

PERSONAL.—About the middle of the year, owing to illness, Mr. T. Ritchie resigned as Inspector of Schools, a position he had filled for many years with much credit to himself and honour to his profession. It was with great regret that the Board heard of his death, which took place early in August. Towards the end of June the Board lost the services of Mr. E. K. Mulgan, in consequence of his appointment as Chief Inspector to the Auckland Board. During his comparatively short time of service under the Board, Mr. Mulgan carried out his duties with much ability, and showed himself ever ready to further the advancement of educational progress. The two vacancies on the inspectorate were filled by the appointment of Mr. T. Hughes and Mr. C. D. Hardie, both of whom as headmasters of important schools had already rendered the Board signal service.

I have, &c.,

The Hon. the Minister of Education, Wellington.

C. H. A. T. OPIE, Chairman.

SOUTH CANTERBURY

SIR,—

Education Office, Timaru, 1st March, 1911.

In accordance with the provisions of section 174 of the Education Act, 1908, I have the honour to submit the annual report of the Education Board of the District of South Canterbury for the year ending 31st December, 1910.

THE BOARD.—At the beginning of the year the Board consisted of the following members: Messrs. W. M. Hamilton (Chairman), G. W. Armitage, C. S. Howard, William Lindsay, George Lyall, John Maze, J. S. Rutherford, G. J. Sealey, and Thomas Sherratt. Messrs. Hamilton, Sealey, and Rutherford retired in August, and all three were re-elected unopposed. Mr. Hamilton was re-elected Chairman of the Board. The Board held twenty-two meetings during the year, the average attendance of members being 7·6.

THE SCHOOLS.—There were eighty-three schools in operation at the end of the year, three more than in 1909. The new schools were Pareora East, which was opened as a separate school in November, and the two "household schools," Pusey and Bluecliffs. The Riverlands School was closed at the end of the year because the Inspector's report was unsatisfactory.

The Board experiences some difficulty in getting qualified teachers to fill vacancies in up-country schools. In view of the inferior quality of teaching in many of the smaller schools it is suggested that superintendent teachers might be appointed to undertake the supervision of and be responsible for an efficient method of teaching in certain groups of schools placed under their supervision. An intelligent application of the syllabus cannot be expected from teachers of inexperience or of inferior ability and qualifications, and as only such can usually be got for the smaller country schools some system of closer supervision seems necessary to maintain efficient instruction in those schools.

TEACHERS.—There were 176 teachers in the Board's service at the end of the year, 142 adult teachers, twenty-six pupil-teachers, and eight probationers. Of the adult teachers twenty were uncertificated, but of these twenty, five have since passed their certificate examinations, two have obtained partial passes, and four have retired from the service. As there are at the present a few certificated teachers out of work, the Board should consider the advisability of replacing the remaining uncertificated teachers by certificated ones as far as possible.

SCHOLARSHIPS.—The annual examinations were held in November and December, the number of candidates being thirty-nine for the junior examination and thirty for the senior examination. Twelve junior and eight senior Board Scholarships were awarded. The Junior National Scholarships were won by a scholar of the Waimate School and a scholar of the Milford School. During the year the sum of £225 collected by the School Committees was handed to the Board for the purpose of establishing a scholarship in memory of the late Rev. George Barclay, who was so long a leading enthusiast in educational matters in this district. The Board has decided to invest the money, and to devote the proceeds to scholarship purposes.

PHYSICAL DRILL.—Physical exercises continue to receive a satisfactory share of attention at the hands of the teachers, and, as it becomes recognized that children are developing their brain as much in the playground as in the schoolroom, more and more attention will be given to school games and physical training.

AGRICULTURE.—As stated in last report, the Board was fortunate in securing the services of Mr. Brown, of the West of Scotland Agricultural College, to take charge of the agricultural instruction in the district. Since arriving in New Zealand Mr. Brown has made a good beginning with classes in three district high schools and with teachers' training classes. The work in the district high schools is surrounded with some difficulty, because the majority of the pupils are preparing for the Civil Service and for professional examinations, and it is not easy with the present staff to provide for these and at the same time for pupils wishing a purely agricultural course. This year Mr. Brown purposes conducting classes for young farmers in different centres, and it is hoped that the instruction in these will not only benefit those attending, but will arouse an interest in what should be the most important technical subject in the district. The Board has to thank the Timaru and Waimate High School Boards, the agricultural and pastoral associations, and the County Councils for their liberal support promised to this branch of educational work.

FREE SCHOOL-BOOKS.—The free distribution of school-books is regarded as a mistake. Much better use might be made of the money now applied to this purpose—*e.g.*, if it were applied to