

CADET CORPS AND DRILL.—Cadet corps have been established at eleven schools. Although some of these corps are considerably over the regulation strength, they labour under the great disadvantage of not having a regular drill-instructor. More than a year ago the Board applied to the Department for the services of qualified drill-sergeants, and arranged for the teachers to assemble at Wanganui, Palmerston North, and Hawera to receive instruction on Saturdays. Nothing, however, has yet been done in the matter, with the result that the teachers and cadets are left to their own devices, to drift along as best they may—a state of things which is most unsatisfactory.

TECHNICAL SCHOOLS.—The technical schools at Wanganui, Palmerston North, and Hawera are in full operation. The Wanganui School is now made use of for teaching science and other subjects to the pupils of the Wanganui District High School. Classes are also held in connection with the City and Guilds of London for plumbing, &c. The art classes are also continued as usual; so that the school is not only doing useful work, but under the remodelled staff, referred to in my last report, is in a much more satisfactory condition. The schools at Palmerston North and Hawera are both suffering from want of proper accommodation. The Board has been advised of a grant for the purpose of erecting suitable rooms at Hawera, and the work will be proceeded with at once. At Palmerston North, however, where there are good classes, a building has still to be rented, which is not only unsatisfactory from a financial point of view but the accommodation itself is quite unsuitable for the work which is required. The Board therefore trusts that the Department will at once see that steps are taken to provide a suitable building for this important institution.

KINDERGARTEN CLASSES.—By the courtesy of the Wellington Education Board three of this Board's female teachers were sent to Wellington to study the kindergarten system at one of the Wellington schools. The instruction thus received, combined with that given at the late Wanganui Summer School, under the direction of the Board's Chief Inspector, has enabled some of the teachers to obtain a fair grasp of the system, and as soon as materials are supplied by the Department the work will be commenced without delay.

TRUANCY.—During the year the Truant Inspector paid 482 visits to various schools, an average, not counting those visits made in June and December, of forty-eight schools visited each month. He inquired closely into sanitary matters at each school on the occasion of his visit, and furnished each School Committee with a copy of his report to the Board when any sanitary matters were defective. Each of the schools named in his monthly report has been visited every two months, with the exception of those in and around Palmerston, which have been visited monthly. During the year the Inspector travelled about 4,500 miles. The average attendance for the year has been 84·4 per cent. of the roll-numbers. By direct effort of the Inspector twenty pupils have been placed on the rolls, and, in addition, 104 children were traced after leaving a school district, and found to be on the rolls of other schools. Four hundred and seventy-eight summonses for irregular attendance were issued, with the following results: Fines, 262; convictions (no fine), 81; dismissed, 52; withdrawn, 32; not heard (the Stipendiary Magistrate ruling that the Truant Inspector had no status in Court under the Act of 1901), 51. In 1900 the figures were: Summonses issued, 736; fines, 421; no fine, 59; dismissed, 157; withdrawn, &c., 99.

"THE PUBLIC-SCHOOL TEACHERS' SALARIES ACT, 1901."—On the 6th December, a special meeting of the Board was convened for the purpose of adjusting the teaching staff under the new Act. This was a work requiring considerable care, and involving much labour. The task was however, accomplished, not only in good time, but with satisfaction generally to the teachers and Committees.

PUPIL-TEACHERS.—At the usual examination in June 59 candidates presented themselves. Of these, 17 were first class, 19 were second class, and 23 were third class. In the first class 14 passed and 3 failed; in the second class 11 passed and 8 failed; in the third class 18 passed and 5 failed.

SCHOLARSHIPS.—At the annual competition for scholarships, which was held in December, 36 candidates competed for the senior, and 32 for the junior. Of the seniors, 12 qualified for scholarships and 24 failed; of the juniors, 6 qualified and 26 failed. In the senior class, 3 boys and 1 girl were granted scholarships of £40 a year each for three years. In the junior class, 1 boy and 1 girl were awarded scholarships of £40 a year each for two years, 1 boy £5 a year for two years and free tuition at an approved school, 1 girl £15 a year for two years, and 1 boy £17 10s. a year for two years, the latter being the balance of the grant.

SWIMMING AND AMBULANCE.—A swimming class was formed at the Wanganui Girls' School and has been attended by as many girls as could be accommodated at the public baths, under the direction of the instructor. It was not possible to obtain the use of the baths for the boys during school-hours, in addition to the above.

An ambulance class, under the direction of the head teacher, has also been in full operation during the last quarter of the year, and has been well attended.

FINANCE.—The statement of receipts and expenditure shows a credit balance in the General Account of £367 11s. 5d., and there are liabilities amounting to £660 9s. 7d., leaving a debit balance of £292 18s. 2d. There is in hand the sum of £216 3s., the amount subscribed by the Palmerston North residents towards the cost of the erection of a technical school, and interest to the end of the year. The Building Account shows a credit balance of £3,032 3s. The liabilities on this account amount to £2,661 13s. 1d.

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GEO. S. BRIDGE, Chairman.

The Hon. the Minister of Education, Wellington.