

probationers. Of these sixty-one young people, no less than thirty-two had passed the Matriculation Examination, while twenty-six had passed the Intermediate or the Public Service Entrance Examination. Only three had no higher examination status than the Proficiency Examination.

Attendance of Pupils.—The mean of the average roll, average of attendance, and percentage of average attendance for the year were: Average roll, 22,128; average attendance, 20,479; percentage, 92·5. The increase in the mean roll number over that of the previous year was 248, while the increase in the average attendance was 242. The average attendance (20,479) is the highest ever attained in this district. The percentage of attendance (92·5) has only once been exceeded—viz., in the year 1914, when it reached 92·7 per cent. The following table shows for each twenty years since the institution of the Otago education scheme in 1856, and for the year just closed, the number of schools, the number of teachers, the number on the rolls, and the average attendance:—

Year.	Schools.	Teachers.	On the Roll.	Average Attendance.	Percentage of Attendance, Otago District.	Percentage of Attendance for whole of Dominion.
1856-57	5	7	..	236	..	..
1876	165	329	13,537	11,210	..	..
1896	218	554	22,091	19,502	85·9	81·4
1916	261	754	21,880	20,237	92·4	88·6
1917	261	748	22,128	20,479	92·5	..

Classification.—The pupils of the public schools classified according to standards as at the 31st December, 1917, were: Class P, 7,219 (32·6 per cent.); Standard I, 3,039 (13·7 per cent.); Standard II, 2,830 (12·7 per cent.); Standard III, 2,775 (12·5 per cent.); Standard IV, 2,579 (11·6 per cent.); Standard V, 2,132 (9·6 per cent.); Standard VI, 1,555 (7 per cent.); Standard VII (exclusive of secondary pupils of district high schools), 78 (0·3 per cent.): total, 22,207.

Junior and Senior National Scholarships.—For the Junior Scholarships there were 259 competitors, of whom three from schools with not more than one teacher gained between 53½ and 63½ per cent. of marks. Forty-three competitors reached the ordinary standard of qualification (63½ per cent.). There were thus forty-six Junior Scholarships awarded to pupils in this district, as against thirty-three in the previous year: that is, 17·7 per cent. of the competitors were successful last year, as compared with 12·5 per cent. in 1916. The number of pupils in Standard VI at the time the examination was held was 1,555, and 259, or 16·6 per cent., contested the examination. For the Senior Scholarships there were seventy-four competitors, of whom twenty-three gained the qualifying percentage of marks (63 per cent.): that is, 31 per cent. were successful, as against 16·5 per cent. in the previous year. It is noteworthy that thirteen out of the twenty-three scholarships awarded were taken by pupils of the secondary departments of the Board's district high schools—viz., Balclutha, 5; Normal, 4; Lawrence, 2; Mosgiel, 2. Of the ninety-eight scholarships current at the end of the year sixty were Junior National, twenty-nine were Senior National, five were Junior Board, and four were Senior Board. Twenty-five were held by girls and seventy-three by lads. The Principals of the secondary schools the holders attended reported that, almost without exception, their conduct, diligence, and progress were satisfactory.

District High Schools.—[See E.-6, Report on Secondary Education.]

Agricultural Instruction.—During the past year elementary agricultural instruction has, under the supervision of the Board's instructors in agriculture, been associated with the other subjects of the curriculum in 196 schools, and in many of these very effective work is being done. In six of the district high schools the full rural science course has been followed. In these schools the permeation of the ordinary subjects with agricultural sciences paves the way for an intelligent appreciation of the principles upon which the best practice of the art of agriculture is based.

Swimming.—Pupils from thirty-one schools participated in the instruction, the average attendance being 786 boys and 697 girls. The cost of the classes was £198 17s. 7d., while the amount of Government capitation earned was £187 10s.

Training College.—The total number of students enrolled was 117, comprising 97 women and 20 men. The education districts represented were: Otago, 70; Southland, 28; Canterbury, 18; Wanganui, 1. The allowances paid to them or on their behalf were: Bursaries, lodging-allowances, and travelling-expenses, £6,094 18s. 6d.; College fees, £962 12s.: total, £7,057 10s. 6d.—or £162 18s. 6d. less than in the previous year.

Truancy.—The Board's Truant Officer served 434 notices on parents and guardians for infringements of the Education Act, 1914, while 186 cases of irregular attendance were investigated by him. Penalty summonses to the number of forty-two were issued under section 62 of the Act. Forty convictions were obtained and two cases were withdrawn—one by doctor's certificate, and one owing to the child concerned being committed to the industrial school. The fines inflicted and the costs awarded amounted to £21 18s. 2d. In Dunedin and suburbs 146 pupils in classes below Standard VI terminated their school course in December, 1917. Of this number four had passed Standard II, twenty-three had passed Standard III, thirty-eight had passed Standard IV, and eighty-one had passed Standard V. All the pupils in question had reached the exemption age—viz., fourteen years.