increased very materially. Some of these are doing satisfactory work, and show promise of becoming capable teachers. During the month of December classes were established to assist those who were eager to improve their professional status, but very few took advantage of the facilities offered to them by the Board, their respective Committees, and their fellow-teachers, who so generously placed their services at the Board's disposal to assist their less fortunate brethren. Now that the results of the recent certificate examination are known, and a considerable number of young teachers are available, the time is opportune for replacing by more earnest workers some of those who have not shown any desire for self-improvement. The education of children in the remote parts of the district cannot be permanently entrusted to poorly educated and inefficient teachers, who make little or no effort to improve themselves.

ATTENDANCE.—The returns for the year show an increase of 293 in the number of pupils enrolled during the year. The number of pupils enrolled at the six Dunedin schools shows a decline of 141. The number in attendance at all the schools in the district in December last was 19,900, or 333 more than at the end of the previous year. The number on the roll of the Dunedin schools in December was 3,171, or nineteen less than in the preceding year.

The average attendance for the district was 17,865, an increase of 392 pupils for the year. The average attendance at the Dunedin schools shows a decrease of twenty-six, as compared with 1908. The average attendance expressed as a percentage of the weekly roll-number was 90.7, an increase of 0.9 for the year. The average percentage for the Dunedin schools was 92, an increase of 1 per cent. for the year. The mean weekly roll for the district was 19,694, and the average percentage gained implies that 1,829 pupils were absent each school day.

INSPECTION OF SCHOOLS.—Upon the retirement of Mr. W. S. Fitzgerald early in the year, Dr. Don was appointed to the inspectorate. Mr. Fitzgerald had been in the service of the Board for forty years, first as Rector of the Oamaru Grammar School, then as Principal of the Dunedin Training College, and last as Inspector of Schools, in all of which capacities he did good service for education, and exercised a fine influence over all with whom he had personal or official relations. He had richly earned the restful life to which he has retired.

In the Inspector's report the schools are classed as follows: Good to very good, 69 per cent.; satisfactory, 23 per cent.; fair, 5 per cent.; inferior, 3 per cent.