

and equipment for teaching science at the above-named schools. Towards the end of the year, the Board approached the Department for permission to establish a secondary department in connection with Winton School. The necessary approval was granted and the school will function as a district high school as from the 1st February, 1927. It is anticipated that thirty-five to forty-five pupils will avail themselves of the opportunity of securing a secondary education without loss of time in train travelling.

*Model School.*—The model school at Charlton, which has been in operation since 1923, was disestablished during the year. The need for the school no longer exists, owing to the fact that at the present time the supply of fully trained teachers more than adequately meets the demand.

*Hospital School.*—This school was established in 1924 for the purpose of providing educational facilities for child patients. These children, though incapacitated from attending an ordinary public school, are sufficiently well to continue their education in a room in the hospital. The teacher of this school acts also as part-time teacher at Waikiwi. The morning is spent at the Hospital and the afternoon at Waikiwi School. The roll number at the Hospital School at the end of the year was three.

*Special School for Retardates.*—The Board is pleased to report that the Department has practically decided to establish a school in this district for subnormal children. Intimation has been received that the Department's Architect will visit Invercargill early in the current year and will confer with the Board in the matter of accommodation for the proposed special school.

*Consolidation of Schools.*—During the year members of the Board have, at the request of School Committees, visited various parts of the district with a view to placing before the residents the advantages that must accrue by the closing of small country schools, often staffed by inexperienced teachers, and conveying the pupils to a central school with an experienced staff and a better equipment. Although several parts of this district lend themselves admirably to the scheme, the Board regrets that, so far, it has not been able to secure unanimity amongst the residents concerned, as is necessary before introducing some system of consolidation.

*Efficiency of Schools.*—The report of the Inspectors shows that all but three graded schools and seven schools of Grade O were visited during the first half of the year, and all the schools were met during the second half. Notwithstanding the fact that there was an abnormal amount of sickness prevalent, not only in this district, but throughout the Dominion during the winter and spring months, the Board is pleased to know that the schools under its control have fully maintained the efficiency of previous years.

The following summarizes the results for 1925 and 1926: 1925—Very good, 10; good, 53; very fair or satisfactory, 113; fair, 13; weak, 3. 1926—Very good, 13; good, 55; very fair or satisfactory, 109; fair, 17; weak, 3.

*Attendance of Pupils.*—The Attendance Officer, in his annual report to the Board, states that he has sent out 171 notices to defaulters, has issued fourteen summonses, and has secured eight convictions. The amount of fines inflicted was £5 11s. The Board is pleased to be able to express gratification that the very creditable record of the past few years regarding the attendance of pupils has been well maintained. Although the great majority of parents are alive to the value of a good education for their children, it is well to reiterate for the benefit of the few who are indifferent that there is now no provision whereby a child may absent himself from school on any one half-day of the week unless a good and sufficient reason for absence can be shown.

*Teaching Staff.*—The Board is pleased to report that the educational status of its teaching staff has risen in an appreciable degree. This is due to the fact that the efforts of the Department through its training colleges are bearing fruit by the production of an ample supply of fully trained teachers. During the year the Board terminated the engagement of several teachers who had failed to obtain classification.

*Organizing Teachers.*—The two organizing teachers, Messrs. D. Brown and H. Romans, continue to do valuable work in assisting the inexperienced and untrained teachers. In view of the fact that the number of uncertificated teachers is rapidly diminishing, the time is not far distant when it will be possible to do without the services of organizing teachers.

*Instruction of Teachers.*—The usual Saturday classes for instruction of probationers and uncertificated teachers were held during the year at Invercargill and Gore. For the benefit of teachers so situated in remote districts that attendance at Saturday classes was impossible, a special course was arranged to be held during the summer vacation, and a class in general agriculture for "C" was also conducted at the same time for the benefit of those teachers who wished to complete the requirements for a practical certificate in this subject for purposes of the "C" Examination. Following are the particulars in regard to the classes conducted and the roll numbers of teachers in attendance: Saturday classes: Invercargill centre—Drawing and handwork, 33; nature-study and agriculture, 25; general agriculture for "C," 31; dairy science for "C" 26; physical drill, 28. Gore centre—Drawing and handwork, 10; nature-study and agriculture, 9. Summer vacation course: Invercargill centre—General agriculture for "C," 12; elementary practical agriculture, 9; hygiene, 6. In view of the proposal of the Department to discontinue Saturday classes, the Board is glad to know that favourable consideration will be given to proposals for the establishment of holiday refresher courses for the benefit of teachers requiring practical certificates in science subjects for "D" or "C."

*Conveyance and Board of Children.*—The total amount paid by the Board under this head was £2,573 19s., compared with £1,923 18s. 7d. in 1925.

*Medical Inspection.*—This important branch of the Health Department continues to do excellent work. The Board cannot speak too highly of the work of the School Medical Officer, Dr. Collier, and her assistants. Children are examined partially and completely by Dr. Collier according to the standard