

EDUCATION.

The increase in the amount to be provided for this year, as compared with last year's expenditure, is due almost entirely to the increased attendance at the ordinary public elementary schools, at the manual and technical schools and classes, and at secondary schools, and also to the additional number of new school buildings which have to be provided for and maintained.

It is the intention during this session to go carefully into the report of the Education Commission of last year. Although it will not be possible to give full consideration to University education, the most urgent needs of the University colleges will be provided for.

STAFFS AND SALARIES.

I do not think it will be possible to bring down this session a scheme for the improvement of the staffs and of the salaries of teachers in public schools, but proposals dealing with these two questions will be submitted to Parliament next year. Meanwhile, to give some increase of salary where it is most needed, the Government intends, as from 1st January next, to raise the amount of the yearly increments of salary in the several grades from £5 to £10, so that, for instance, a teacher of Grade 4 whose salary under the present law begins at £180 and rises in six years by £5 increments to £210, will receive £190 after one year, £200 after two years, and £210 after three years; and similarly for all other grades. The cost of this for the first year will probably be about £12,000. In addition, it is proposed to make better provision for the pay of some of the staff of the training colleges, and to increase the salaries of the secondary assistants in district high schools.

FREE UNIVERSITY EDUCATION.

The opportunities for free University education have been further extended during the year by a modification of the conditions for obtaining University bursaries, so that it may be said that the University is now open free to any person who has shown himself qualified to take a University course. Special bursaries have also been established to enable teachers to become well trained in home science. The number now receiving free University education in New Zealand is about 750.

SPECIAL SCHOOLS.

The system outlined in the last Financial Statement of placing young offenders with their relatives on probation instead of sending them to industrial schools has been successfully inaugurated. There is abundant evidence that the training given in our industrial schools is praiseworthy, and that the results fully justify the public expenditure necessary in the upbringing of the children; yet the officers engaged in this work are unanimously of opinion that as far as possible aggregation should be avoided, and that for a child of normal tendencies who cannot be provided for with his relatives, the system of boarding out with foster-parents, which has been in operation for thirty years past, is the nearest approach to the ideal of family life.

The extension of facilities for the care of feeble-minded and epileptic children is a matter of most urgent importance. It is necessary to make provision for girls as well as to increase the present limited accommodation for boys. Works are to be set in hand at Otekaike immediately to enable girls to be received there for the present, and the buildings will be erected in such a manner as to be equally available for boys should it be necessary in the near future to make a separate establishment for girls of this class.

SCHOOL BUILDINGS.

The demands on the vote for school buildings are very great, and with all the care for economy that can be exercised in the Department the need for new schools as settlement proceeds, and the extension of schools in the settled districts to provide for increasing school attendance, together with the increasing demand for facilities for secondary, technical, higher, and special education, make it useless to expect