

or not. The Tinline Scholarships which will be offered for competition this year—one for a boy and one for a girl—may be competed for by candidates from any part of Nelson and Marlborough Districts except Nelson City. Children of either sex throughout the district, whether within reach of secondary schools or not, may compete for the bursaries. In all these scholarships except the Commissioners' the age-limit is fourteen years. The girls competing for the Commissioners' must be between fourteen and fifteen years of age.

There were no competitors for the Victoria Scholarships from our district this year. It is a pity that some effort was not made to intercept one or more of these valuable awards, especially as our candidates were so successful on previous occasions. It is pleasing to note that both of the scholars from this district attending Victoria College succeeded in keeping terms at the late examinations. We observe that the regulations in connection with these scholarships have been remodelled and four Senior Victoria Scholarships proposed for later competition. By an Act of the 23rd November last higher education is to be still further encouraged by the granting of National Scholarships to aid such as would not otherwise be able to pay the cost of a University education. These and the Victoria Scholarships are notable steps marking progress towards opening the University freely to all.

The secondary classes of our three high schools, though still growing in popularity, as shown by the December quarter returns, which give the following numbers attending—Westport 77, Motueka 34, Reefton 28—have each this year been labouring under special difficulties. At Westport it was a question of too-limited accommodation for the increased number. Reefton has never had special accommodation provided, and the class has suffered much from changes of teachers, especially unfortunate in that one was occasioned by the sad death of the secondary master shortly after he had received his appointment. Motueka, owing to a time of epidemics being sandwiched in between that of fruit and hop picking, was closed for the whole of the first quarter. Six pupils from the Westport High School last year passed the matriculation test. In connection with these classes we would point out that the difficulty experienced in obtaining qualified teachers has been increased since the Salaries Act came into force. Before that time the Board used to receive as subsidy £9 15s. per head on the average attendance. The whole of this sum could be devoted to the payment of the salaries of secondary-class teachers. Now the grant amounts to only £6 a head, with an extra allowance of £30 per school; but an exceedingly heavy deduction is made in the case of those that do not record a satisfactory number of attendances. The effect of this loss of revenue is severely felt in maintaining an adequate and competent staff for this important work.

At inspection visits we have noticed that the recess-time often encroaches too much upon the working-hours. Recesses varying in amount from 1 hour 15 minutes to 2 hours 30 minutes weekly have been observed. Out of twenty-five hours of working-time 1 hour 40 minutes should be an ample allowance. By the Education Act even Class P are expected to attend for at least four hours a day.

As a help towards the practical training of pupil-teachers in school-management, head teachers should regularly hold criticism lessons for their benefit.

In several instances zealous teachers have tastefully decorated the walls of their schoolrooms with gay and instructive pictures. In order still further to make many of them less dungeon-like and more cheerful and attractive as working-rooms it would, if only the Board could find the means, be advisable to make the painting of the interiors universal. Another matter that urgently calls for more funds for maintenance is that of sanitation. In the towns, where this matter has been most effectively and economically dealt with, the cost is still a heavy drain upon the Committees' allowance, but in the country it has been found almost impossible for Committees with straitened finances to satisfy the demands of the Health Officer. The difficulties of maintenance consequent upon the reduction in the grant available for the purpose led to the summoning of the last conference of Boards. The representations then made to the Minister have not as yet been the means of obtaining any relief, except the 6d. capitation for the employment of relieving teachers.

The need for increased accommodation is most pressing at Coal Creek, the claims for which were brought before the notice of the Board last year. Since then further inconvenience has resulted from the increase of the number enrolled. Some few of the teachers' houses, too, are inadequate for such a purpose, their rental value being far below the house allowances accorded in the scale, while neither in comfort nor in appearance are they in keeping with the dignity of the positions to be maintained. Too often, however, complaint is made of the neglected state of the teacher's garden and house-precincts. This is not as it should be; care shown for one's surroundings has, particularly with children, who often regard their teachers with a respect akin to reverence, a high educational value. We quote from Mr. Hill's last report: "The school-house and residence, with the ground attached, should present to the people of a district a standard of neatness and tidiness that is worthy of imitation. Children are imitators by nature, and if they have presented to them at school good surroundings, so as to cultivate their taste and influence habit, the foundation of a good character will be laid."

The question of a retiring-allowance for teachers is still, unfortunately, in abeyance. We hope that the Premier, who throughout his term of office has shown an enlightened and progressive spirit in the treatment of educational questions, will shortly satisfy the crying need of the service by carrying into effect a workable scheme of superannuation. This and the establishment of training colleges would be fitting monuments of his term of office as Minister of Education.

If from what has been written above the impression be left that the work of the year was not characterized on the part of our staff by conscientious effort and a high sense of duty this report would not reflect truly our opinion. Many of our teachers deserve the greatest praise for their industry in the face of much discouragement. The experience of Thring, late headmaster of Uppingham, finds an echo in their hearts: "The real teacher is animated by a high and true ideal towards which he is ever working, to which he is ever finding some response even in apparent