

able falling-off in the quality of the pupils' work presented to us at the notified or, as it is often called, the examination visit. Additional evidence of the drop in efficiency appeared to be furnished by the lower percentage of passes both at the Standard VI Proficiency Examination and at the Junior National Scholarship Examination. Though doubtless all districts have their "lean" years, yet we do not think this explanation suffices in our case. The decreased efficiency in the schools was doubtless due very largely to the disturbing influences of the Great War. Praiseworthy efforts to raise money for patriotic purposes and to manufacture or otherwise provide comforts for the New Zealand troops were made in every school, and no doubt interfered considerably with the teachers' regular work. It must also be remembered, however, that our district suffers very greatly from the employment of a large percentage of uncertificated teachers: 41 per cent. of our teachers are uncertificated. The Board does its best to cope with the difficulty, but the supply of capable teachers does not nearly equal the demand. Fifteen and twenty years ago the reverse was the case, and even certificated teachers found it hard to secure positions. To-day the Board is forced to employ in the remote schools almost any fairly well-educated person who offers his services. An attempt is made to give these people some insight into their duties by sending them to observation schools, taught by our best teachers; but such an arrangement can hardly be called training. The result is that year after year we have to report that some fifty schools, most of them small and in remote corners of the district, are inefficiently taught. We feel sure the way to deal with this problem is to have a model country school in Wanganui, to enable inexperienced teachers to receive an adequate preliminary training in method, and to enable them to return from time to time for what may be called "refresher" courses. We deal more fully with the training of teachers later on in this report.

Last year we drew attention to the special difficulties teachers in our district have to contend with. This year we have secured statistics which confirm the general opinions we formed last year. Returns show that only 56 per cent. of our S6 pupils have passed through all the standard classes in the school in which they were presented for the Proficiency Examination, and that no less than 11 per cent. had passed through only S6 at the school in which they were presented. The migratory character of the school population is further evidenced by the following figures: Returns from 194 schools show that, with a total average roll of 14,751, no less than 6,272 pupils left and 6,805 were admitted during the year. After deductions have been made for various reasons, such as pupils leaving at the end of their course, &c., there remains a sufficiently high percentage of changes to indicate that the schools in this district suffer very materially indeed from the migration of pupils from school to school and from district to district.

Our general procedure at inspection visits is as follows: At the first visit, which is usually an unnotified visit, we observe the teacher at work, make notes regarding the quality of his teaching, examine the examination register and the pupils' work done at the various term tests, inspect the other school-records, the buildings, furniture, and apparatus, the schemes of work, time-tables, and lesson-plans, and, whenever there seems need, give lessons on topics occurring in the teacher's daily programme. At the second or notified visit the greater portion of the Inspector's time is taken up by an investigation into the effectiveness of the teaching. After both visits it is our custom to discuss our notes with the members of the staff either individually or collectively, and we find much benefit results from this plan. In this connection it may be mentioned here that the acting Senior Inspector is of the opinion that a somewhat different method of organizing the inspection of schools would result in increased efficiency. He says, "I am of the opinion that greater mobility on the part of the inspectorial staff would result in greater efficiency in the schools. I do not think a notified visit necessary except in cases where it is deemed advisable to examine the pupils in greater or less detail. Now that motor vehicles make rapid transit possible it should be easy for an Inspector to pay more than two visits to schools that require frequent attention. The regulations allow considerable latitude in this matter; but, not only are we bound more or less firmly to traditional practice, we have not at present the means of travelling rapidly. The now old-fashioned horse and trap are still in general use among Inspectors, and many precious hours are wasted in moving from school to school. Many short visits at irregular intervals will do more to raise the efficiency of the schools than more formal visits at long intervals. More frequent visits would mean more frequent advice from the Inspector, and generally more frequent consultation and help. Further, I am strongly of the opinion that, whenever it appears to the Inspector necessary after a round of visits, he should be able to gather the teachers together at convenient centres in order that the most important matters that have called for attention at the inspection visits may be discussed and otherwise dealt with. The Board's special instructors might also be present, and a vastly greater amount of help would be given the teachers than by the present method of advising each one individually. I would also suggest that such a meeting should be held on a school day, thus making the attendance of teachers compulsory, in which case it would also be necessary to arrange for free transit by rail and the payment of reasonable expenses."

*Training of Teachers.*—Besides the work that is done by the Inspectors at their visits in the direction of training teachers, valuable aid is rendered by the Board's journal, the *Leaflet*, published quarterly. The *Leaflet* contains, besides inspectorial direction and advice, articles written by prominent teachers and by instructors on the Board's staff. The journal is very unambitious, and is intended to supply what may be called the "immediate" needs of the teachers; it is therefore essentially practical in character. We have many evidences of the help given teachers by the *Leaflet*, and we are grateful to the Board for enabling us to use it to supplement our efforts in the schools. It has been the means of introducing some of the Montessori ideas into the schools, in particular the one-teacher schools, where we think there is most urgent need for the introduction of some such methods. For too long have the infant-class pupils in the sole-charge schools had both soul and mind deadened by the endless repetition of mechanical tasks. With the introduction of Montessori methods the difficulty the teacher previously met in providing useful work for his preparatory class altogether disappears; the little ones, under the teacher's guidance, educate themselves. We have not at the present