

(3.) Lesson by the teacher on the value of trees as a private and national asset, and as objects of beauty. (4.) Songs and recitations by pupils. (5.) Pupils present to the school, pictures, books, curios, specimens and seedlings. (6.) Lesson by teacher or friend on the methods of tree-plantings. (7.) The junior children under the lady teachers will ornament the walls of the class-rooms with the pictures, and the senior pupils will proceed to the play-ground to plant trees (all the tools necessary for doing the work would need to be at hand). (8.) The Chairman to declare the rest of the day a holiday. (9.) The parents and the general public might be invited to attend, and the occasion might, perhaps, be signalized by a little social function at the school.

The following is the method of tree-planting recommended by Mr. Grant, the Board's Supervisor of Agricultural Training: "Dig holes somewhat larger than the natural spread of the roots. If the soil is poor, some well-rotted farmyard manure should be mixed with it, but on no account should fresh farmyard manure or fertilisers containing potash or soda be used. In planting, the roots of all trees should have a fine mellow bed of good soil, which should be firmly pressed into contact with every rootlet. No air-spaces should be left and no two roots should be in contact. After the fine soil, to a depth of three or four inches, is pressed into place, the remainder may be thrown loosely on top. If the early summer is dry, it is a good plan to apply a mulch of straw, hay, weeds, or ti-tree around the tree. This mulch should be about three inches deep, and should cover an area a little larger than the size of the hole in which the tree was planted. Before planting trees in the school ground, it will be necessary to have a plan carefully drawn out. The completion of the plan may be the work of years, but without a plan no work of any value can be done. The first thing to plan for is shelter, and from the data accumulated in most schools this will not be a difficult task. It is not a good plan to plant tall-growing trees in front of a school, or to plant trees in a position that they will block out any good views that may be had from the school grounds. All contributions by way of plants, labour, fencing, and manure are subsidized if there is a garden recognized by the Department attached to the school."

Special lessons were given by the teachers on the value of trees as a private and national asset, and on the best method of tree-planting. At some of the schools patriotic addresses were given by members of Committee and other public men. Each recurrence of Arbor Day not merely interests the pupils afresh in trees and tree-planting, but also adds something pleasing to the appearance of the schools.

SICK-LEAVE.—Owing to the reduction in the payments made by the Education Department to the Board, several unwelcome methods of economy have had to be introduced, and one of those is the abolition of pay to teachers absent on sick-leave, except when necessitous circumstances compel the relaxation of the rule.

HOLIDAYS.—Though the Board's scale of holidays errs perhaps on the side of liberality, it does not appear to satisfy all the teachers, Committees, or the parents, and, of course, none of the children. This matter is mentioned because there is a general tendency on the part of some teachers and Committees to play fast and loose with the Board's regulations on the subject. It would perhaps be a good thing if the school holidays for the whole Dominion were fixed and all adventitious holidays abolished, leaving only the date of the annual school-treat to be fixed locally. To this it must come sooner or later, as the interruptions in the school-work do not make for increased efficiency.

BUILDINGS.—During the year a new school was opened at Dunolly. Additions were made to the Lytton Street School, Feilding; the Manutahi School was renovated; and the Wanganui District High School, the greater part of which was destroyed by fire in October, 1908, was rebuilt in brick. A new residence was built at Tokaora, and the residences at Brunswick, Manutahi, Linton, Matapu, Moutoa, and Warrengate were enlarged and renovated. The new school at Makaka was finished in the early part of the year, but the school on the Main South Road was not ready for occupation until the beginning of last month. Contracts for painting totalling a little more than £500 were let in December, and at the same time a contract was entered into for sewerage work in connection with the Lytton Street School, Feilding. Grants exceeding £10 were made for works in connection with schools or residences at Kakariki, Otakeho, Awahuri, Riverton, Stanway, Turakina, Waverley, Ashhurst, Gonville, College Street (Palmerston North), Taihape, Eltham, Oroua Bridge, Taonui, Owahakura, Rata, Bull's, Rawhitiroa, Waituna West, Mount View, and Okoia, and small grants were expended at a number of schools.

This year the Maintenance Fund of the Board has been reduced by £1,300, although it is well known to the Department that in the past the grant has been insufficient to keep the buildings in order and replace worn-out schools and residences. The Board again enters an emphatic protest at the system—which no one outside the Department understands—under which grants for maintenance and erection of school buildings are made at the present time. With nothing but expectations as security, the Board is supposed to finance undertakings to the tune of thousands of pounds, and frequently very much short of the amount expended is paid over as grudgingly as if it were the last drop of blood left in the official's body. Inadequate grants, dilatory payments, uncertain amounts, and suspicious misgivings are the rule in this connection, with few exceptions, in the dealings of the Department with the Board. While by no stretch of imagination can it be proved that it is the duty of the Board to find half the cost of school-sites or additions to sites out of the maintenance grant, yet that is the rule enforced by the Department.

OFFICE ACCOMMODATION.—To relieve the congestion in the office accommodation the Board, in the month of August last, rented part of the Westport Coal Company's new buildings, which are adjacent to the Board's offices. To the new rooms the audit and technical departments were transferred, greatly to the advantage of efficient work and the health of the officers. It is expected that the Board will be able to provide new offices when the new technical school is built, as the outcome of the Legislature's permission to lease the present technical-school site and apply the proceeds as security for a loan to be expended on buildings in the Borough of Wanganui for a technical school, infant school, and Board's offices.