

Towards the end of the year a grant was made for equipping the woodwork rooms at Hawera and College Street District High Schools, and the science room at the latter school. The grant for the science room at Hawera was not made until early in this year. In the opinion of the Board, provision should be made for science, cookery and woodwork rooms at Feilding, and cookery and plumbing rooms at Wanganui.

TRAINING OF TEACHERS.—A week was added to the June holidays for the purpose of holding a winter school for the training of teachers. Lectures and addresses on subjects of interest to teachers were given by Miss Eva Hooper, Mr. W. Gray, Chief Inspector, and Mr. J. A. Johnson, of Timaru Main School. The female teachers were instructed in brushwork and paper-work by Miss Hooper, and the males in cardboard-modelling by Messrs. H. M. Payne and J. Banks, and in free-arm drawing by Messrs. L. J. Watkin and D. E. Hutton. More than two hundred teachers attended the classes. The majority took several subjects. To Mr. W. Gray, Chief Inspector, is due the credit for the excellent arrangements and for the consequent success of the school. Miss Eva Hooper was engaged by the Board for seven months from the beginning of June. During this time she visited many of the schools and gave advice to the teachers, chiefly on subjects of technical instruction. She also conducted classes for teachers at Palmerston North in paper-work, at Wanganui in brushwork and paper-work, and at Hawera in paper-work. These classes were fairly well attended and much good work was done, which cannot fail to be of great benefit to those who were sufficiently interested to attend regularly. Drill classes for male teachers were held at Palmerston North under Sergeant Parkes, at Wanganui, under Mr. W. H. McLean, and at Hawera under Mr. H. M. Payne. It is a matter for regret that many teachers were not alive to the importance of a knowledge of military drill, and that, in consequence, they did not avail themselves of the opportunity of attending these classes.

BUILDINGS.—The expenditure on new buildings during the year amounted to £6,248 15s. 11d., and on the maintenance of schools and residences to £2,732 10s. 4d.

New schools were built at Pukeokahu, Mangamingi, Kawhatau Valley, Tapuae, Kaheke, Mars Hill, Mount View, and Crofton; and contracts were let for the erection of schools at Coal Creek, Lower Moawhango, and Torere—none of which were completed at the end of the year. The Mars Hill School replaced one that was almost falling to pieces, and the schools at Crofton and Mount View replaced buildings destroyed by fire early in the year. A residence was built at Kelvin Grove, and a new one, the old one being beyond repair, at Normanby. Additions and improvements were made to the residences at Maxwell, Auroa, Kakaramaea, Ohakea, Colyton, Halcombe, Kimbolton, and Kohi; extensive additions were made to the Campbell Street School (Palmerston North), and on the schools at Bull's, Patea, Bunnythorpe, Sandon, Ashhurst, Cheltenham, Awahuri, Alton, and Mangatoki a considerable sum was spent in repairs and necessary additions. Towards the end of the year a contract was let for the enlargement of the school at Raetihi.

It was found impossible to undertake any painting, although some of the buildings are almost bare.

The work undertaken during the year was based on the supposition that the grant for school buildings would be not less than the amount granted for the previous year. The notice received at the end of the year that the grant would be £2,999—that is, £1,201 less than the amount received for 1902–3—came as a surprise, and called for a strong protest. The result was the increase of the grant for the year 1903–4 to £4,200, with an intimation that for the future the recommendation of the parliamentary Committee concerning the distribution of the school-buildings vote would be followed. Under this the Board will be expected to maintain all the school buildings and provide for the renewal of old buildings out of the sum of £2,999. For years past the grant has been insufficient to enable the Board to satisfy all the demands for necessary repairs and improvements, and the result of the reduction proposed cannot be otherwise than to seriously hamper the Board. It will be impossible to do the work that is expected by the Department and that the Board is called upon to do by School Committees. The method, if such it can be called, of distribution which is to be followed may be right and fair in theory, but the Board cannot refrain from protesting strongly against a method under which its grant, which has not in the past sufficed to meet the demands, is reduced by 28 per cent.

MANUAL AND TECHNICAL INSTRUCTION.—Handwork classes were held during the year in connection with the following schools:—Kindergarten, &c.: Wanganui St. John's, College Street District High School, Hawera District High School, Wanganui Girls', Wanganui Boys' District High School, Makino Road, Feilding District High School, and Wanganui Infants'. Cottage-gardening: Bull's, Halcombe, Ohingaiti, Pohangina, Rata, Makino Road, Bunnythorpe, Taonui, Mangaweka, and Manaia. Swimming: Hawera District High School. Science: Wanganui Boys' District High School and Hawera District High School. First Aid and Home Nursing: Wanganui Girls'. Woodwork: Wanganui Boys' District High School. Instruction in needlework was given in twenty-seven schools, with an average attendance of less than forty-one. In all cases the programme of work was approved by the Department.

FINANCE.—A statement of the Board's income and expenditure is appended. The sum expended in teachers' salaries, including house and lodging allowances, was £38,527 19s. 9d. The amount paid to School Committees for incidental expenses was £2,191 12s. 4d.; and the amount expended in the erection, enlargement, and improvement of school buildings, and the purchase of and improvement to sites, was £8,981 6s. 3d.

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GEO. S. BRIDGE, Chairman.

The Right Hon. the Minister of Education, Wellington.