

General.—During the year the Board was glad to welcome the departmental Medical Inspector, Dr. Eleanor Baker. Her report disclosed the need for such inspection, but it is hoped that in future a much larger proportion of our pupils may be medically examined.

The Board again extends its thanks to the various School Committees and Technical Association Managers, and to its teachers for services so efficiently rendered in the cause of education. The reports of the Inspectors show that in most cases Committees are fully alive to their duties, and that our teachers are as a body whole-hearted in their work and deeply interested in the progress of the little folk committed to their care.

The Board also desires to records its appreciation of the Department's ready attention to its requests and courteous reception of its many statements and claims. But it is earnestly to be desired that in future payments due on account of manual instruction may be made more promptly and earlier in the year.

I have, &c.,

J. S. RUTHERFORD, Chairman.

The Hon. the Minister of Education, Wellington.

OTAGO.

SIR,—

Education Department, Dunedin, 31st March, 1915.

In accordance with the provisions of section 39 of the Education Act, 1914, the Education Board of the District of Otago has the honour to present the following report of its proceedings for the year 1914 :—

Board.—At the beginning of the year the Board was composed of the following members: Northern Ward—Messrs. Donald Borrie, James Mitchell, and Andrew McKerrow; Central Ward—Hon. Thomas Fergus, Messrs. William Scott, and George C. Israel; Southern Ward—Messrs. D. T. Fleming, Parker McKinlay, M.A., and James Smith. The Board records with sincere regret the sudden death in the month of September of the Hon. Thomas Fergus, a member for fifteen years and its Chairman for three years. He was a man of high administrative ability, strong personality, and wide sympathy, and in him Otago has lost an ardent and able supporter of the cause of education. Mr. James Wallace was elected in the month of November to the vacancy in the Central Ward. Mr. George C. Israel was elected Chairman in the month of August. Forty-one meetings of the Board were held during the year, the average attendance being eight. The following were the Board's representatives on various educational bodies: Council of the University of Otago—Hon. Thomas Fergus and Mr. James Mitchell; Otago High Schools Board—Hon. Thomas Fergus, Messrs. G. C. Israel, and D. T. Fleming; Waitaki High Schools Board—Mr. James Mitchell; Boards of Management of Associated (Technical) Classes—Dunedin, Messrs. George C. Israel, P. McKinlay, M.A., and C. R. D. Richardson, B.A.; Oamaru, Messrs. James Mitchell and F. S. Aldred; Balclutha, Messrs. D. T. Fleming and W. W. Turner, B.A.; Milton, Messrs. P. McKinlay, M.A., and W. B. Graham.

Number of Schools.—The school at Taiaaroa Head was reopened, and new schools were opened at Concord, Elderslie, Hill Springs, Matea, Otanomomo, Post-office Creek, Shingle Creek, Spylaw Valley, and Waenga. The school at Stoneburn was reopened in February and closed at the 31st May. The number of schools in operation at the 31st December, 1914, was 255, an increase of ten for the year. Thirteen Roman Catholic schools, with a total attendance of 1,316 pupils, were visited and reported upon by the Board's Inspectors.

Teachers.—On the 31st December there were in the Board's service 706 teachers, classed as under :—

	Male.	Female.	Total.
Head teachers	102	2	104
Sole teachers	47	103	150
Assistant teachers	66	244	310
Total of adult teachers	215	349	564
Pupil-teachers	13	27	40
Probationers	11	37	48
Teachers of needlework	..	29	29
Manual and technical (special teachers)	16	8	24
Teachers of vocal music	1	..	1
Totals for 1914	256	450	706
Totals for 1913	243	429	672
Increase for 1914	13	21	34

For the past two years the ratio of male to female teachers was :—

Year.	Adult Teachers.	Pupil Teachers and Probationers.
1913	100 males to 165 females.	100 males to 270 females.
1914	100 „ 162 „	100 „ 267 „

There were 113 appointments of adult teachers made. The monthly average of temporary teachers employed to fill relieving or casual vacancies was thirty-three; in 1913 it was twenty-five. The necessity of providing substitutes for those teachers who enlisted accounts partly for the increase. There were twenty-eight pupil-teachers and twenty-four probationers appointed during the year: