

Uncertificated Teachers.—The Board continued with satisfactory results the payment of half-fees for tuition by correspondence in the cases of all teachers who took approved courses for the D certificate, and whose attention was favourably reported upon.

School-sites.—The intimation that the Department proposes to pursue a forward course in the matter of providing additional playground areas has given the Board much satisfaction, and it trusts that this will result in the improvement of conditions at many of the schools, and that the future needs will be duly provided for. The results so far have been encouraging. A fine new site of $3\frac{1}{2}$ acres has been acquired for the Caversham School, and it is proposed to proceed shortly with the erection of the new school thereon. Arrangements have been made with the Otago Harbour Board whereby a site of 5 acres at Lake Logan will be available for a new school to supersede the present Albany Street School. An area of three-quarters of an acre has been acquired as a site for a training-college hostel, and extensions of the Anderson's Bay, Benhar, Milburn, and Alexandra sites have been sanctioned.

Buildings.—Building-work has been carried out during the year under ever-increasing difficulties. Prices are still very high, and certain lines, such as water-tanks, heating-stoves, good locks, and other hardware are almost unprocurable. The supply of durable timber is far from equal to the demand, and the quality of the bricks now being made is much inferior to that of pre-war days, while the price is almost double what it was then. Labour is an outstanding difficulty, and much urgent country work remains undone owing to the demand for skilled labour being far in excess of the supply. The Board's efforts have been concentrated in an attempt to maintain all buildings by timely repairs and painting, but this work is not so far advanced as was hoped for. In this connection the Board would respectfully point out that the money allocated for the maintenance-work must be very largely increased in the future if buildings are to be kept in good order. At present the work is not being overtaken, while the cost is far exceeding the amount of the grant. Very few new buildings have been completed during the year, Balclutha infant-room with teachers' retiring-room attached being the most important.

Boarding for Female Teachers in Country Districts.—Hardly a meeting of the Board now passes without complaints being received regarding the difficulty of securing suitable accommodation for some country teachers, especially female teachers. In some cases the teachers have had to be withdrawn for lack of boarding-facilities. In districts where the difficulty is acute the Board is proposing to build on the school ground, or if it is in too isolated a position, on private property, cottages of one or two rooms, on runners, so that, if necessary, they can be moved from one part to another without great expense. The problem is one of some difficulty; but it must be faced, as young women cannot be sent into country districts without some reasonable assurance that suitable accommodation will be available.

Increase in Teachers' Salaries and Increased Grants to School Committees.—The action of the Government in providing higher salaries for all grades of teachers and for more liberal grants for School Committees' incidental expenses is heartily approved by the Board. It does not think, however, that the limit in teachers' salaries has yet been reached, and that, in comparison with other sections of the Public Service, the increases are adequate. It hopes that financial inducement for securing for the teaching profession the best material available in the Dominion will be still further increased. There can be no better investment of Government funds.

The Hon. the Minister of Education, Wellington.

I have, &c.,

J. WALLACE, Chairman.

SOUTHLAND.

SIR,—

Education Office, Invercargill, 25th March, 1920.

In accordance with the provisions of the Education Act, 1914, the Education Board of the District of Southland has the honour to submit the following report of the proceedings for the year ended 31st December, 1919.

The Board.—The members in office at the beginning of the year were Messrs. J. C. Thomson (Chairman), J. Findlay, D. Gilchrist, F. W. Gresham, J. MacGibbon, A. J. Nichol, P. A. de la Perrelle, and J. D. Trotter. An election was held in July to fill the extraordinary vacancy caused by the death of Mr. Findlay, resulting in the election of Mr. G. F. Johnson of Lumsden. Messrs. J. C. Thomson and G. T. Stevens continue to act as the Board's representatives on the Southland Boys' and Girls' High Schools Board; Messrs. F. W. Gresham, H. E. Niven, W. Riddell, J. C. Thomson, J. D. Trotter, F. A. Webb, and A. L. Wyllie, M.A., represent the Board on the Southland Technical College Board; Messrs. D. Gilchrist, H. E. Niven, and A. J. Nichol are the Board's representatives on the Gore High School Board, while the Hon. T. A. MacGibbon and Mr. J. C. Thomson represent the Board on the Otago University Council and the Training College Committee of Advice respectively. During the year twelve ordinary meetings and one special meeting were held, while the Executive Committee met twenty-two times.

Schools.—At the end of the preceding year there were in existence 191 schools. During the year the schools at Etalvale II, Cainard, Glen Dhu, Mount Alfred, Mount Aspiring, Titipua, and Upper Shotover were closed, and five first-named being "household" schools, while new schools were opened at Port Craig, Sandhills, Northope, Raymond's Gap (reopened), Lillburn (reopened) and Duncarn (reopened). The 190 schools in operation in this district at the close of 1919 were graded as follows: Grade 0, 16; Grade I, 51; Grade II, 40; Grade IIIA, 56; Grade IIIB, 7; Grade IVA, 5; Grade IVB, 3; Grade IVC, 3; Grade VB, 3; Grade VD, 1; Grade VIA, 1; Grade VIIA, 2; Grade VIID, 1; Grade VIIA, 1.

Grade 0 Schools.—The Board notes with pleasure that the Department has increased the capitation allowance to the above class of school from £9 to £12 per pupil. This increase will be welcomed by the backblocks settlers, who have been called upon to guarantee the salary of the teacher up to £100 per annum. Again, the Board expresses the opinion that instead of establishing