

REPORT.

**Education and
the war.**

To some it may appear that the Government should for the duration of the war go slowly with its educational policy. The nation is at war: money, materials, and human energy must be thrown without stint into the task of saving for the world those simple moral and political principles which give our education its meaning. The Government might with some show of justification rest satisfied with the great progress made in education since 1935 under my predecessor, the Right Hon. P. Fraser, now Prime Minister, did it not feel, with all thinking people, a new sense of urgency in education arising from the world crisis. Above all, this is a war of ideas. The Axis Powers have a clear and definite and utterly brutal philosophy, and for years they have moulded their education systems into almost perfect instruments for instilling that philosophy into the minds of the young. The democracies have a harder task. It is simpler to teach hatred and prejudice and half-crazy pride of race than it is to create a love for freedom and tolerance and the quiet, decent virtues of the democratic way of life. But if the present sacrifices are not to be in vain we must press on more quickly than ever before with the kind of education that will make the children of New Zealand understand and love the ways of life for which their elders are fighting. So I make no apologies for reporting that during 1940 there was no slackening in the educational effort that has been a characteristic of the Government's policy, although the exigencies of the war situation have sometimes made it necessary to divert the effort into slightly different channels.

Expenditure.

The total expenditure (including that out of endowment revenue) for the year ended 31st March, 1941, was £5,401,123 which was £206,840 less than in the previous year. This reduction was due solely to a decrease in the amount spent on school buildings, expenditure on other educational services showing an increase.

Buildings.

Because of shortages of labour and materials, the building programme did not proceed quite as quickly as in the previous year; even so, the total expenditure on school buildings and the purchase of sites during the year was £580,470. Many fine new buildings such as Palmerston North Intermediate School, Marlborough College, Napier Girls' High School Hostel, Wellington Education Board offices, and portions of Nelson College were completed, and a large number of obsolete schools were remodelled and brought nearer to modern standards.

**Consolidation
and
conveyance.**

Owing to the need for saving petrol and the difficulty of getting motor-buses, there has been a drop in the rate of consolidating small country schools on larger centres, new consolidations being restricted to a few districts where the only alternative would have been heavy building programmes. New conveyance services have, for the same reason, been started less readily than in previous years. Even with these restrictions, the total expenditure on conveyance (other than by rail) for school-children rose from £233,000 in 1939-40 to £260,000 in 1940-41. Part of this increase was due to increased running-costs and part to the inclusion of children of private schools in the conveyance scheme. In spite of difficulties, the Government has held as closely as possible to its stated policy of giving the country child an education in no degree inferior to that enjoyed by the city child.

**War
appointments.**

If there has been some slight slackening of pressure in the fields of building and conveyance, there has been heavily increased activity in spheres even more closely connected with the war. Large numbers of teachers have left the schools to enter the overseas or the Territorial services, and still more will leave in the coming year. Emergency regulations have been gazetted ensuring that the vacant positions shall be filled by the best teachers available and that soldier-teachers shall suffer in no way professionally by entering the armed Services. As yet there is no shortage of teachers, but there may well be by the end of 1941. A record number of students was selected for admission to the training colleges for 1941. After the war it is hoped there will be sufficient teachers trained to enable the school leaving age to be raised and a material reduction to be made in the size of classes.